

'The dreadful tides of a new and incomprehensible life':  
Rural Modernity and Watchfulness in Early Twentieth-  
Century Scottish Women's Writing.

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of Edinburgh Napier University, for  
the award of Doctor of Philosophy



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## Declaration Statement

I confirm that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Edinburgh Napier University for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

I confirm that this thesis is the result of my own independent work.

Signed:

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## Abstract

### 'The dreadful tides of a new and incomprehensible life': Rural Modernity and Watchfulness in Early Twentieth-Century Scottish Women's Writing

This thesis provides a detailed study of the work of three Scottish women writers of the interwar period (Willa Muir, Lorna Moon, and Nan Shepherd) to review their individual responses to one critical aspect of rural modernity: widespread watchfulness. The analysis in this thesis combines, for the first time, a rural approach to theories of modernity and watchfulness and, using the metaphor of the rural panopticon, shows that they are interlinked and that women are disproportionately impacted by pressures to adhere to societal rules.

Scholarship which reviews the contribution of Scottish women writers to the field of rural modernity remains in need of further exploration. To address this gap, this thesis investigates the responses of Muir, Moon, and Shepherd to rural modernity and watchfulness. Muir's writing depicts semi-rural spaces which are negatively impacted by a patriarchal Presbyterianism, and positions departure as the most likely means by which to access the opportunities offered by modernity. Moon mocks traditions of grief and the women who adhere to them and adopts ridicule and parody as a protective tool. Shepherd's fiction highlights the tensions between rural and urban spaces and the pressures of watchfulness, and the thesis then examines Shepherd as a rural-*flâneur* in her non-fiction, who reclaims and celebrates the rural space.

The thesis concludes that these three interwar writers each provide different responses to the pressures of rural modernity and watchfulness, and each seeks strategies for empowerment. Furthermore, the thesis contextualises the writing of these authors in broader scholarship and debates in Scottish literary modernism, feminism, Presbyterianism, and grief studies. Through explicitly considering the crucial insights offered by these authors, this thesis makes a significant contribution to existing scholarship by further refining what is understood of Scottish literary modernism, firmly establishing its relationship with watchfulness, and emphasising the nuanced contributions of women writers.

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## Introduction

Whilst studies of rural modernity are increasing, scholarship which reviews Scotland's contributions - and women's contributions in particular - to this field remains comparably sparse. This thesis explicitly combines theoretical approaches to watchfulness with studies of rural modernity and Scottish women's writing for the first time. As such, this research is original and provides a significant contribution to the continuing interest in expanding studies of Scottish literary modernism and the undervalued contributions of women. Beyond the contribution to the study of the authors considered, the work in this thesis on rural modernity, watchfulness, and women's writing can also aid in reshaping a broader understanding of the scope and significance of Scottish literary modernism.

This thesis therefore focuses on three women writers of the interwar period – Willa Muir, Lorna Moon, and Nan Shepherd – to review their responses to one critical aspect of rural modernity: widespread watchfulness. The term 'rural modernity' will be used in this thesis to refer to explicitly non-urban areas, which are nonetheless impacted by influences of modernisation. I argue that a central characteristic of much Scottish literary modernism *is* its rurality, and central to rural modernism is watchfulness wherein both an individual and a wider society excessively observe the behaviours of others.<sup>1</sup> This thesis applies an approach to theories of modernity and watchfulness focused on rurality and, using the metaphor of the rural panopticon, shows that they are interlinked. Importantly, rural watchfulness in rural modernist literature will be shown to overwhelmingly impact women. The three focus authors each therefore offer their own responses to this form of watchfulness and other

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<sup>1</sup> There are some notable exceptions in regard to urban writing in Scotland in the interwar period. See: Dot Allan, *Deepening River* (Peterburgh: Jarrolds, 1932); Dot Allan, *Hunger March in Makeshift and Hunger March: Two Novels by Dot Allan* (Glasgow: ASLS, 2018); Catherine Carswell, *Open the Door!* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2010); Christine Orr, *The Glorious Thing* (Edinburgh: Merchiston Publishing, 2013).

accompanying impacts of modernity. For Muir, Moon, and Shepherd those responses are departure, assimilation, and reclamation, respectively. Muir's writing depicts rural spaces which are simultaneously greatly impacted by influences of modernity, yet which largely remain in a state of stasis. Departure is thus positioned as the most likely means by which to access the opportunities offered by modernity. Conversely, Moon mocks and criticises both the traditions and the women who adhere to them but repeatedly implies that assimilation to these traditions can be used as a protective tool. Nan Shepherd instead uses her fiction to centralise the ways in which rural Scottish communities mirror behaviours seen in modern urban epicentres. Shepherd then uses her non-fiction to offer a positive response to these influences: the opportunity to reclaim areas, and to rebuild networks. The thesis concludes that these three interwar writers each provide different responses to the pressures of modernity, particularly that of rural watchfulness. These responses enable the novels' women to tactically navigate unfamiliar terrain, and to find strategies for empowerment when threatened by widespread watchfulness. The authors offer crucial insights into interwar rural Scotland, and the thesis showcases the under-discussed writing of these authors which can be used to further extend and refine what is understood of Scottish literary modernism, the spaces women made for themselves within it, and why they did so.

Although contemporary scholarship acknowledges the breadth of Scottish women's writing, there is scope to further expand these discussions of the contributions made by women writers to Scottish literary modernism; this thesis will foreground the contributions of Willa Muir, Lorna Moon, and Nan Shepherd.<sup>2</sup> This thesis is indebted to the existing research

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example: Carol Anderson and Aileen Christianson, eds, *Scottish Women's Fiction 1920s to 1960s: Journeys into Being* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000); Aileen Christianson and Alison Lumsden, *Contemporary Scottish Women's Writers* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000); Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan, eds, *A History of Scottish Women's Writing* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997); Dorothy McMillan, *The Scotswoman at Home and Abroad* (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1999); Glenda Norquay, ed., *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Women's Writing* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

of Scottish literary modernism, such as Margery Palmer McCulloch's edited collections of source texts in *Modernism and Nationalism: Literature and Society in Scotland 1918 – 1939* and *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts 1918 – 1959*. In continuing McCulloch's initial discussion of Scottish women writers as 'conscious contributors' to a vibrant Scottish literary modernism, by considering their contributions in more detail this study demonstrates that their representations of community differ from – but are as worthy of critical discussion as – other writing by male writers.<sup>3</sup>

Alongside considering Muir, Moon and Shepherd as key contributors to Scottish literary modernism, I combine a contextualisation of rural modernism, with definitions of watchful communities and an analysis of the rural panopticon. This approach provides an original insight into some of the specific characteristics of Scottish literary modernism and rural modernity, as well as a deeper understanding of the three authors' responses to these characteristics. In the work of Muir, Moon, and Shepherd, whilst modernism can be understood as a movement towards that which is new, rural modernism can be seen as the bridge between disparities and there is an increasing desire in Modernist studies to incorporate the rural into the discussion. Louisa Gairn argues that divisions between rural and urban writing of modern Scotland are 'reductive [...and] the supposed rift between "rural" and "urban" literature remains [and encourages] a distorted outlook on Scottish literature'.<sup>4</sup> My research is also indebted to scholars of rural modernity such as Kristin Bluemel and Michael McCluskey, whose 2018 edited collection *Rural Modernity in Britain: A Critical Intervention* explicitly defines the field of rural modernity to argue that rural areas of Britain were impacted by modernisation as much – if not more – than urban areas. Their collection

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<sup>3</sup> Margery Palmer McCulloch *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts 1918 – 1959: Literature, National Identity and Cultural Exchange* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> Louisa Gairn, *Ecology and Modern Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), p 3.



argues that ‘rural areas could be the sites and sources of innovation and experimentation’, and this is then supported by multidisciplinary studies of particular locations and texts.<sup>5</sup> However, Bluemel and McCluskey aim to broadly explore representations of the real, lived experiences of rural people and how often it was necessary for rural people and places to ‘adapt to changes in order to survive’.<sup>6</sup> Yet, I argue that Shepherd in particular demonstrates a more nuanced relationship between the rural and the urban. Personal and collective adaptations to changes are, in Shepherd’s work, usually presented as choices rather than survival routes.

My focus adds to the current conversations led by critics such as Bluemel and McCluskey, to explore in more detail how rural modernity impacts women; I argue that women are more explicitly and negatively impacted by the pressures related to high visibility and societal rules, and that watchfulness should be considered as a core component of rural modernity. Just as the lure of anonymity is central to urban modernity, wherein individuals can navigate urban spaces with relative freedom, watchfulness is central to rural modernity.

This thesis bridges several gaps in existing scholarship. Firstly, it expands on the current discussions of rural modernity and provides greater – necessary – depth to an understanding of *Scottish* rural modernity, rather than English or British rural modernity. Secondly, it elaborates on certain characteristics of rural modernity that separate it from urban modernity; namely, its relationship to watchfulness. This thesis’ analysis of watchfulness unites readings of the rural panopticon with rural modernity for the first time, and therefore provides a thorough illustration of the aesthetics and repercussions of this characteristic of rural modernity. In doing so, the depictions of rural modernity provided by this thesis’ three authors become clearly grounded as there is a specific motivation for their

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<sup>5</sup> Kristen Bluemel and Michael McCluskey, eds, *Rural Modernity in Britain: A Critical Intervention*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Bluemel and McCluskey, *Rural Modernity*, p. 3.

responses. Muir, Moon, and Shepherd each – in their own ways – respond to the pressures of watchfulness and rural modernity, and their work explicitly voices the challenges faced by women who live in such environments. Finally, although Shepherd in particular is in the midst of a resurgence in both popular culture and contemporary scholarship, the work of all three authors demands further exploration to appreciate the breadth and value of their contributions to Scottish literary modernism. This thesis provides a re-examination of the major works of Muir, Moon, and Shepherd, and concludes that each author’s response to the pressures of watchfulness provides a unique insight into womanhood and rurality in early twentieth-century Scotland.

### The Language of Rights: Seeing and Hearing the ‘Modern’ Woman

The interwar years were marked by feminist movements, aiming to equip newly enfranchised women with the knowledge necessary for life within a modern society. Following the enfranchisement of many women in Britain in 1918 as a result of the Representation of the People Act, the aims of feminist movements were revised to reflect the new opportunities available for women, and women’s organisations and political parties were all in a period of adaptation and reinterpretation. Adrian Bingham explores these changes within of British society, noting that the ‘wider goal of encouraging women’s citizenship [after 1918] symbolized the emergence of a new age,’<sup>7</sup> whilst Valerie Wright in her analysis of women’s organisations in interwar urban Scotland notes the steady increase in membership numbers in a range of political organisations that targeted new women voters in this time.<sup>8</sup> Annmarie

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<sup>7</sup> Adrian Bingham, ‘Enfranchisement, Feminism and the Modern Woman: Debates in the British Popular Press, 1918-1939’ in *The Aftermath of Suffrage*, eds J.V.Gottlieb et al., (Macmillan Publishers Limited: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) pp. 87 – 103 (p. 87).

<sup>8</sup> Valerie Wright, ‘Education for active citizenship: Women’s organisations in interwar Scotland’ in *History of Education*, 38.3 (2009), 419 – 436 (p. 423).

Hughes has also suggested in her research into the formation of the political identity of working-class Scotswomen that questions of modern feminism were lively at this time, and such discussions allowed women whose lives may previously have been marked by limitations to engage in activities that had the power and potential to make visible changes in local communities.<sup>9</sup> For example, within the British popular press, new women voters were celebrated, and this apparent equality granted to women by the vote paved the way to fierce debates within certain circles of the press as to whether ‘crusading organisations’ were still a necessity now that women had political power to ‘remedy grievances themselves’.<sup>10</sup> Comparatively, whilst debates were also prominent within popular feminist periodicals of the interwar period, these discussions centred on the emergence of clear distinctions between ‘old’ and ‘new’ feminism, and what it meant to be a feminist in this period of change.<sup>11</sup> Eleanor Rathbone, for example, in her 1923 address entitled ‘Patience and Impatience’ referred to this time as a ‘period of reaction following on from the tremendous wave of progressive feeling which swept away so many barriers in 1918-19.’<sup>12</sup> Rathbone’s ‘period of reaction’ mirrors a characteristic of literary modernism wherein writers reacted against economic and political constraints of the past. Certainly, this reactivity and the removal of certain barriers proved to be vital to interwar women’s writing.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Annemarie Hughes, ‘Fragmented Feminists? The Influence of Class and Political Identity in Relations between the Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society and the Independent Labour Party in the West of Scotland, c. 1919 – 1932’ in *Women’s History Review*, 14 (2005), 7 – 32.

<sup>10</sup> Bingham, ‘Enfranchisement, Feminism and the Modern Woman’, p. 100.

<sup>11</sup> Maria DiCenzo and Alexis Motuz, ‘Welfare Feminism and the Feminist Press in Interwar Britain’, in *Women: A Cultural Review*, 27.4 (2016), 378 – 396 (p. 379).

<sup>12</sup> DiCenzo and Motuz, ‘Welfare Feminism and the Feminist Press in Interwar Britain’, p. 386.

<sup>13</sup> See for example: Andrzej Gasiorek, *A History of Modernist Literature* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015); Sally Ledger, ‘The New Woman and Feminist Fictions’ in *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siecle*, ed. by Gail Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 153 – 168; Jane Eldridge Miller, *Rebel Women: Feminism, Modernism and the Edwardian Novel* (London: Virago, 1994); Glenda Norquay and Sowon S. Park, ‘Mediating women’s suffrage literature’ in *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 29 (2006), 301 – 306; Lyn Pykett, *Engendering Fictions: The English Novel in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995).

Over the course of the following few years Rathbone emphasised the differences between ‘old’ and ‘new’ feminists, arguing that the new feminist – and the new woman – must have the space and tools to adjust to her situation, as opposed to moulding herself to an existing societal structure.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, political parties and political organisations were attempting to mobilize new women voters for their respective causes, wherein central to each of the organisations was the focus on ‘notions of citizenship, femininity and respectability’ and – indeed – what each of these terms meant.<sup>15</sup> These ideals of co-operation, the reconstruction of women as active members of a politically-informed public, and overlapping spheres of feminisms in Scotland can be transferred to a discussion of the existence and characteristics of Scottish literary modernism and – more specifically – the literary modernism of Scottish women writers. Muir’s *Mrs. Ritchie* (1933) explicitly pits the motivations of the Suffragists against traditional domesticity, for example, and Shepherd’s novels explore the tensions between increasingly accessible education and opportunities, and the rituals of rural work and community.

In a lecture in 1925, writer and activist Rose Macaulay speculated on how future generations might reflect on the wave of developments that escalated post-1918, particularly in relation to the escalation in popular press coverage and discussion of women’s equality, career progression and increased visibility in professional and public fields. She joked that ‘if a future chronicler were to study the files of our newspapers, he would get the impression that there had appeared at this time a strange new creature called woman who was receiving great attention from the public.’<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the interwar years saw tensions between various forms of an idealised woman grow. Mary Evans’ book *Making Respectable Women: Changing*

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<sup>14</sup> DiCenzo and Motuz, ‘Welfare Feminism and the Feminist Press in Interwar Britain’, p. 386.

<sup>15</sup> Wright, ‘Education for active citizenship’, p. 419.

<sup>16</sup> Rose Macaulay, *Manchester Guardian*, 13 Nov. 1925, in *The Guardian Century: The Twenties* (London: The Guardian, 1999), p. 5.

*Moralities, Changing Times* explores the changing appearance of a respectable woman in Britain from the late-nineteenth century onwards. Evans notes that in the early-twentieth century ‘battles began to emerge [...] about new and often distant sources of aspiration and respectability’, making the interwar question of ‘what women should be’ notably difficult to answer.<sup>17</sup> Macaulay continued that due to the inclination of the popular press to generalise about women in regards to their lives, interests, and capabilities it felt increasingly as though ‘sex formed some kind of bond in the women’s political world, and that neither temperament, nor education, nor economic conditions counted for anything’.<sup>18</sup> Although Macaulay’s article offers a relatively light-hearted rebuttal towards what she considered to be the inconsistencies of the popular press’ newfound fascination of visible women, she also highlights her concerns as to the dangers of viewing women collectively, rather than providing a balanced depiction of individuals. She does, for example, criticise the way in which – due to the impact of the Representation of the People Act – she was repeatedly asked for her opinion on ‘how [women will] vote’, and argues that viewing all women as one is as detrimental to women’s equality as not viewing or representing women at all.<sup>19</sup> Certainly, this is a key concern of this thesis. Approaching a study of women’s literature homogenously and neglecting the nuances of women’s responses would be as detrimental as entirely failing to consider women’s responses.

In a response to the concerns and anger of Rose Macaulay, Bingham provides a thorough overview and analysis of 1920s newspaper files and the ‘endless stream of newspaper articles’<sup>20</sup> which had an ‘insistent fascination with modern women and changes in

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<sup>17</sup> Mary Evans, *Making Respectable Women: Changing Moralities, Changing Times* (London: Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 43 - 44.

<sup>18</sup> Macaulay, *Manchester Guardian*, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Bingham, ‘Enfranchisement, Feminism and the Modern Woman’, p. 86.

<sup>20</sup> Bingham, ‘Enfranchisement, Feminism and the Modern Woman’, p. 87.

femininity'.<sup>21</sup> Due to the rapid increase in newspaper circulation following the end of World War 1 – Bingham notes that circulation doubled in the twenty years after 1918, and by 1939 the majority of the British population was regularly reading a newspaper – the role of newspapers was ever more crucial in 'setting the agenda for public and private discussion'.<sup>22</sup> The 'agenda' for many journalists appeared to be a simultaneous enthusing of the developments of modernity, particularly in regards to women's moves into public roles and the enfranchisement of women as a sign of social progress and gender equality, but also an underplaying of the continued efforts of feminist movements to tackle additional areas of inequality. In terms of praising the signs of British political and social modernity, in one particular editorial published in the *Daily Mail* shortly before the election in December 1918, politicians who had previously resisted the suffrage movement were referred to as 'out-of-date',<sup>23</sup> demonstrating how 'in this post-war modernity the denial of citizenship to women seemed entirely anachronistic'.<sup>24</sup> Women's pages within the popular press were also, at this time, filled with editorials on how to adapt from a housewife into a voter (such as in an article entitled 'Learning To Be Citizens – A Matter of Importance' published in September 1919 in the *Mail*) and for the most part, the language used was suggestive of a widespread belief that women needed greater guidance as to how to utilise their vote, and required direct instruction on how to conduct themselves in public circles. Indeed, the title infers that housewives and voters were two separate entities, with the former not counting as a citizen at all.

Despite the patronising air of instruction that shrouded many of the editorials geared toward new women voters, many newspapers also expressed a considerable level of support toward the increasing visibility of women in public fields and recognised this as a sign of

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<sup>21</sup> Bingham, 'Enfranchisement, Feminism and the Modern Woman', p. 87.

<sup>22</sup> Bingham, 'Enfranchisement, Feminism and the Modern Woman', p. 87.

<sup>23</sup> *Daily Mail*, 4 Dec. 1918, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Bingham, 'Enfranchisement, Feminism and the Modern Woman', p. 92.

modernity, progress, and gender equality. Bingham writes that ‘voting was only one aspect of women’s new role in British public life, and evidence of these fresh opportunities were presented in newspapers on almost a daily basis’, citing examples from pioneering sportswomen and aviators, to the more freeing fashions and styles of the 1920s.<sup>25</sup> Elsewhere, Labour MP Ellen Wilkinson’s pithy comments in the *Mail* in 1931 that ‘women doing startling new things fill the papers [to such an extent that] one begins to wonder if men are doing anything at all’ and that it is easy to assume, based on this vast coverage in the press, that all women are ‘barristers, or aeronauts or crack channel swimmers’ indicates that this trend continued throughout much of the interwar period, with a consistent discussion of women’s progress and visibility.<sup>26</sup> In this sense, the attention given to women’s social advancements can be considered as a positive step forward; women were increasingly viewed as pioneers in a variety of fields. Furthermore, when considering Wilkinson’s comment in particular, women’s achievements were seemingly being written about with more variation than those of men. With this evidence that discussion of the modern woman was not relegated only to the vote and discussion of women’s voting preoccupations, it could of course be claimed that there was a balanced and widespread representation of women in the popular press. However, such narratives of modernity and of female progress were in many ways often a misrepresentation of the realities of interwar society, as they failed to demonstrate that this was an ongoing, fluid and multi-stranded movement.

The journalistic preoccupation with female voters directly impacted the attempts of the women’s movement to resolve further issues of social and economic inequality that were not solved by enfranchisement. Indeed, the sheer number of articles and editorials of women successfully beating the odds to become the first woman to do a certain thing actually meant

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<sup>25</sup> Bingham, ‘Enfranchisement, Feminism and the Modern Woman’, p. 95.

<sup>26</sup> Ellen Wilkinson, *Daily Mail*, 19 May. 193, p. 10.

that stories of ‘the frustrations of those who failed to break into their chosen field were not usually pursued [and] the number of women who overcame the obstacles in front of them was repeatedly overestimated’.<sup>27</sup> Bingham therefore suggests that, far from being a symbol of progress, the distortion of interwar narratives of womanhood meant that ‘the woman’s movement struggled against being stereotyped as “old news” and found it more difficult to capture headlines’.<sup>28</sup> In a similar sense, Elizabeth MacLeod Walls’ article on the rhetoric of British Modernism considers the way in which narratives of ground-breaking women resulted in frustration for, in particular, ‘modern men of talent, artists and idealists of the new age’.<sup>29</sup> MacLeod Walls quotes novelist and feminist Dorothy Richardson’s essay ‘Women and the Future’ from 1927, wherein she claimed that such modern men wished to ‘constrain the militant [...wherein she] could be just as happy were she to claim a kind of equality while remaining securely within the androcentric intellectual tradition – and thus [remain] always lesser and subjugate within this paradigm.’<sup>30</sup> MacLeod Walls argues that there was a growing anxiety over the promotion of a false modernity wherein politics and the arts were feminized as a result of a focus in headlines of women’s progress. Indeed, Michael Tratner in *Modernism and Mass Politics: Joyce, Woolf, Eliot, Yeats* considers modernism in Britain as a period wherein ‘groups that had struggled as marginal parts of the political system – particularly workers and women – suddenly exploded into vast and seemingly unstoppable movements’, and maintains that this phenomenon of the assembly of the post-marginalised masses led toward some fresh hostilities.<sup>31</sup> In this sense, there was a degree of resistance

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<sup>27</sup> Bingham, ‘Enfranchisement, Feminism and the Modern Woman’, pp. 99 – 100.

<sup>28</sup> Bingham, ‘Enfranchisement, Feminism and the Modern Woman’, p. 100.

<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth MacLeod Walls, ‘“a little afraid of the women of today”’: The Victorian New Woman and the Rhetoric of British Modernism’ in *Rhetoric Review*, 21.3 (2009), 229 – 246 (p. 236).

<sup>30</sup> MacLeod Walls, ‘a little afraid of the women of today’, p. 237.

<sup>31</sup> Michael Tratner, *Modernism and Mass Politics: Joyce, Woolf, Eliot, Yeats* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 1.



towards a subset of modern women: those who were increasingly visible, vocal, and socially mobile.

However, and as Valerie Wright suggests, the passing of the enfranchisement act of 1918 was also viewed ‘as an opportunity to educate and politicise women [and created space] for likeminded women’s organisations throughout Britain’ to mobilise women as voters and to utilise momentum in the best way.<sup>32</sup> Examining women’s organisations in interwar urban Scotland, Wright suggests that the booming popularity of women’s political groups such as the Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship (GSEC) and Edinburgh Women Citizens Association (EWCA) likewise allowed for the focus to be on preparing women to take roles in public life ‘which involved being educated in how to use their new right to vote, and also encouragement to take an active interest in local government and political issues’.<sup>33</sup> Wright considers the many similarities between these two groups as markers of the blossoming political interests of interwar Scotswomen. For example, she ascertains that both the GSEC and the EWCA ‘employed a gendered notion of citizenship’, which directly impacted which educational activities and aims were prioritised, and further that the representation of women in municipal government was a central focus to both.<sup>34</sup> Both parties had their roots in the suffrage movement, and both envisioned that future generations would be (and needed to be) educated as to how best to seamlessly transition into political life. However, Wright believes that whilst their core beliefs were aligned, ‘the ways in which each envisaged the equality of women in society varied [and that this] can be explained by each organisation’s interpretation of “citizenship”’.<sup>35</sup> The aims of these organisations can reveal a lot about the motivations of

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<sup>32</sup> Valerie Wright, ‘Education for active citizenship: women’s organisations in interwar Scotland’ in *History of Education*, 38.3 (2009), 419 - 436 (p. 420).

<sup>33</sup> Wright, ‘Education for active citizenship’, p. 421.

<sup>34</sup> Wright, ‘Education for active citizenship’, p. 421.

<sup>35</sup> Wright, ‘Education for active citizenship’, p. 423.

individual women, and the organisations provide an insight into the nuances of women's broader aims. Yet, although these groups demonstrate a continued efforts to unite and mobilize in order to amplify women's voices, it is unclear as to whether they were accessible to – or attended by – women from all classes.

In defining the difference between old and new feminism, DiCenzo and Motuz claim that although both 'could be credited with trying to liberate women from the domestic sphere [...] for welfare feminists, equality was not enough because it accepted a world structured for men' which women were encouraged to adjust themselves to, as opposed to being encouraged to restructure it entirely.<sup>36</sup> For new (welfare) feminists, a key concern was of the repositioning of motherhood, wherein motherhood was framed in such a way that the 'status of work in the home [was raised] to that of the workplace, in order to legitimize it'.<sup>37</sup> That is to say that rather than encouraging all women to remove themselves by any means possible from binds of wifehood and motherhood, the aim was to alter public thought. The 1918 Family Endowment Committee Report stated this directly, noting that 'the first step towards raising the status of women must be raising the status of motherhood',<sup>38</sup> and Eleanor Rathbone in her 1925 speech 'The Old and the New Feminism' similarly argued that women require the support of modern feminism in order to 'fulfil the potentialities of their own natures and to adjust themselves to the circumstances of their own lives'.<sup>39</sup> For the new woman therefore, modernity represented adjustment and repositioning, and the co-operation of different areas of life.

The attempts to mobilise women were not limited to urban areas. Across Scotland in the inter-war period there was a rapid rise in the number of Scottish Women's Rural

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<sup>36</sup> Wright, 'Education for active citizenship', p. 423.

<sup>37</sup> DiCenzo and Motuz, 'Welfare Feminism and the Feminist Press in Interwar Britain', p. 386.

<sup>38</sup> DiCenzo and Motuz, 'Welfare Feminism and the Feminist Press in Interwar Britain', p. 386.

<sup>39</sup> DiCenzo and Motuz, 'Welfare Feminism and the Feminist Press in Interwar Britain', p. 388.

Institutes, which was founded in 1917 by former suffragist Catherine Blair who ‘envisaged that Rurals would provide countrywomen with an opportunity to voice their concerns over life in rural areas [and believed that improvements] could only be achieved through the work of women, and specifically the work of the Rurals.’<sup>40</sup> In a pamphlet printed by the S.W.R.I in 1933, it is quoted that at the time of printing there were over 900 Institutes with a total number of over 40,000 members, compared to only a few dozen Institutes across Scotland in the previous decade.<sup>41</sup> The pamphlet, alongside offering various guidelines for a well-kept home and printed advertisements for local businesses, also features an article by a member of the S.W.R.I, focusing on the centrality of homemakers to a stable Empire. Brown notes that the sharp and sudden incline in Institutes across even the most ‘remote and isolated parts of [Scottish] countryside’<sup>42</sup> is indicative of the widespread determination of women to bring essential comfort and stability to communities – and therefore the Empire – by taking part in ‘those simple, everyday duties’ such as homemaking, and in transforming into the very model of successful wifedom and motherhood.<sup>43</sup> Brown’s note that women’s duties are directly related to the success of the Empire is also reflected elsewhere. For example, Deborah Dwork’s research on the history of the infant and child welfare movement in England before women were granted the vote considers how the ideals of Empire and family directly shaped welfare reform, due in no small part to high levels of infant mortality<sup>44</sup> and a widespread anxiety over what Sue Innes refers to as ‘racial degeneracy [...] particularly in comparison

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<sup>40</sup> Valerie Wright, ‘The Prevention of Rural Depopulation: Housing and the Scottish Women’s Rural Institutes, c.1917 – 39’ in *Twentieth Century British History*, 23.3 (2012), 336 – 358 (p. 338).

<sup>41</sup> Naomi Brown, ‘S.W.R.I Home-Makers are the Empire Makers’, in *The Scottish Country Woman: Her interests, hobbies, pursuits – Published under the Auspices of the Fife Federation of the S.W.R.I* (Cheltenham and Wellington House: London, 1933), pp. 21 – 25 (21).

<sup>42</sup> Brown, ‘S.W.R.I Home-Makers are the Empire Makers’, p. 24.

<sup>43</sup> Brown, ‘S.W.R.I Home-Makers are the Empire Makers’, p. 22.

<sup>44</sup> Deborah Dwork, *War is Good for Babies and Other Young Children: A History of the Infant and Child Welfare Movement in England, 1898 – 1918* (London and New York: Tavistock, 1987), pp. 221 – 222.

with Germany.<sup>45</sup> The construction of idealised femininity in the modern world was therefore seen as imperative in ensuring the continued strength of the Empire and the health of a nation. That directions for gardening, cleaning, and cooking are printed next to articles such as Brown's which situates the W.I. woman as the pinnacle of femininity is comparable to the assertion made by Vickers and Eden that conduct literature 'articulated a view of women's conduct as based upon learnable universal principles'.<sup>46</sup> That is to say, just as a woman can learn a certain recipe, she can also learn to become the sort of woman that is idealised within the pages of published conduct literature. Indeed, when Willa Muir references the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes in an article for *The Left Review* in 1936, she notes that 'even in purely feminine movements [such as this], the ordinary women let themselves be run by their "country"' as they remain too timid for the focus to be on representing themselves.<sup>47</sup> Muir also references the high mortality rates in urban Scotland in the interwar period, and writes that this is partly due to the unwillingness of social and political leaders to incorporate women into public life and appropriately utilise the female skills. Muir's primary argument in the article is that Scotland requires a complete socio-economic overhaul in order to become a fully functioning modern nation, and that Scottish men should 'co-opt [their] women' rather than endeavour to advance without the assistance of Scottish women.<sup>48</sup> Muir's resistance to purely feminine movements can therefore be seen in similar terms; her frustration (a frustration that is voiced in much of her writing) is that she feels that the S.W.R.I movement does not promote gender partnership.

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<sup>45</sup> Sue Innes, *Love and Work: Feminism, Family and Ideas of Equality and Citizenship, Britain 1900 – 1939* (Unpublished doctoral thesis: University of Edinburgh, 1998), p. 99.

<sup>46</sup> Roy Vickers and Jacky Eden, *Conduct Literature for Women, Part V, 1830 – 1900* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. X – XI.

<sup>47</sup> Willa Muir, 'Women in Scotland from 'Left Review 1936' in *Imagined Corners* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 1996), p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> Muir, *Women in Scotland*, p. 3.

However, Muir's stance assumes that Women's Institutes held women back and prevented women from embracing agency rather than providing an empowering community of likeminded women who, far from being too timid, were able to share resources, advice, and skills *in order* to represent themselves. It is noted in the S.W.R.I pamphlet, for example, that 'in most of the parishes [across Scotland in 1933] the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes are to be found, radiating a kindly light', which indicates that these groups were a solace to many women.<sup>49</sup> Further, in Valerie Wright's article 'The Prevention of Rural Depopulation: Housing and the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes, c. 1917–39' in *Twentieth Century British History*, she analyses the relationship between widespread rural depopulation in Scotland, and the work of Rural Institutes in campaigning for improved housing. Rural Scotland's population fluctuated dramatically with a particularly noticeable population dip in most rural counties in the interwar period, a population dip which caused increased isolation and a decline in housing and agricultural standards.<sup>50</sup> Wright states that Blair's 'primary objective was to combat the isolation of women in rural Scotland', and that the development of further Rural Institutes would encourage a greater degree of social cooperation in tackling such issues as depopulation and isolation.<sup>51</sup> Rural Institutes therefore encouraged partnership and social inclusion in combatting economic and housing issues.

Wright also highlights the tactics utilised by Blair and other organisers of the Rural Institutes in gaining respectability as an organisation. Wright suggests that Blair deliberately constructed the Rural Institutes as consisting of patriotic wives of the Nation, and 'emphasized the necessity of such institutes in the war effort [by adopting] a rhetoric of

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<sup>49</sup> Brown, 'S.W.R.I Home-Makers are the Empire Makers', p. 17.

<sup>50</sup> Census of Scotland, 1911, 'Preliminary Report on the Twelfth Census of Scotland' (1911 lxxi (Cd.5700) 665); 1921, 'Preliminary Report on the Thirteenth Census of Scotland' (1921 xvi (Cmd.1473) 341); 1931, 'Preliminary Report on the Fourteenth Census of Scotland' (H.M.S.O., 1931); and 1951, 'Preliminary Report on the Fifteenth Census of Scotland' (H.M.S.O., 1951).

<sup>51</sup> Wright, *The Prevention of Rural Depopulation*, p. 337.

community of service'.<sup>52</sup> In doing so, Blair and other organisers were able to seamlessly garner high-profile support from – amongst others – ‘Vice-chairman and Chairman of the Board of Agriculture, Dr Robert Greig and Sir Robert Wright [and] Secretary for Scotland, Mr Munro’.<sup>53</sup> By harnessing this support, the Rural Institutes were in a stronger position to demand improvements to rural housing conditions and agricultural conditions which, by extension, supported the image of Rural Institutes as being heavily involved in strengthening the nation. Wright notes that there was a slight change to typical Rural Institute meetings following the enfranchisement of women in that the idea of citizenship and the public and political roles of women were occasionally formally discussed. However, Wright states, ‘it would be best to describe the Rurals’ approach to citizenship as practical [...and] its notions of a gendered citizenship encompassed both its duty to the nation and increasingly its dedication to improving the lives of its members’.<sup>54</sup>

The Rural Institutes’ approach to women’s citizenship to a certain extent promoted some of the more traditional moulds of femininity, and Wright highlights how Agnes Campbell – organizer of the Rural Institutes – stated that, above all else, the work of the Rural Institutes was ‘based on knowledge of five things: health, food, home crafts, the house, and education’.<sup>55</sup> Yet the work and opinions of the Rural Institutes were acknowledged and valued by those in positions of power such as government agencies.<sup>56</sup> Wright concludes that women who were involved in the Institutes, whether as members or as members of committees, were able to empower themselves by making their views known whilst

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<sup>52</sup> Wright, *The Prevention of Rural Depopulation* p. 341.

<sup>53</sup> Wright, *The Prevention of Rural Depopulation*, p. 342.

<sup>54</sup> Wright, *The Prevention of Rural Depopulation*, p. 342.

<sup>55</sup> Wright, *The Prevention of Rural Depopulation*, p. 342.

<sup>56</sup> Wright, *The Prevention of Rural Depopulation*, p. 342.

simultaneously being in a position to ‘make attempts to improve their standards of living’.<sup>57</sup>

As previously mentioned in regards to the promotion of motherhood as a viable and important path for modern women to be able to *choose* to follow, groups such as the Scottish Women’s Rural Institutes encouraged women to have a direct and sustained involvement with their roles as mothers and wives, but also as active participants of society.

Through this section’s contextualisation of the political and sociological atmosphere for women in the early twentieth century, the motivation of this thesis to reflect the nuances of women’s experiences and responses to these experiences is established. Approaching women’s experiences homogenously is reductive. As such, the thesis explores the central authors as active participants of society, each with their own motivations and their own – often complicated – relationship with literature, modernism, and rural and semi-rural Scotland. Attempts to mobilise women spanned rural and urban Scotland and, centrally, the interwar period saw the increasing visibility of women. The authors discussed in this thesis are, like the interwar feminist movements discussed in this section, battling against the confines of tradition. As such, the multi-stranded movements of the interwar period can be read alongside works such as Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz’s edited collection *Bad Modernisms*, Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel’s collection *Geomodernisms*, and Bonnie Kime Scott’s *The Gender of Modernism* to further elucidate the necessary expansion of studies of modernism and the increasingly nuanced discussions of women’s experiences of – and responses to – modernity.

### Scottish Women’s Literary Modernism

The trends discussed – co-operation, the reconstruction of women as active members of a politically-informed public and overlapping spheres of feminisms in Scotland – are useful to

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<sup>57</sup> Wright, *The Prevention of Rural Depopulation*, p. 342.

a discussion of the existence and characteristics of Scottish literary modernism and – more specifically – the literary modernism of rural and semi-rural Scottish women writers. In *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts*, Margery Palmer McCulloch opens her discussion with the acknowledgement that ‘many academic scholars and critics – Scottish as well as non-Scottish – would probably join [T.S. Eliot] in doubting that there was any such thing’<sup>58</sup> as a Scottish modernism, just as Eliot had concluded in 1919 that on the basis of there being neither ‘a single language nor a sufficiently unfragmented literary history’ there was no such thing as *a* Scottish literature.<sup>59</sup> However, McCulloch’s study is successful in not only disproving any remaining doubts that there ‘was and still is a varied and distinctive Scottish literature,’ but also in providing an expansion to the ‘existing limited and potentially inward-looking idea of an interwar Scottish Renaissance movement to incorporate a particular understanding of Scottish modernism.’<sup>60</sup> My own aim is to continue McCulloch’s initial discussion of Scottish women writers as ‘conscious contributors’ to a vibrant Scottish literary modernism, and to further incorporate an understanding of the nuances of women’s responses to the facets and pressures of modernity.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, the central texts of this thesis write only sparingly of urban spaces, and even more sparingly of urban *Scottish* spaces. Muir’s depictions of urban modernity predominantly focus on European cities or London, and Shepherd and Moon focus almost entirely on rural and semi-rural Scottish spaces. Therefore, this chapter demonstrates that the rural and the semi-rural are central to an understanding of Scottish literary modernism. There is growing critical interest in the importance of rural modernity and the writing of Muir, Moon and Shepherd offers a valuable opportunity to explore and assess individual women’s perspectives on influences of modernity, alongside

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<sup>58</sup> McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts*, p. 2.

<sup>59</sup> McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts*, p. 2.

<sup>60</sup> McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts*, p. 2.

<sup>61</sup> McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts*, p. 2.



the impact of modernisation on rural Scottish spaces. Rather than representing areas of solace and simplicity, untouched by – and removed from – modernity, there are instead depictions of the rural as a new space for alternate versions of modernisation.

My research contributes to discussions regarding the limitations of traditional modernist studies by further expanding what can – and, indeed, should – be considered as modernist. This thesis examines some of the disruptive and transformative impacts of modernity on rural and semi-rural Scotland in the work of Muir, Moon, and Shepherd. The settings of these texts do not negate their modernist thematic and aesthetic qualities, and the representations of newness and modernisation should not cease to be of benefit to modernist studies because the writer or the place do not necessarily align with a prescribed view of modernism. Indeed, discounting such responses to modernity unnecessarily stunts the exciting development of modernist studies. Further, although some of the disruptions and transformations may be localised to small communities, there are connections to broader national and global shifts. As such, my position on modernism aligns most closely with the new modernist studies and scholars such as Mao, Susan Stanford Friedman, Doyle and Winkiel, and Rita Felski. New modernist studies, which temporally and spatially expands what may be understood as modernist, allows for greater opportunities for interdisciplinarity and a flexible approach to modernism.

Mao's edited collection, *The New Modernist Studies* explores the changing scope of modernism and modernist studies and celebrates the engagement of modernist studies with other fields of scholarship.<sup>62</sup> Mao and Walkowitz in their edited collection *Bad Modernisms* aim to extend understandings of modernism's discussions of – and commitment to – “badness”, in which modernism is discussed as being ‘not at war against but rather

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<sup>62</sup> *The New Modernist Studies*, ed. by Douglas Mao (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

contentious with tradition'.<sup>63</sup> This thesis is similarly committed to “badness”, and such contentions with tradition are central to each chapter’s literary analysis. In terms of spatial expansion, Doyle and Winkiel’s edited collection *Geomodernisms* aims to uncover the geographical peripheries of modernism and ‘unveils both unsuspected “modernist” experiments in “marginal” texts and unsuspected correlations between those texts and others that appear either more conventional or more postmodern’.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, this thesis similarly unveils the ‘marginal’ texts of Scottish literary rural modernism. Stanford Friedman considers how adopting a ‘relational’ mode of defining modernism and modernity, rather than a ‘nominal’ mode (which fixes modernity to a specific moment in history with a ‘particular societal configuration’) ‘opens up the possibility for polycentric modernities and modernisms at different points of time and in different locations.’<sup>65</sup> Stanford Friedman’s research therefore aligns with my stance that rural modernism is active rather than passive, and that it can both coincide and exist separately from a ‘nominal’ mode of modernity.

Stanford Friedman’s more recent research continues to challenge traditional understandings of modernist frameworks, by asking ‘for an even more radical epistemological shift, one that incorporate the geo-histories and cultures of the planet *before* 1500’ into contemporary critical discussions of cultural and literary modernism.<sup>66</sup> Key to each definition of literary modernism, Stanford Friedman argues, is that ‘in all its various forms [modernism] produces heightened, often extreme and accelerating change that spreads

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<sup>63</sup> *Bad Modernisms* eds Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 8.

<sup>64</sup> *Geomodernisms*, ed. by Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2005), pp. 2 – 3.

<sup>65</sup> Susan Stanford Friedman, ‘Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies’ in *Modernism / modernity*, 13.3 (2006), 425 – 443 (p. 426).

<sup>66</sup> Susan Stanford Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity Across Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), p. X.

through the various domains of society.’<sup>67</sup> As such, modernist studies continue to be extended, and it becomes impossible to reduce modernism to a single definition or a single place. The analysis of this thesis aligns with Stanford Friedman’s stance that ‘rather than positing a mosaic of different modernisms, each separated from all others by the fixed barriers of geopolitical and cultural borders around the world [...] the boundaries between multiple modernisms [are] porous and permeable.’<sup>68</sup> For instance, the characterisations of women’s modernist literature, Scottish modernist literature, and rural modernism can therefore be as notable for their similarities to ‘modernism’ proper as by their differences.

Additionally, there are ongoing attempts to reframe traditional understandings of modernism to include thorough and broad assessments of the contributions of women writers, as well as gendered readings of modernist criticism.<sup>69</sup> For example, Scott’s *The Gender of Modernism* encourages the ongoing revision of definitions of modernism, arguing that ‘modernism as caught in the mesh of gender is polyphonic, mobile, interactive, sexually charged; it has wide appeal, constituting a historic shift in parameters.’<sup>70</sup> Rachel Potter remarks on the burgeoning appetite for narratives ‘of sexually and financially independent female characters [which] dominate fiction in the 1910s and 1920s.’<sup>71</sup> Potter acknowledges the response to the shift in gender perceptions in the novels and poems of the early twentieth century, such as Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* (1929), D. H. Lawrence’s *Women in*

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<sup>67</sup> Stanford Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms*, p. 4.

<sup>68</sup> Stanford Friedman, ‘Periodizing Modernism’, p. 428.

<sup>69</sup> See, for example: Shari Benstock, *Women of the Left Bank: Paris, 1900 – 1940* (London: Virago, 1987); Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man’s Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century* (London: Yale University Press, 1989); *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Bonnie Kime Scott (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); Vivian Liska, ‘From Topos to Trope: Feminist Revisions of Modernism’ in *The Turn of the Century: Modernism and Modernity in Literature and the Arts*, eds Christian Berg, Frank Durieux, Geert Lernoux (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), pp. 66 – 76.

<sup>70</sup> Bonnie Kime Scott, *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 4.

<sup>71</sup> Rachel Potter, *Modernist Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), p. 125.

*Love* (1921), Lewis Grassie Gibbon's *Sunset Song* (1932), and H. D.'s *Bid Me TO Live* (1960).<sup>72</sup> Yet, although Potter considers the ways in which the interwar period saw the destabilisation of 'gender hierarchies',<sup>73</sup> Cristanne Miller reasons that the 'formal study of modernism [...has been narrowed down] almost entirely to literature by men.'<sup>74</sup> This, Miller argues, 'prevented decades of readers from perceiving one of the most revolutionary aspects of modernism [... in that] it was the first literary and artistic movement in which women played major roles both nationally and internationally.'<sup>75</sup> Elsewhere, Lynn Pykett in *Engendering Fictions* and Felski's *The Gender of Modernity* both utilise gendered approaches and contemporary feminist theories to analyse modernity and literature of the early twentieth-century and further shift parameters.

Felski's text is particularly valuable to my argument in establishing the literary atmosphere of, and the critical response to, women's writing in the early twentieth century. Felski's text is 'motivated by the desire to question existing theories of literary and cultural history in order to reveal their blindness to issues of gender.'<sup>76</sup> Felski, although critical of a tradition of scholarship which focuses on the male experience, notes that 'identification of modernity with masculinity is not, of course, simply an invention of contemporary theorists' as many of the tropes and symbols of modernism such as the man of the crowd, the public sphere and the dandy, were 'explicitly gendered.'<sup>77</sup> As such, the identification of the male experience with modernity 'was largely responsible for the belief that women were situated

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<sup>72</sup> Potter, *Modernist Literature*, pp. 125 – 131.

<sup>73</sup> Potter, *Modernist Literature*, p. 50.

<sup>74</sup> Cristanne Miller, 'Gender, sexuality and the modernist poem' in *The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Poetry*, eds Alex Davis and Lee M. Jenkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 68 – 86 (p. 69).

<sup>75</sup> Miller, 'Gender, sexuality and the modernist poem', p. 69.

<sup>76</sup> Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 15.

<sup>77</sup> Felski, *The Gender of Modernity*, p. 16.

outside processes of history and social changes.’<sup>78</sup> Anne Phillips also remarks on the phenomenon of modernity being ‘best exemplified by the male [...] we see both the importance of gender in constructions of modernity, and the marked lack of fit between gender *equality* and modernist ideals.’<sup>79</sup> Andrzej Gasiorek also comments on the desire of ‘some male modernists [to] hold onto distinctions between the genders that enabled them to maintain their cultural and social pre-eminence’ which discloses ‘a conception of the creative artist as a hyper-masculine figure who is anxious about the threat women pose – both publicly and privately – to male primacy.’<sup>80</sup> Felski’s text appeals for a balanced response to this problem, and her argument neither espouses ‘a progress narrative which assumes that modernisation brought with it an unambiguous improvement in women’s lives or else a counter-myth of nostalgia for an Edenic, nonalienated, golden past.’<sup>81</sup> In other words, contemporary scholarship in modernity and women’s writing should acknowledge both the impacts of the transformative effects of modernisation on, but also the distinctions between men’s and women’s experiences.

In a response to Felski’s appeal, the previously understudied contributions made by women writers of the early-twentieth century to Scottish literary modernism offer crucial specific perspectives of individual responses to influences of modernity. Primarily, there are differences which can be seen in how the various attempts by Scottish writers to ‘adapt to modernity’ manifested.<sup>82</sup> Joy Hendry argues, for example, that writers such as Muir, Shepherd and Moon explore ‘the tensions within a Scots community’ and Muir in particular

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<sup>78</sup> Felski, *The Gender of Modernity*, p. 16.

<sup>79</sup> Anne Phillips, ‘Gender and Modernity’ in *Political Theory* 46.6, (2018), 837 – 860 (p. 845).

<sup>80</sup> Andrzej Gasiorek, *A History of Modernist Literature* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015) p. 189.

<sup>81</sup> Felski, *The Gender of Modernity*, p. 18.

<sup>82</sup> Paul Robichaud, ‘MacDiarmid and Muir: Scottish Modernism and the Nation as Anthropological Site’ in *Journal of Modern Literature*, 28.4 (2005), 135 – 151 (p. 145).

attributes these to ‘social mores and religion, and to restrictions on individual freedoms, the effect of sexual repression, and particularly the effect of women living as second-rate citizens’.<sup>83</sup> More specifically, women’s writing of this period reflects not only the sustained efforts by the writers to reposition themselves *within* an existing literary framework, but also the simultaneous movement toward expansion *outwith* this framework. There is therefore a clash contextually and in the literature itself between adopting and repurposing tradition, and responding to and embracing modernity (politically, technologically, and within various literary fields).

McCulloch notes that ‘despite the fact that women were increasingly making their way into the workplace [post-1918] the continuing social perception of a woman’s role [remained] a domestic one’ and women were therefore not as publicly active in literary and social debates.<sup>84</sup> That said, in an unpublished notebook – available in the National Library of Scotland’s Naomi Mitchison Collections – Naomi Mitchison mused on women’s writing in the early-twentieth century. Alongside her broad analysis of decades of change for British women wherein 1919 saw ‘complete change [...] skirts shorten, new undies, swimsuits’ the 1920s were characterised by ‘votes’ and in the 1930s ‘women [were] able to live alone (some uncertainty)’, Mitchison also states: ‘women writers / Virginia Woolf [...] We could do things because we don’t have to wash up.’<sup>85</sup> Mitchison’s brief insight into women’s increased ability to write demonstrates the limitations caused by expected domesticity. There are obvious implications of class in Mitchison’s statement; the ‘we’ she refers to would not

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<sup>83</sup> Joy Hendry, ‘Twentieth-century women’s writing: The nest of singing birds’ in *The History of Scottish Literature: Volume 4, Twentieth Century*, ed. by Cairns Craig (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), pp. 291-310 (p. 303).

<sup>84</sup> *Modernism and Nationalism: Literature and Society in Scotland 1918 - 1939, Source documents for the Scottish Renaissance*, ed. by Margery Palmer McCulloch (Glasgow: The Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2004), p. xvi.

<sup>85</sup> National Library of Scotland, Naomi Mitchison Collections, 10810, ‘This must be some two or three years after my brother’s death’.

include all women, as for some domesticity would not be a choice but a necessity. Indeed, in the same notebook Mitchison considers that although education for women increased in the early-twentieth century ‘the fathers were pro-education partly because young men wanted educated wives’ and ‘men don’t help with traditional things’ such as housework, and ‘few rural girls go to school at all.’<sup>86</sup> Although education was encouraged for some women, for others it remained inaccessible or without purpose. Similarly, although some women were able to access education – and were encouraged to do so by men – ‘traditional’ work in the home remained gendered, which supports McCulloch’s argument regarding the lingering perception of women’s roles as domestic.

Critical discussions of Scotland’s contribution to literary modernism often make reference to key figures such as Hugh MacDiarmid and Edwin Muir. Yet, whilst modernist studies continue to expand, a definition of Scottish modernism remains elusive, particularly in regards to its overlaps with and divergences from the Scottish Renaissance. Indeed, McCulloch acknowledges this contention between terminologies and argues that whilst the reference to the interwar literary movement in Scotland as the Scottish Renaissance ‘has some truth in it in relation to MacDiarmid’s prominence’,<sup>87</sup> it is an insular and limited term ‘which ignores both the diversity and strength of other participants and the interactive, outward-looking nature of Scottish culture in this period’.<sup>88</sup>

McCulloch’s note on the conflict between inward reflection and appreciation of – or self-awareness of – the past, and a mindful adoption of the new is a key facet of all modernisms. Stasi concurs that ‘modernism’s restless search for the new is [...] intimately

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<sup>86</sup> National Library of Scotland, Naomi Mitchison Collections, 10810, ‘This must be some two or three years after my brother’s death’.

<sup>87</sup> McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts*, p. 4.

<sup>88</sup> McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts*, p. 4.

ted to its awareness of the accumulated weight of the past', <sup>89</sup> and also refers to Virginia Woolf's own reflections on the weight of the past when she considers how 'we have accumulated such a deposit of tradition and inheritance on top of us that the original substance is scarcely to be discovered'.<sup>90</sup> This cultural weight and its difficult relationship with separating the past from the new is certainly a key characteristic of Scottish literary modernism as a whole, but can be seen more explicitly in the perspectives of women writers in this period.

There is a danger that by deliberately utilising a separatist approach to Scottish modernism there is a risk of maintaining existing boundaries between literatures and continuing a trend of unequal recognition and representation. Indeed, Marianne Dekoven's review of feminist modernist criticism in *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism* praises the development of modernist studies for 'establishing the importance of women modernist writers [and] broadening our understanding of what constitutes Modernism so that [it is not defined by] masculinity',<sup>91</sup> which Dekoven argues enabled a move away from separatist gendered readings of modernist texts and toward 'seeing modernism itself as a wider and more varied movement'.<sup>92</sup> However such a development, McCulloch responds, 'is certainly not yet applicable to the Scottish context, and to Scottish modernism, where the work of both male and female writers of [this period] is still struggling to be recognised' as having made any acknowledgeable contribution to literary modernism.<sup>93</sup> Sian Reynolds concurs that, despite McCulloch's strides in re-evaluating Scottish modernism, in considering the roles and

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<sup>89</sup> Stasi, *Modernism, imperialism and the historical sense*, p. 4.

<sup>90</sup> Stasi, *Modernism, imperialism and the historical sense*, p. 4.

<sup>91</sup> Marianne Dekoven, 'Modernism and Gender' in *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>92</sup> McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts*, p. 201.

<sup>93</sup> McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts*, p. 201.



contributions of women writers to the Renaissance period she ‘was obliged to be satisfied with rather patchy documentary evidence’.<sup>94</sup> Reynolds suggests that the ‘patchy evidence’ is symptomatic of a literary movement which was consciously constructed without women in mind.<sup>95</sup> The in-depth study of women’s writing of the period is therefore crucial in order to establish their contribution to Scottish modernism and to assess their individual responses to influences of modernity. Richard A. Marsden examines the wording in the *Scotsman* obituary of antiquary Cosmo Innes (‘reconstructing the history of their own country’)<sup>96</sup> and suggests that “‘reconstructing” might almost be read as “rehabilitating” [in regards to the] restoration of Scotland’s past to a position of credibility in both Scotland’ and elsewhere.<sup>97</sup> Marsden’s distinction between reconstruction and rehabilitation lends well to this reading of Scottish women’s modernism, wherein their modernity aimed to work within existing historical Scottish literary frameworks but simultaneously sought to reconstruct the foundations entirely, in order to rehabilitate Scottish women’s literature as a credible and distinctive. Stanford Friedman’s assertion that ‘modernity can enslave or free, shatter or exhilarate, displace or replace, dismantle or reassemble’ at once is also evident here in this assessment of Scottish women’s modernism in terms of the juxtaposition between working within existing literary foundations (perhaps enslaving) and reconstructing these foundations to better suit their purpose.<sup>98</sup>

Whilst there will be a deeper analysis of the ways in which Muir, Moon and Shepherd reconstructed these foundations in Chapter 1, it is key first to establish a clearer image of

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<sup>94</sup> Sian Reynolds, ‘Gender, the Arts and Culture’ in *Gender in Scottish History since 1700*, eds Lynn Abrams, Eleanor Gordon, Deborah Simonton and Eileen Janes Yeo (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 170 – 198 (p. 186).

<sup>95</sup> Reynolds, ‘Gender, the Arts and Culture’, pp. 186 – 187.

<sup>96</sup> Richard A. Marsden, *Cosmo Innes and the Defence of Scotland’s Past c. 1825 – 1875* (Surrey: Ashgate Press, 2014), p. 3.

<sup>97</sup> Marsden, *Cosmo Innes and the Defence of Scotland’s Past*, p. 3.

<sup>98</sup> Stanford Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms*, p. 4.

Scottish literary modernism and to provide an overview of key texts and ideas of this period. As Stanford Friedman concludes, ‘modernism is alive and thriving wherever the historical convergence of radical rupture takes place.’<sup>99</sup> As explored at the start of this chapter, such ruptures were certainly in place in Scotland. These ruptures thus lead to the landscape in Scotland ‘post-1918 [...in which] a new Scottish modernism – this time literature-led and ideological in nature – was born’ and was spearheaded by C.M. Grieve (Hugh MacDiarmid).<sup>100</sup> Annie Boutelle writes that ‘through his editorship of *The Scottish Chapbook* [MacDiarmid moved] into leadership of the newly born Scottish Renaissance’, the aims of which were established in the inaugural issue of 26<sup>th</sup> August 1922.<sup>101</sup> The manifesto read that the aims of the *Chapbook* were, primarily:

To encourage and publish the work of contemporary Scottish poets and dramatists, whether in English, Gaelic, or Braid Scots. To insist upon truer evaluations of the work of Scottish writers than are usually given in the present over-Anglicised condition of British literary journalism, and, in criticism, elucidate, apply, and develop the distinctively Scottish range of values. To bring Scottish literature into closer touch with current European tendencies in technique and ideation. To cultivate ‘the lovely virtue’. And, generally, to ‘meddle wi’ the thistle’ and pick the figs.<sup>102</sup>

MacDiarmid insists that there are distinct Scottish qualities to celebrate, and he focuses on unveiling a Scottish literary truth that aligns Scottish literature with Europeanism rather than Britishness. Andrew Blaikie reasons that ‘the significant property of the nation is how it is

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<sup>99</sup> Stanford Friedman, ‘Periodizing modernism’, p. 439.

<sup>100</sup> McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts*, p. 7.

<sup>101</sup> Annie Boutelle, *Thistle and Rose: A Study of Hugh MacDiarmid’s Poetry* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1981), p. 49.

<sup>102</sup> *Modernism and Nationalism: Literature and Society in Scotland 1918 - 1939, Source documents for the Scottish Renaissance*, ed. by Margery Palmer McCulloch (Glasgow: The Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2004), p. x.

perceived as a collective form of social life’, which mirrors MacDiarmid’s aims for a clearly identifiable and inheritably Scottish school of literature.<sup>103</sup> McCulloch asserts that ‘this, then, was to be a foreword-looking movement [seeking to] revitalise [Scottish indigenous languages], but [which] would also seek to bring these Scottish traditions into contact with modern European creative and intellectual ideas.’<sup>104</sup> Indeed, Marsden refers to the previous failure of Scotland ‘to capitalise on the promise of [Walter] Scott in re-asserting Scottish distinctiveness within the Union,’ but MacDiarmid’s Renaissance aims can be seen as the period wherein Scotland achieved distinctiveness from – and within – the Union.<sup>105</sup> Samantha Walton also considers that the Scottish Literary Renaissance was a movement which ‘brought Scottish writing into dialogue with international modernisms.’<sup>106</sup>

Tom Normand considers early-twentieth century Scottish art to be characterised by ‘questions of nationhood’ in which ‘the commitment to an independent Scottish nation was [...] predicated upon a belief in the viability and validity of an authentic Scottish culture’ and references MacDiarmid (alongside Edwin Muir, Lewis Grassie Gibbon, and Erik Linklater) as a central figure in the revolutionising of Scottish art and literature.<sup>107</sup> Tracking MacDiarmid’s debates with himself in letters and editorials until he reached an establishment ‘in his own mind at least [of] the potential and viability of Scots as a literary language for a modern Scotland’, McCulloch writes that the *Chapbook* manifesto represents a truly modernist project, one which also shared its initial publication year with James Joyce’s

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<sup>103</sup> Andrew Blaikie, *The Scots Imagination and Modern Memory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 8.

<sup>104</sup> McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts*, p. 16.

<sup>105</sup> Marsden, *Cosmo Innes and the Defence of Scotland’s Past*, p. 2.

<sup>106</sup> Samantha Walton, ‘Nature Trauma: Ecology and the Returning Soldier in First World War English and Scottish Fiction, 1918 – 1932’ in *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 42 (2021), 213 – 223 (p. 215).

<sup>107</sup> Tom Normand, *The Modern Scot: Modernism and Nationalism in Scottish Art 1928 – 1955* (New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 1.

*Ulysses* and T.S Eliot's *The Waste Land*.<sup>108</sup> Two years after the inaugural edition of *Chapbook*, George Kitchin wrote in an article in the *Scotsman* of the progress of the Scottish Renaissance, praising its scope and its ability to be 'at once intensely local and European at the same time'.<sup>109</sup> Douglas Gifford refers to such paradoxes in the aims of the Renaissance period. Just as literature of the Renaissance was both local and European, Gifford notes that it was also 'just as concerned with ideas of social and cultural decline as it was with ideas of revival', and it 'mocks the confusions surrounding ideas of Scottish identity and culture [more] than it celebrates them.'<sup>110</sup> However, despite its contradictions Kitchin celebrates what the literary group represents and its core aims which are, he states, 'to liberate Scottish art from being the lackey of English art, so that Scotland can play her separate part in European culture'; an assessment which bears many parallels to MacDiarmid's original manifesto and which could therefore signify some successful moves toward ensuring a modern Scotland.<sup>111</sup>

The question of a Scottish nationhood in literature naturally lends itself to a discussion of geographies, and which Scottish landscapes are viewed as both truly Scottish and as modern. Despite the importance of the urban in modernism, and the industrialisation that impacted Scottish cities, by the end of the nineteenth century almost half of the population of Scotland was living in rural areas.<sup>112</sup> As such, the prominence of the rural in Scottish modernism is representative of the experiences of much of the population; as one of

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<sup>108</sup> McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts*, p. 19.

<sup>109</sup> George Kitchin, 'The Scottish Renaissance Group: What it Represents' in *Scotsman* (8<sup>th</sup> November 1924).

<sup>110</sup> Douglas Gifford, 'Re-mapping Renaissance in Modern Scottish Literature' in *Beyond Scotland*, eds Gerard Carruthers et al., (Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2004), pp. 17 – 37 (p. 17).

<sup>111</sup> George Kitchin, 'The Scottish Renaissance Group: What it Represents' in *Scotsman* (8<sup>th</sup> November 1924).

<sup>112</sup> Robert Irvine, 'Introduction' in *Edinburgh Anthology of Scottish Literature, Volume 2*, ed. by Robert Irvine (Edinburgh: Kennedy and Boyd, 2010), pp. ix – xiv (pp. x-xi).

the aims of the Renaissance was to produce obviously and identifiably Scottish literature, a central identifying factor must be its rurality.

### The Anti-Urban and the Rural

It is crucial to emphasise the importance of accepting rural Scotland *as* modern. The rural should not be relegated as a romantic notion of the countryside, or a marker of the past in opposition to the city's modernity. Bluemel and McCluskey's edited collection *Rural Modernity in Britain* – the first collection of its kind to focus entirely on rural modernity – emphasises that although 'there are very good etymological and generic reasons why the rural, as a geographical and especially cultural category, has been treated as antagonistic to modernism and modernity', there is a need to now understand that "'rural' and 'modern' should not be seen in opposition but rather as two terms relating to a vital relationship that came under intense pressure during the first half of the twentieth century.'<sup>113</sup> As such, the collection critiques the relegation or elision of the rural from critical discussions of modernity. Andrew Thacker notes, for instance, that modernist writing 'has frequently been traced to the impact of the urbanization of consciousness' which can be seen most clearly in modernist depictions of the city.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, he suggests that 'the real challenge would be to locate a city in the world with no discernible modernist activity', which is a statement that thesis argues could as well be applied to rural Scottish areas.<sup>115</sup> Peter Childs considers the 'focus on the city' as a central characteristic of modernist literature alongside mass industrialization.<sup>116</sup> Childs also notes that modernist literature can be taken as a response to

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<sup>113</sup> Bluemel and McCluskey, *Rural Modernity in Britain*, p. 1.

<sup>114</sup> Andrew Thacker, *Modernism, Space and the City* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), p. 3.

<sup>115</sup> Thacker, *Modernism, Space and the City*, p. 12.

<sup>116</sup> Peter Childs, *Modernism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), p. 19; p. 16.

‘urban society’.<sup>117</sup> Raymond Williams in *The Country and the City* (1975) considers the distinct characteristics of the city and the countryside in order to emphasise their points of difference. In doing so, he critiques the positive and negative stereotypical tropes aligned with each space. For example, Williams writes that many believe that the country is comprised of ‘peace, innocence, and simple virtue’ and the city is an ‘achieved centre: of learning, communication, light’.<sup>118</sup> Such characteristics present the rural as passive and naïve, whereas the city is the recipient of – and vehicle for – education and change. As Chapter 4 examines in more detail when considering Shepherd’s depiction of fluidity between landscapes, there can be an assumed divergence between modernity and the rural, which also aligns rural communities with a limiting pastoral view of the ‘countryside’.<sup>119</sup>

However, Bluemel and McCluskey argue that the ‘countryside’ is just a ‘small part’ of the story of rural modernity in Britain; rather, ‘rural regions, communities, classes and figures can originate and sustain histories of and criticism on modernity and the modern.’<sup>120</sup> Bluemel and McCluskey’s work is much needed in addressing the existence of, and characteristics of, rural modernity.<sup>121</sup> Although the collection overwhelmingly favours analyses of English or broadly ‘British’ rural modernity, there is a chapter on Lewis Grassie

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<sup>117</sup> Childs, *Modernism*, p 19.

<sup>118</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 1.

<sup>119</sup> See also: *Modernism and the Spirit of the City*, ed. by Iain Boyd White (London: Routledge, 2003); Desmond Harding, *Writing the City: Urban Visions and Literary Modernism*, (New York and London: Routledge, 2003); Morag Shiach, ‘Modernism, the City and the “Domestic Interior”’ in *Home Cultures: The Journal of Architecture, Design and Domestic Space*, 2.3 (2005), 251 – 267.

<sup>120</sup> Bluemel and McCluskey, *Rural Modernity in Britain*, p. 2.

<sup>121</sup> Bluemel and McCluskey’s focus is specifically on the city in British rural modernity; some strands of modernism outwith Britain did not exclude the rural. See for example: Gregory Castle and Patrick Bixby, eds, *A History of Irish Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); John N. Duvall, ‘Regionalism in American modernism’ in *The Cambridge Companion to American Modernism*, ed. by Walter Kalaidjian (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 242 – 260; Jolene Hubbs, ‘William Faulkner’s Rural Modernism’ in *The Mississippi Quarterly*, 61.3 (2008), 461 – 475; Dean Irvine, ‘Editing Canadian Modernism’ in *English Studies in Canada*, 33 (2007), 53 – 84; Tina Loo, ‘High Modernism, Conflict, and the Nature of Change in Canada: A Look at *Seeing Like a State*’ in *Canadian Historical Review*, 97.1 (2016), 34 – 58.

Gibbon, and fruitful discussion throughout the collection of the Scottish rural landscape and of gendered approaches to rural modernity. However, there are no discussions of Scottish women writers specifically. As such, this thesis aims to contribute to the valuable discussions introduced by the collection. There is ample space for further scholarly engagement with rural modernity, and this thesis addresses the importance of Scottish women's writing to the field.

Bluemel and McCluskey summarise their collection by stating that they 'seek to persuade readers that rural areas cannot be viewed only as retreats from modernity but must also be seen as modern spaces inviting us to consider the diverse effects of new ways of moving, communicating, producing and perceiving.'<sup>122</sup> Furthermore, the collection considers the intended audience for rural modernist art and design; Bluemel and McCluskey note that 'many of these writers, artists and designers offered up their treatments of rural subjects for contemplation and consumption by rural people themselves' which can aid in a scholarly understanding of 'active cultural agents in the processes of national modernisation.'<sup>123</sup>

Mitchison considered that 'the people who matter in Scotland [are] the workers by hand and brain', and reasons that although it is the opinions of rural and working-class people which should hold the most critical weight, the cost of books often made them inaccessible.<sup>124</sup>

Similarly, Emma West analyses the relationship between arts organisations and accessibility to the arts in the interwar period. West acknowledges the role of the Arts League of Service (ALS) and other British arts organisations who sought 'to bring art to *all* the people', noting that they were 'guided by principles of democracy and decentralisation, [as] they believed in

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<sup>122</sup> Bluemel and McCluskey, *Rural Modernity in Britain*, p. 15.

<sup>123</sup> Bluemel and McCluskey, *Rural Modernity in Britain*, p. 15.

<sup>124</sup> Naomi Mitchison in *Scotland in Quest of her Youth: A Scrutiny*, ed. by David Cleghorn Thomson (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1932) pp. 170 – 171 (p. 170).

arts provision as a civil right.’<sup>125</sup> West demonstrates that the ALS ‘explode myths about where modernism was seen, and by whom [and] they sought to complicate or even collapse the simple division between the rural and the urban, challenging assumptions about the artistic tastes and appetites of rural, provincial or working-class audiences.’<sup>126</sup>

Although studies of modernity and literary modernism still often focus predominantly on sprawling urban epicentres, the rural and semi-rural cannot be separated from Scottish literary modernism.<sup>127</sup> To define the semi-rural, this thesis utilises Henri Lefebvre’s axis definition of the process of ‘complete urbanization’.<sup>128</sup> Lefebvre’s axis ‘runs from the complete absence of urbanization (“pure nature”, the earth abandoned to the elements) on the left to the completion of the process on the right.’<sup>129</sup> The ‘spatial and temporal’ axis illuminates the succession of societies; ‘in short, the rural, industrial, and urban succeed one another.’<sup>130</sup> Lefebvre also acknowledges the stereotypes aligned with each space; ‘urbanity (cultured) and rusticity (naïve and brutal).’<sup>131</sup> Therefore, using Lefebvre’s axis, the semi-rural would be between the rural space and the urban space, sharing more characteristics with the former. Derek Hall, Moira Birtwistle and Joy Gladstone refer to the ‘inbetween-ness’ of

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<sup>125</sup> Emma West, “‘within the reach of all’: Bringing Art to the People in Interwar Britain’ in *Modernist Cultures*, 15.2 (2020), 225 – 252.

<sup>126</sup> West, ‘within reach of all’, pp. 225 – 252.

<sup>127</sup> Criticism which neglects considered discussion of the rural space as modern includes : Tim Armstrong, *Modernism: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005); David Ayers, *Modernism: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004); Astradur Eysteinnsson and Vivian Liska, eds, *Modernism (Volume 1)* (Amsterdam: John Bejamins Publishing Company, 2007); Astradur Eysteinnsson, *The Concept of Modernism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992); Peter Faulker, *Modernism* (New York: Routledge, 1977); *The Cambridge Companion to European Modernism*, ed. by Pericles Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Pericles Lewis, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Andrew Thacker and Peter Brooker, eds, *Geographies of Modernism* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2007).

<sup>128</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), p. 1.

<sup>129</sup> Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, p. 7.

<sup>130</sup> Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, p. 78.

<sup>131</sup> Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, p. 12.



semi-rural areas in Scotland and reason that this ‘inbetween-ness’ can express ‘temporal interlinkage, between the present and the past, and wider spatial considerations between the local and the global.’<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, the semi-rural space would have a slightly greater population density, greater access to transportation, and less reliance on land labour.

Elizabeth Black reasons that a ‘unifying interest in the natural world and a shared commitment to environmental protection are central to modernist thought.’<sup>133</sup> However, in Scottish literary modernism the representation of rural and semi-rural spaces is transformed. These transformations differ in the novelists’ depictions but can include the increasing visibility of and viability of transportation and industry, the broader opportunities for women in terms of education and employment, the displacement of tradition, and the impact and aftermath of war. Nick Hubble critiques the separation between the urban and the rural when discussing Scottish literary modernism. Hubble, in his analysis of Gibbon’s *A Scots Quair*, remarks that the success of *Grey Granite* – the final novel in the *A Scots Quair* trilogy – is partially due to how Chris Guthrie’s narrative voice is ‘made up of many personal and community perspectives, both rural and urban, weaved in together with no linguistic hierarchy.’<sup>134</sup> The sentimental, patriarchal and parochial Kailyard style is rejected in favour of realism and the nuances of alternate voices and rural Scotland can be seen as being actively engaged with – and impacted by – modernity.

Certainly, many of the key figures of the Scottish Renaissance movement – such as Willa and Edwin Muir, Nan Shepherd, Hugh MacDiarmid, Neil Gunn and Lewis Grassic

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<sup>132</sup> Derek Hall, Moira Birtwistle and Joy Gladstone, ‘Semi-rural Marginal Areas, “Inbetween-ness” and Tourism Integration in South-West Scotland’ in *Tourism Recreation Research*, 36 (2011), 3 – 14 (p. 3).

<sup>133</sup> Elizabeth Black, *The Nature of Modernism: Ecocritical Approaches to the Poetry of Edward Thomas, T. S. Eliot, Edith Sitwell and Charlotte Mew* (New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 2.

<sup>134</sup> Nick Hubble, ‘Transformative Pastoral: Lewis Grassic Gibbon’s *A Scots Quair*’ in *Rural Modernity in Britain: A Critical Intervention*, ed. by Kristin Bluemel and Michael McCluskey (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), pp. 149 – 164 (p. 155).

Gibbon – were born and spent much of their lives in semi-rural and rural Scottish communities and their experiences of and responses to modernity rely on their knowledge of rural Scottish life. Indeed, Katie Gramich notes that Shepherd’s writing is ‘redolent of a particular way of life and a particular place in North-East Scotland in the early-twentieth century.’<sup>135</sup> Similarly, Scott Lyall responds to MacDiarmid’s anti-Kailyard Renaissance and argues that although ‘the impossible community of MacDiarmid is principally prospective rather than being retrospective in the manner of the Kailyard,’ both seek an impossible ‘communion with a reality that can never be realised.’<sup>136</sup> Yet, Lyall reasons that for MacDiarmid, as for the Kailyard, the small rural town ‘*is* Scotland’.<sup>137</sup> Keith Dixon likewise considers the Renaissance movement as a ‘break with the all-pervading parochiality and never-never land anti-realism of the Kailyarders’ and its literature presents, instead, an ‘uncompromising vision of Scottish reality’ which was rooted in the rural.<sup>138</sup>

Further, other key figures of the Renaissance movement actively rejected urban life. Christopher Harvie notes that the ambitions of the Scottish Literary Renaissance, despite occurring ‘at a time when urbanization and mass culture [...] was determining a new politics’, did not promote urbanism.<sup>139</sup> Although Carla Sassi asserts that MacDiarmid’s re-vision of the Scottish nation encourages ‘an embodied sense of belonging in the Scottish landscape’, this sense of belonging does not seem to extend so willingly into Scotland’s

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<sup>135</sup> Katie Gramich, ‘Caught in the Triple Net? Welsh, Scottish, and Irish Women Writers’ in *The History of British Women’s Writing 1920 – 1945*, ed. by Marioula Joannou (London: Palgrave, 2012), pp. 217 – 232 (p. 220).

<sup>136</sup> Scott Lyall, ‘Hugh MacDiarmid’s Impossible Community’ in *Community in Modern Scottish Literature*, ed. by Scott Lyall (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 82 – 102 (p. 87).

<sup>137</sup> Lyall, ‘Hugh MacDiarmid’s Impossible Community’, p. 88.

<sup>138</sup> Keith Dixon, ‘Making Sense of Ourselves: Nation and Community in Modern Scottish Writing’ in *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 29.4 (1993), 359 – 368 (p. 359).

<sup>139</sup> Christopher Harvie, *Scotland: A Short History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 193.

urban centers.<sup>140</sup> For example, Beatrice Duchateau refers to MacDiarmid's 'sensory disgust' when in Glasgow and in his writings of Glasgow.<sup>141</sup> In MacDiarmid's 'Glasgow 1938', Duchateau argues that MacDiarmid 'poetically and mercilessly' deconstructs Scotland: 'Glasgow is no longer a "dear green place", Scotland no longer a land of peasants but urban hell where filthy disease and dirty capitalism spread around, murdering creation and culture.'<sup>142</sup> Lyall notes that in MacDiarmid's derisory accounts of Glasgow he displays an 'unwillingness to allow for the more exciting and hopeful aspects of cosmopolitanism.'<sup>143</sup> MacDiarmid's Edinburgh, like his Glasgow, is criticised. In 'Talking with Five Thousand People in Edinburgh', MacDiarmid writes that 'all the big centres of mankind are like thunder-clouds to-day / Forming part of the horrific structure of a storm.'<sup>144</sup> Lyall regards this poem as an indication of MacDiarmid's 'vision of the moral bankruptcy of metropolitan centres' and, certainly, MacDiarmid's emphasis on the horror and gloom of the metropolis reflects a desire to promote rural Scottish settings.<sup>145</sup>

Grassic Gibbon's and MacDiarmid's anti-urban text *Scottish Scene: or The Intelligent Man's Guide to Albyn* is similarly hostile to Glasgow, and the city is depicted as disease and deceasing. Grassic Gibbon writes:

Nothing endured by the primitives who once roamed those hills – nothing of woe or  
terror – approximated in degree or kind to that life that festers in the courts and wynds

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<sup>140</sup> Carla Sassi, 'Hugh MacDiarmid's (Un)making of the Modern Scottish Nation' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Hugh MacDiarmid*, ed. by Scott Lyall and Margery Palmer McCulloch (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), pp. 111 – 124 (p. 111).

<sup>141</sup> Beatrice Duchateau, 'Urban Scotland in Hugh MacDiarmid's Glasgow Poems' in *Études écossaises*, 15 (2012), 39 – 58 (p. 41).

<sup>142</sup> Duchateau, 'Urban Scotland in Hugh MacDiarmid's Glasgow Poems', 39 – 40.

<sup>143</sup> Scott Lyall, *Hugh MacDiarmid's Poetry and Politics of Place: Imagining a Scottish Republic* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 66.

<sup>144</sup> Hugh MacDiarmid, *Complete Poems: Volume 1*, eds Michael Grieve and W. R. Aitken (Manchester: Carcanet, 1994), p. 1156.

<sup>145</sup> Lyall, *Hugh MacDiarmid's Poetry and Politics of Place*, p. 13.

and alleys of Camlachie, Govan, the Gorbals... [the] hundred and fifty thousand eat and sleep and copulate and conceive and crawl into childhood in those waste jungles of stench and disease and hopelessness, sub-humans as definitely as the Morlocks of Wells.<sup>146</sup>

Glasgow is clearly presented as a site of desolation, dirt, and disease in this passage. Grassic Gibbon's comparison of Glaswegians to H. G. Wells' Morlocks in *The Time Machine* (1895) is explicitly dehumanising. Wells' Morlocks are characterised as 'things' and are 'ape-like' beings which move 'on all fours'.<sup>147</sup> They, compared to the 'graceful children of the Upperworld' (the Eloi), are 'obscene, nocturnal Thing(s)' who live underground.<sup>148</sup> Glaswegians are described as sub-human, removed from the Upperworld – perhaps, in this instance, a 'true' Scotland – and their lives presented in terms of animalistic simplicity. Indeed, Grassic Gibbon also refers to Glasgow as a 'corpse' but 'the maggot-swarm upon it [...] very fiercely alive.'<sup>149</sup> The residents of Glasgow are directly compared to maggots, feeding upon a dead landscape which offers no hope for a vibrant Scottish future.

Edwin Muir's *Scottish Journey*, published in 1935, also demonises urban life. Muir presents Glasgow as the unnatural underbelly of Scotland. Muir's Glaswegian streets consist of 'several things, clean and dirty, liquid and solid, [which together] make up a sort of pudding or soup which is an image of the life of an industrial town.'<sup>150</sup> The 'greasy paste' of the ground may 'resemble mud' but there is 'no other likeness to the natural mire of a country road [...which] breathes freshness' as opposed to Glasgow's 'manufactured dirt.'<sup>151</sup> For

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<sup>146</sup> Lewis Grassic Gibbon, *Scottish Scene: or The Intelligent Man's Guide to Albyn*, eds Lewis Grassic Gibbon and Hugh MacDiarmid (London: Hutchinson, 1934), pp. 115 – 116.

<sup>147</sup> H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine* (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 45 – 46.

<sup>148</sup> Wells, *The Time Machine*, pp. 46 – 49.

<sup>149</sup> Grassic Gibbon, *Scottish Scene*, p. 115.

<sup>150</sup> Edwin Muir, *Scottish Journey* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing Company, 1979), p. 115.

<sup>151</sup> Muir, *Scottish Journey*, p. 115.

Muir, the city is a dangerous concoction of unpleasant scraps, and it is a manufactured and unclean imitation of the countryside. Hayden Lorimer argues that in *Scottish Journey* ‘Edwin Muir traded only in home truths’ and his harsh review of urban Scotland provided a ‘sobering antidote’ to sentimentalism about the benefits of industrialisation.<sup>152</sup> Indeed, in reviewing the opportunities provided by industrialisation, Muir documents working-class deprivation and unemployment and writes that in Clydeside ‘there is hardly anything but this silence, which one would take to be the silence of a dead town if it were not for the numberless empty-looking groups of unemployed men standing about the pavements.’<sup>153</sup>

In each of these examples from MacDiarmid, Grassie Gibbon and Muir, whilst the unflattering portraits of urban Scottish life are extreme, they demonstrate that for some central literary figures of the Renaissance, the city was not a place of opportunity and flânerie but of poverty, destitution, alienation, and isolation. As Lorimer notes, the novelists and poets of the Renaissance were ‘committed, if unconventional geographical commentators’ and ‘the vitality of rural life was both intellectual stimulus and political project’ which fought back against the urban as the focal point of Scottishness.<sup>154</sup> Sylvia Bryce-Wunder similarly remarks that Glasgow is depicted as the epitome of ‘what Scotland should *not* be’,<sup>155</sup> and highlights the ‘anti-city, pro-rural bias of the Scottish Literary Renaissance’.<sup>156</sup> This thesis therefore highlights the work of three writers whose writing evidences the stimulation, activity, and modernity of the rural and semi-rural Scottish landscape. The texts considered,

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<sup>152</sup> Hayden Lorimer, ‘Notes on a Small Country: Scotland’s Geography since 1918’ in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature: Modern Transformations: New Identities (from 1918)*, eds Ian Brown, Thomas Clancy, Susan Manning and Murray Pittock (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 11 – 20 (p. 15).

<sup>153</sup> Muir, *Scottish Journey*, p. 138.

<sup>154</sup> Lorimer, ‘Notes on a Small Country’, p. 14.

<sup>155</sup> Sylvia Bryce-Wunder, ‘Glasgow, Anti-Urbanism and the Scottish Literary Renaissance’ in *European Journal of English Studies*, 18.1 (2014), 86 – 98 (p. 86).

<sup>156</sup> Bryce-Wunder, p. 91.

despite implicitly fighting back against the urban ‘as the focal point of Scottishness’, also provide nuanced accounts of rural Scotland; the rural is not sentimentalised, and the texts offer an insight into the opportunities and the restrictions for women in the interwar years.

### Outline of Chapters

The first chapter details the central critical-theoretical framework of the thesis. Watchful communities consist of an individual gaze, with a widespread communal gaze, and this in part allows the rural panopticon to flourish. The discussions of watchfulness and the panoptic town combine Jeremy Bentham’s original panopticon design and Michel Foucault’s subsequent treatment of Bentham in *Discipline and Punish* (1975), alongside Foucault’s theory of ‘pastoral power’. As this thesis examines women’s writing, and the myriad gendered difficulties that coincide with rural panopticism, the chapter also considers contemporary feminist-Foucauldian approaches in order to outline some of the limitations of a purely Foucauldian approach. In this chapter, I transfer ideas of the traditional panopticon design to a rurally panopticonic town in order to provide a theoretical foundation for the later chapters’ literary analysis. Drawing on Bentham and Foucault, Philo, Parr and Burns specifically consider the implications of contemporary watchful and mental health in the Highlands, however there is a lack of contemporary scholarship on the impact of the rural panopticon on women. As Chapter 1 will explain in more detail, although there is a hierarchy of power present in this panopticon the widespread gaze ensures – or encourages – an adherence to societal regulations, and is often upheld by women more than by men. The combination of watchfulness and the rural panopticon leads to a pervasive gaze that operates as a means to moderate behaviour alongside influences of modernity.

The first author studied in this thesis is Willa Muir, whose work examines various potential avenues of escape from the form of rural panopticon consistently presented by Muir

as being stagnant, claustrophobic, and inhospitable to rapidly modernising women. The chapter primarily focuses on Muir's two published novels, *Imagined Corners* (1931) and *Mrs. Ritchie* (1933). Both novels demonstrate the claustrophobia of small-town Scotland, and Muir highlights the clashes between alternating ideals of womanhood. The narrative of *Imagined Corners* focuses on the fictional town of Calderwick, and the interweaving of the town's central families: the Shand family, and the Murray family. Within the strands of marriage, religion, and everyday life is the novel's central focus: the two Elizabeths. The younger Elizabeth Shand is introduced to her new sister-in-law of the same name, and is thrust into a new landscape of philosophical, sexual, and intellectual desires. *Mrs. Ritchie* similarly engages with the tensions of semi-rural community. The novel traces the life of Annie Rattray (later, Mrs. Ritchie) from girlhood to womanhood, and it is the varying forms that these stages of life take that are central to the novel's plot. The novel is a study of religion, gender, and a Scotland in flux, and – through the relatively straightforward narrative of one woman's life and relationship with her community and her God – is demonstrative of Muir's interest in the intersections of modernity, gender, and small-town Scotland.

This chapter further develops the critical-theoretical framework of Bentham and Foucault, by considering Foucault's theory of 'pastoral power'. Pastoral power combines a desire for individual salvation with the widespread protection of the 'flock'. For Muir, individual salvation is central in her exposition of the experience of everyday life for women in small rural communities. Muir centralises the overbearing influence of Presbyterianism, and her work demonstrates how many of the expectations of womanhood are reliant on the patriarchal beliefs and structures of religion. Escape – in various forms – is presented as Muir's response to this watchfulness, and in her texts the narratives of escape are presented with the most hope. Utilising the Willa Muir Papers archive at the University of St. Andrews, the chapter considers Muir's interpretations of Scottishness and Scottish culture, particularly

in terms of what she presents as limitations when compared to Europeanism, and her criticisms of the expectations of womanhood that she proposes are characteristic of Scotland and of a patriarchal Presbyterianism. The chapter also draws on Judith Butler and Simone de Beauvoir to consider Muir's representation of womanhood, and – in particular – the active process of becoming a woman.

The chapter's literary analysis divides Muir's presentations of potential modes of escape into three primary sections. The first, spiritual escape, sees some characters seeking solace in the rigidity of Presbyterianism and, like Annie Rattray in *Mrs. Ritchie*, viewing religious watchfulness as an indicator of individual salvation. Conversely, other characters – such as Elizabeth Shand in *Imagined Corners* – eschew the central facets of Presbyterianism to instead seek comfort in individual philosophies which transcend the limitations of the rural panopticon. Both *Imagined Corners* and *Mrs. Ritchie* consider political escape, and though Muir's interest in women's suffrage in the texts offers a promise of positive change, the financial restraints faced by women as a result of legal gendered imbalances reinforces Calderwick as a place of stasis. Finally, therefore, physical escape as the final form of escape (abandonment of the rural panopticon) is ultimately the only option which can enable women to access the opportunities of modernity. In both *Imagined Corners* and *Mrs Ritchie*, those who do not physically escape are met with spiritual (or actual) death.

Following from Muir's warning, my analysis of Lorna Moon focuses on death and trauma within the rural panopticon. The chapter engages with Moon's short story collection *Doorways in Drumorty* (1926) and her only published novel *Dark Star* (1929). The short stories, which are laced with satire, each engage with a facet of everyday life, such as grief, courtship, attendance at Church, and work. Yet the stories unveil the sinister, claustrophobic, and often bizarre aspects of Moon's fictional Drumorty. Moon's *Dark Star* can be read as a



*bildungsroman*, following the youth and young adulthood of its protagonist Nancy Pringle. The novel focuses on Nancy's queries into her parentage as she attempts to determine whether she is the daughter of the scorned Willie Weams or whether she belongs to the Fassefern family, whose stories are passed down as local legend. In both the short story collection and the novel, there is an overarching focus on grief, traumas, and the labour of mourning.

This chapter draws on a critical-theoretical framework which combines Sigmund Freud's theories of mourning and melancholia with scholarship – such as Bessel van der Kolk and Cathy Caruth – of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder. The representations of grief and trauma in Moon's fiction are clear examples of connections between rural watchfulness and women's roles, and Moon's short stories reveal a tension between a modern perspective and narration, and content which is rife with Victorian tropes of mourning and grief. As Chapter 3 explains, this tension is consistent both with the national transformation of public and private mourning during and after the First World War and with Moon's parodying of Scottish kailyard literary tropes. Further, her novel and her private letters move towards a more recognisably modern style, demonstrating an increased interest in modernist style and themes and cementing her deserved place within studies of Scottish literary modernism. Moon suggests that tactical assimilation (in this sense, women adopting expected behaviours to blend in with rural life) can be used as a tool to navigate the pressures of watchfulness, but Moon herself ridicules these rituals. Whilst assimilation can be seen across various rituals in Moon's fiction, it is most evident in her depictions of grief, mourning, and trauma, which is consistent with national changes at the time.

The relationship between mourning, grief, and rural watchfulness is significant. Much of what is understood to be grief – the emotion – is inseparable from what is expected from

grieving – the process. Further, the process of grieving involves many public rituals; funerals, conversations, transitions from – for example – wife to widow. Yet, the interwar period saw a rapid shift towards private grieving and mass-mourning. Therefore, pressures of watchfulness surrounding grieving changed in a way that paralleled modernity’s influence on grieving: from observing and aiding the grieving process, to ensuring it is not indulgent. Moon’s fiction similarly critiques the apparent indulgence of public grieving encouraged by rural watchfulness, and simultaneously critiques the pressures of gendered grief. In both instances – the pre-war rituals of elaborate grieving, and the interwar pressure to suppress public grief – the onus is overwhelmingly on women to observe the expectations of the times appropriately. Moon celebrates hidden rebellions against traditional grief in *Doorways in Drumorty* and sympathises with those who suffer from the pressure to avoid grieving in *Dark Star*. In both instances, the assimilation to societal expectations is suggested as one way to avoid negative scrutiny.

My analysis of Nan Shepherd – having followed a study of everyday life in Muir’s fiction, and death in Moon’s fiction – is representative of Shepherd’s appeal for renewal (or rebirth). More so than Muir and Moon, Shepherd presents rural modernity as being rooted in the bridging of apparently disparate worlds. Chapters 4 and 5 examine Shepherd’s novels, *The Quarry Wood* (1928), *The Weatherhouse* (1930), *A Pass in the Grampians* (1933), and her non-fiction environmentally focused text *The Living Mountain* (1977). Each of Shepherd’s novels demonstrates – in its own way – the clash between the traditional and the new and emphasises the impact of modernity on the rural and semi-rural landscape. *The Quarry Wood* follows the story of Martha Ironside, as she struggles with her decision to attend university. The novel expresses the tension between traditional rural life, and the newfound opportunities for women. *The Weatherhouse*, set in the fictional town of Fetter-Rothnie, follows a interconnected web of characters who are – in their own ways –

acknowledging the impact of war and modernity on their community. In particular, the novel focuses on Garry Forbes' return to Fetter-Rothnie from the frontline, and his own attempts to navigate a changing world alongside the narratives weaved by the women of the community. *A Pass in the Grampians*, set in the fictional town of Boggiewalls, is the study of a small rural community in flux. The two central characters of the novel – Bella Cassie and Jenny Kilgour – each grapple with the effects of modernity on their lives, and their community. Bella, who returns briefly to Boggiewalls having moved to London, horrifies much of the local community as a result of her modern nature, yet Jenny is increasingly intrigued by the allure of a life elsewhere.

In Chapter 4, I argue that Shepherd demonstrates that aspects of modernity and the landscape each lend meaning to each other. Rather than rural spaces being only passive and receptive to impacts of urbanisation and modernity, Shepherd's work displays a more balanced relationship. Other critics have explored this relationship between Scottish landscapes and the writers who write of and from them. Gillian Carter's research on the 'politics of Scottish landscape' in the writing of Nan Shepherd, with particular emphasis on *The Living Mountain*, for example, interweaves Shepherd's position as a modernist writer with analysis of the landscape she discusses.<sup>157</sup> However, this chapter will instead expand on Shepherd's personal connection to landscape and nature, and the effects of modernity on this connection, to argue that Shepherd emphasises balance. I consider the impact of modernity on the landscape itself in terms of the representation of new technological advancements, an increase in footfall, and movement away from rurality and toward urban life. Whereas Muir and Moon depict these landscapes as ideal sites for rural panopticism, this analysis of Shepherd foregrounds an appeal to reclaim these spaces. Likewise, by consciously bridging

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<sup>157</sup> Gillian Carter, 'Domestic Geography' and the Politics of Scottish Landscape in Nan Shepherd's 'The Living Mountain' in *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 8:1 (2001), 25 – 36.

the space between rural and urban rather than just indicating that there is a relationship between the two, Shepherd produces neutral ground that is at once a space for the continuing of tradition *or* a receptive space for urbanisation.

The sustained choice to bridge these spaces manifests itself in many ways in Shepherd's writing, and often as a means of reclaiming space or agency. Chapter 5 therefore examines Shepherd's depiction of the nature of rural modernity in Shepherd's fiction and in *The Living Mountain*, and utilises contemporary ecocritical and ecofeminist scholarship to establish Shepherd as an ecofeminist. Finally, Shepherd's meditative writing of the landscapes will be considered in regard to the *flâneur*, but in a distinctly Scottish context that considers Shepherd and her female characters as possessing or seeking deeper knowledge and power through the act of *stravaiging*, or 'wandering'. Whilst rurally panopticonic existence can have, I argue, the ability to immobilise residents, the act of walking can be utilised as a powerful tool to reclaim agency, (re)conquer space, and allow walkers to access deeper self-understanding. The result of this in Shepherd's writing is the presentation of 'resistance in the face of environmental and cultural degradation',<sup>158</sup> wherein the process of 'journeying out [...by] "journeying in"' bridges tradition with modernity.<sup>159</sup> It is the active and explicit process of connection which I argue is central to Shepherd's writing and to rural modernism as a whole.

Modernity and modernisation impacted women, and the authors and texts in this thesis each provide their individual responses to these impacts. The responses by these authors are therefore not specific to all women in the early twentieth century, but nor is it possible in this thesis to consider a wide variety of authors in the detail that they deserve. The

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<sup>158</sup> Louisa Gairn, *Ecology and Modern Scottish Literature*, p. 110.

<sup>159</sup> Eleanor Bell, 'Into the Centre of Things: Poetic Travel Narratives in the Work of Kathleen Jamie and Nan Shepherd' in *Kathleen Jamie: Essays and Poems on Her Work* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 126 – 133 (p. 127).

focus on Muir, Moon, and Shepherd allows for a structured focus on the broad themes of everyday life, death, and re-birth in literature of rural and semi-rural Scotland. The chapters combine a combination of literary and critical theories to present new ways of reading the work of these authors', and to provide the framework of rural watchfulness which then has the scope to be utilised in the future with alternative writers and texts of the period. This thesis therefore aims to provide an original contribution to the ongoing critical discussions into Scottish literary modernism, women's writing, and rural modernity. The following chapter positions the writers of this thesis to establish their geographical and literary position, and establishes the critical framework of surveillance and rural watchfulness.

## Chapter 1: Women and Watchfulness in Early-Twentieth Century Scotland

### Introduction

The aims of this chapter are threefold: firstly, to determine what is meant by modernity in a Scottish context; secondly, to contextualise rural modernity; and finally, to conclude that a key characteristic of Scottish literary modernism is the presence of widespread watchfulness in the form of the rural panopticon. The chapter initially contextualises the evolution of the ‘modern’ woman from enfranchisement to the local revolutions of women’s rural institutes which aimed to equip women with the tools to uproot and re-evaluate societal traditions.

The analysis of the modern woman and the different feminisms of the early-twentieth century leads to the broader discussion of literary modernism. In engaging with the existing work of critics such as Margery Palmer McCulloch, the chapter argues for the existence and importance of Scottish literary modernism and demonstrates its primary characteristics and debates. As this thesis makes clear, the rural perspective is crucial to these debates. However, although existing criticism considers the centrality of the rural Scottish community to early-twentieth century Scottish literature, there remains a necessity to emphasise the nuances of the rural and to more firmly integrate women’s voices to the discussion. Although Stella Deen’s chapter on reclaiming the ‘spinster’ in interwar British rural fiction does not explicitly consider Scottish women’s writing, she emphasises that ‘studies of rural modernity are enriched when works about women, written by women, are considered in terms of each other and, in their numbers and popularity, as distinctive expressions of women’s social and political position in post-World War 1 modernity.’<sup>160</sup> Therefore, this chapter highlights the previously under-discussed contributions made by women writers to Scottish modernism.

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<sup>160</sup> Stella Deen, ‘The Spinster in Eden: Reclaiming Civilisation in Interwar British Rural Fiction’, in *Rural Modernity in Britain: A Critical Intervention*, ed. by Kristin Bluemel and Michael McCluskey (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), pp. 135 – 148 (p. 135).

Ultimately, this chapter provides a characterisation of Scottish literary modernism, and the further incorporation of women's perspectives into this characterisation.

The chapter also provides the theoretical foundation to the thesis' in-depth literary analysis by defining watchful communities and cementing the intertwined relationship between watchfulness and rural Scottish literary modernity. The work of Bentham and Foucault is utilised to examine the purpose and effect of watchful communities, which is then considered specifically in regard to the experiences of women and the behaviours that they are expected or compelled to exhibit. A widespread ability to gaze causes an ever-present threat of being watched, which leads to complicit behaviour wherein women perform in a certain way to ensure that they adhere to community-determined regulations and therefore avoid negative scrutiny. Finally, watchfulness is found to be central to interwar Scottish women's writing. It becomes a tool by which to measure tradition and modernity, and to expose the impacts of – and responses to – modernity in rural Scottish literature.

#### Positioning Willa Muir, Lorna Moon, and Nan Shepherd: Society and Modernity

The fiction of rural Scottish modernity relies upon established and disrupted rhythms. For women's writing in particular these rhythms provide a mirror to the tensions of change, and the difficulties of honouring tradition whilst embracing opportunity. Although Andrew Blaikie fairly considers that 'the conditions of modernity effected a break from older ideas like "community"', the fiction of Muir, Moon and Shepherd unites these seemingly divergent ideas to consider individualism *within* a rural or semi-rural community.<sup>161</sup> Literature of rural Scottish modernity provides insights into the connections and subsequent disconnections between the individual and their community. Taking the approach that modernity is representative of the rejection of tradition, rural Scottish women's writing of the interwar

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<sup>161</sup> Blaikie, *Scots Imagination and Modern Memory*, p. 4.

period clearly and significantly rejects aspects of traditional rural life which are shown to be restrictive and harmful to women. Glenda Norquay similarly suggests that fiction by Muir, Shepherd, and Moon ‘articulate their resistance to the appeal of the local’ and their confrontational approach emerges ‘from women-centred identifications’.<sup>162</sup> The novels considered in this thesis all engage with the tensions surrounding community rituals and traditional expectations of women which are rooted in domesticity and patriarchal societal structures. In doing so, what emerges are depictions of rural life with routines and rules upheld by watchfulness.

Willa Muir’s work certainly engages with these tensions. Muir was educated at St. Andrews University and studied Latin and Greek from 1907-1910 and English and Modern History from 1911-1912. Muir also held a keen interest in psychology, and as a postgraduate during the First World War she studied ‘experimental child psychology [...] and constructed an “analysis of the problems raised by sex in education”’ and developed an enduring interest in the working of the conscious and the unconscious intellect.<sup>163</sup> Her fiction maintains this interest in psychoanalysis, and particularly in the tensions between psychology, philosophy, and spirituality. At University, Muir was also engaged in political and literary circles; she was in the Women’s Debating Society, the Women’s Suffrage Society, the Students’ Representative Council (of which she was also the President and Vice President), and she was on the editing committee of the St. Andrews paper *College Echoes*.<sup>164</sup> Her interest in these societies is also echoed in her fiction, with characters debating the merits of women’s suffrage. During her marriage to the poet and her co-translator Edwin Muir, she lived in

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<sup>162</sup> Glenda Norquay, ‘Geographies of Self: Scottish Women Writing Scotland’ in *The History of British Women’s Writing, 1880 – 1920*, ed. by Holly Laird (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 150 – 161 (p. 159).

<sup>163</sup> Kirsty Allen, ‘Introduction’ in *Imagined Selves* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996), pp. v – xiii (vii).

<sup>164</sup> Aileen Christianson, *Moving in Circles: Willa Muir’s Writings* (Edinburgh: Word Power Books, 2007), p. 10.



many cities including London, Prague, Rome, and Vienna and she was a European more readily than she was Scottish; indeed, Kirsty Allen presents Muir as a ‘Scot who resented Scotland, although her writing is obsessively Scottish.’<sup>165</sup> The extensive travels of the Muirs is in keeping with what Catriona MacLeod refers to as their ‘lifelong patterns of linguistic and geographical deracination, expulsion, and displacement.’<sup>166</sup>

In the interwar years, Willa and Edwin Muir became what Edwin referred to as ‘a sort of translation factory’, and their translations of the works of Kafka, beginning with a translation of *The Castle* in 1929, are particularly renowned.<sup>167</sup> One review from 1937 notes the ‘valuable double service to Scottish culture’ of the Muirs through their literature and their translation work, and pointedly refers to Willa Muir as ‘the more vigorous of the two’,<sup>168</sup> and Scott Lyall notes that as important contributors to the minor modernism of Scotland ‘Willa was the better translator.’<sup>169</sup> However, Muir frequently wrote about the ways in which her contributions to these translations were undervalued. In a particularly vulnerable diary entry, Muir notes that Edwin was often credited as ‘THE translator’,<sup>170</sup> and in his failure to acknowledge Willa’s contributions she states that ‘he has let [her] reputation shrink’.<sup>171</sup> Crucially, Muir is not unsure of her own abilities or suffering from anxieties that she is not as qualified as Edwin as ‘the fact remains; [she is] a better translator than [Edwin]’.<sup>172</sup> Rather,

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<sup>165</sup> Allen, ‘Introduction’, p. v.

<sup>166</sup> Catriona MacLeod, ‘Displaced Vernaculars: Edwin and Willa Muir, Kafka, and the Languages of Modernism’, in *The Germanic Review*, 93 (2018), 48 – 57 (p. 50).

<sup>167</sup> Edwin Muir, *An Autobiography* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1993), p. 217.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> Scott Lyall, ‘Minor Modernisms: The Scottish Renaissance and the Translation of German-language Modernism’ in *Modernist Cultures*, 14.2 (2019), 213 – 235 (p. 220).

<sup>170</sup> Willa Muir, ‘Miscellaneous’, Item MS38466/1/4, Willa Muir Papers in Special Collections at University of St. Andrews.

<sup>171</sup> Willa Muir, ‘Miscellaneous’, Item MS38466/1/4, Willa Muir Papers in Special Collections at University of St. Andrews.

<sup>172</sup> Willa Muir, ‘Miscellaneous’, Item MS38466/1/4, Willa Muir Papers in Special Collections at University of St. Andrews.

she is angry that she has been ‘left without a literary reputation’.<sup>173</sup> The entry closes with Muir stating: ‘and yet, and yet, I want to be acknowledged. That is why I say: I am a mess,’ as she longs for fair and equal reputation in the literary world, with the repetition of her ‘and yet’ indicating how frequently she has this desire.<sup>174</sup>

Though Muir longed for acknowledgement, her work was often well-received at the time of publication. One review of *Mrs. Ritchie* states that it is a ‘novel by skilled hands.’<sup>175</sup> Another article from 1937 considers Muir, alongside Fionn Mac Colla, Hugh MacDiarmid and Lewis Grassie Gibbon, to be one of ‘the greatest figures in [recent] literature.’<sup>176</sup> In literary criticism, her work is considered as central to Scottish literary Modernism. Indeed, though other women’s writing is now increasingly discussed in current criticism, Willa Muir’s name (albeit often in cursory mentions) has long held prevalence in the field. Aileen Christianson’s *Moving in Circles: Willa Muir’s Writing* (2007) provides the most important and thorough evaluation of Muir’s life and writings, examining her in the context of Scottish literary Modernism and women’s writing more broadly. Margery Palmer McCulloch’s work is also invaluable, particularly her *Modernism and Nationalism: Literature and Society in Scotland 1918 – 1939* (2004) which considers Muir alongside other key figures of the Renaissance movement and provides a careful consideration of Muir’s letters to other writers of the interwar period. Alison Smith’s chapter in Christopher Whyte’s *Gendering the Nation* (1995) studies Muir alongside Nan Shepherd and Catherine Carswell to argue that Muir’s writing is interested in the limitation of women as a result of religious and societal norms. Despite these limitations, Smith reasons that the three writers of her chapter ‘have a great

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<sup>173</sup> Willa Muir, ‘Miscellaneous’, Item MS38466/1/4, Willa Muir Papers in Special Collections at University of St. Andrews.

<sup>174</sup> Willa Muir, ‘Miscellaneous’, Item MS38466/1/4, Willa Muir Papers in Special Collections at University of St. Andrews.

<sup>175</sup> *The Times*, Friday 28 July 1933.

<sup>176</sup> *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, Thursday 30 December 1937.

deal of power in the making of their own destinies, regardless of the ways of gods, or men.’<sup>177</sup> Isobel Murray argues that whilst Edwin Muir’s novels are ‘interesting [...] they] tend to be somewhat flat and lifeless: Willa’s novels are full of energy.’<sup>178</sup> Kirsty Allen’s Introduction to *Imagined Selves*, a collection of Muir’s most prominent publications, insists that Muir was ‘throughout her lifetime, denied her literary independence and individuality; now her reputation deserves its autonomy.’<sup>179</sup> Other critics, such as Janet Caird, Carol Anderson, Cairns Craig, Beth Dickson, Margaret Elphinstone, Alan Freeman, and Juliet Shields, have all worked to re-establish Muir’s importance – separately from her husband – to Scottish literary Modernism.<sup>180</sup> My research adds to the growing scholarship on Muir’s literary accomplishments, and further highlights the centrality of her contributions to Scottish literary Modernism alongside the prominence of rural watchfulness within her texts. Similarly, whilst there is critical analysis of Muir’s approach to Presbyterianism in her fiction, this thesis provides an expansion of such scholarship further by determining that some elements of traditional Scottish Presbyterianism and Muir’s ideals for modern womanhood are implied to be incompatible.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Alison Smith ‘And Women Created Women: Carswell, Shepherd and Muir and the Self-made Woman’ in *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*, ed. by Christopher Whyte (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), pp. 25 – 47 (p. 26).

<sup>178</sup> Isobel Murray, ‘Novelists of the Renaissance’ in *The History of Scottish Literature* ed. Cairns Craig (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), pp. 103 – 117 (p. 115).

<sup>179</sup> Kirsty Allen, ‘Introduction’ in *Imagined Selves* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996), pp. v – xiii (xiii).

<sup>180</sup> See: Beth Dickson, ‘An ordinary little girl: Willa Muir’s *Mrs Ritchie*’ in *Scottish Women’s Fiction 1920s to 1960s: Journeys Into Being*, eds Carol Anderson and Aileen Christianson (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), pp. 97 – 106; Margaret Elphinstone, ‘Willa Muir: Crossing the Genres’ in *A History of Scottish Women’s Writing*, eds Douglas Gifford and Dorothy Macmillan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), pp. 400 – 415; Alan Freeman, *Imagined Worlds: Fiction by Scottish Women 1900 – 1935* (Frankfurt: Lang, 2005); Juliet Shields, *Scottish Women’s Writing in the Long Nineteenth Century: The Romance of Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

<sup>181</sup> See for example: Esther Breitenbach and Lynn Abrams, ‘Gender and Scottish Identity’ in *Gender in Scottish History Since 1700*, eds Deborah Simonton, Eileen Yeo, Eleanor Gordon and Lynn Abrams (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 17 – 42; Carmen Luz Fuentes-Vásequez, *Dangerous Writing: The Autobiographies of Willa Muir, Margaret Laurence and Janet Frame* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013); Margery Palmer McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts 1918*

There is an intensity to Muir's writings on Scottishness that exemplifies her difficult relationship with Scotland, and which reflects many of the stifling societal expectations that Muir attributes to Scottish towns and the power of the widespread communal gaze. Despite Muir living away from Scotland – quite deliberately – for much of her adult life, there is a frequent recalling and remembrance of Scottish tradition in her private writing. Muir emphasises her appreciation for aspects of Scottish culture, but also her own feeling of being an outsider from this culture. In a scribbled corner of one notebook Muir describes how her parents, from Shetland, were 'Displaced Persons' on their arrival to Angus, and Willa as a result forever felt treated as outsider and felt 'out of place in Angus tradition'.<sup>182</sup> Similarly, in a separate notebook, to the side of an extended personal essay on the strands of culture in communities, Muir notes that she 'think[s] the whole of Scotland is a locked area for [her], and [she] had better keep out of it', and for the most part this appears to be a self-made promise that Muir kept.<sup>183</sup> Such attitudes to Scottishness are mirrored in her fiction, and in her frequent references to escape. The fictional town of Calderwick is referred to as 'unchanged' even in wartime, 'a world in miniature, carrying on an imitation clockwork life' and Muir presents Scotland – particularly rural Scotland – as being separate from the reality of an increasingly modernised world.<sup>184</sup>

To access the opportunities made possible by modernity, Muir suggests that the female characters must (like Muir herself), remove themselves from miniaturised lives. Carla Cesare, in her 2012 doctoral thesis on femininity and domesticity in interwar Britain,

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– *1959: Literature, National Identity and Cultural Exchange* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009); Kirsteen Sitrling, *Bella Caledonia* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); Michelle Woods, 'Reassessing Willa Muir: Her role and influence in the Kafka translations' in *Translation Studies*, 4.1 (2011), 58 – 71.

<sup>182</sup> Willa Muir, 'Miscellaneous', Item MS38466/5/2, Willa Muir Papers in Special Collections at University of St. Andrews.

<sup>183</sup> Willa Muir, 'Miscellaneous', Item MS38466/5/6, Willa Muir Papers in Special Collections at University of St. Andrews.

<sup>184</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 239.

considers the construction of a particular form of womanhood, which was able to bridge the gaps between tradition and modernity. Cesare notes that the ‘dream of being modern and independent was tempered through a more timid, controlled approach’ to agency and individuality.<sup>185</sup> In her autobiography *Belonging*, Muir mocks this tempered approach to modern femininity when recounting how her presence in literary discussions with her husband and mutual friends ‘incommoded them’.<sup>186</sup> Rather than remaining in uncomfortable silence, Muir instead utilises the safely feminised practice of sewing to encourage the continuation of the conversation:

I pushed my chair back, away from their little triangle, got out a darning basket I had, selected the thickest sock I could find, the largest darning needle, settled myself on a pouffe where I could catch E’s eye and began with exaggerated movements to draw my formidable poker to and fro through the sock [...Whilst Edwin found this amusing] my manoeuvre instead of amusing and embarrassing [Edwin’s friends] soothed them wonderfully. I had now become what I should have been all along, an undemanding bit of background, a proper wife darning a sock.<sup>187</sup>

Muir’s self-awareness when considering social conventions and the noticeable discomfort of others as a result of her presence in literary circles illustrates a conscious manipulation of conventions in order to exist within two spheres simultaneously. Muir’s pithiness in referring to herself as a ‘proper wife’ emphasises how easily she was able to construct an image of femininity, and this satirical approach to womanhood occurs again in Elizabeth Shand’s performance of the ‘Noble Wife’ in *Imagined Corners*. Muir’s performance, having seemingly gone unnoticed by all but Edwin, could be read as an unintentional retreat from the

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<sup>185</sup> Carla Cesare, ‘Sewing the self: needlework, femininity and domesticity in interwar Britain’ (Unpublished doctoral thesis: Northumbria University, 2012), p. 111.

<sup>186</sup> Willa Muir, *Belonging: A Memoir* (London: Hogarth Press, 1968), p. 37.

<sup>187</sup> Muir, *Belonging*, pp. 37 – 38.

literary world and its discussion. However, the deliberate mockery of feminine conventions and the orchestrated performance she stages is demonstrative of the relationship between tradition and modernity and of the unusual and difficult position Muir held within the Scottish literary scene.

Catriona Soukup, a friend of Muir's, wrote in *Chapman* that Muir's 'openness and her refusal to be ignored did not endear her to conventional and "proper" Edinburgh society, where women were expected to take a back seat, to be visible and decorative but silent in mixed company so that men could hold the floor'.<sup>188</sup> Soukup notes here that Muir's unconventionality made her unappealing to Edinburgh society, and the same can be argued for Muir's place in the literary world. Sue Innes references a cartoon published by Hugh MacDiarmid in the inaugural issue of *The Voice of Scotland* in 1938 which, she says, showed 'Willa as a monstrous figure in a bathing suit stroking the ear of a tiny lamb in the likeness of Edwin.' In response to criticism of the viciousness of the cartoon, MacDiarmid wrote that 'the real grievance of the cartoon is precisely the devastating and unanswerable truth of the essential point it makes – Willa's overpowering presence which has always been a nuisance to friends of Edwin's'.<sup>189</sup> Similarly, Peter H. Butter in his work *Edwin Muir: Man and Poet* notes that Wyndham Lewis's *The Apes of God* presents a thinly disguised depiction of Willa and Edwin Muir wherein 'a very earnest, rather melancholy freckled little being fell in with that massive, elderly Scottish lady next to him – that is his wife. She opened her jaws and swallowed him comfortably.'<sup>190</sup> Such depictions of Muir as an intrusive presence echo Aileen Christianson, in her analysis of MacDiarmid's *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*, wherein she considers how women were an afterthought for MacDiarmid. Christianson writes: women

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<sup>188</sup> Catriona Soukup, 'Willa in Wartime' in *Chapman*, 71 (Edinburgh, Winter 1992-93), p. 22.

<sup>189</sup> Innes, *Love and Work*, p. 123.

<sup>190</sup> Peter H. Butter, *Edwin Muir: Man and Poet* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), pp. 108 – 109.

are the ‘moon, the muse, the beautiful other, the threatening other, the child bearer. But you’re not part of the centre [...] He’s got you firmly placed somewhere else. Man’s role is at the centre, your role is [somewhere else].’<sup>191</sup> Further, the presentation of Muir as an overbearing and unwanted intruder to literary circles, and as a predator able to consume Edwin’s social presence and successes, provide important mirrors to Muir’s own self-parodying performance of the proper wife fading into the background (or the ‘somewhere else’ that Christianson refers to). Akin to Cesare’s hypothesis that sewing is representative of one potential bridge between tradition and new feminism and modernity, Muir adopts sewing as a *tool* in order to remain present within literary discussions. By making herself invisible she is, ironically, able to maintain an important presence.

Lorna Moon’s literary presence is also important, though she is markedly understudied even in contemporary scholarship on Scottish literature. Though arguably better known – and more widely studied – now for her work as a successful screenwriter during the Golden Age of Hollywood, writing screenplays for studios such as MGM which starred actors such as Greta Garbo and John Gilbert, the short stories and novel of Moon’s set in Scotland are equally powerful. Richard de Mille, Moon’s son, says that when she grew up in Strichen the town was ‘made up of 800 villagers and 1500 crofters [...] the land was poor, the work was hard and some days there was only gruel to eat.’<sup>192</sup> De Mille paints a picture of Strichen as a working town, with little room for adventure and opportunity for escape in scarce supply. Yet, Moon voraciously devoured the texts available in Strichen devoted to ‘stories of adventure, vengeance, sacrifice and love, and she read them all.’<sup>193</sup> This balance

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<sup>191</sup> Aileen Christianson, ‘Flyting with “a Drunk Man”’ in *Scottish Affairs*, 5 (1993), 126 – 135 (p. 130).

<sup>192</sup> Richard de Mille, ‘Foreword’, in *The Collected Works of Lorna Moon*, ed. by Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Black & White Publishing, 2002), pp. vii - viii.

<sup>193</sup> de Mille, ‘Foreword’, pp. vii - viii

between the reality of lived life in Strichen and the drive for adventure and vengeance is echoed in Moon's fiction.

Glenda Norquay, the foremost Moon scholar, has done much to promote Moon's writing and cement her place in Scottish literary studies.<sup>194</sup> In particular, Norquay's edition of Moon's work – *The Collected Works of Lorna Moon* (2002) – which compiles Moon's short stories, *Dark Star*, and a collection of letters, has helped to rehabilitate Moon's writing and her position as an important figure of the interwar period. Norquay provides a thorough introduction to Moon's work and her life and she considers Moon's stylistic qualities and her fiction's themes in terms of the Kailyard, the *bildungsroman*, realism, romance, and the modern. The edition is regarded as a 'jewel' by Kirsteen McCue.<sup>195</sup> Yet, although Norquay wrote in 2002 that it was 'time for Scotland to welcome [Moon] back,' broader critical analysis of Moon is still needed twenty years later.<sup>196</sup> Though providing the most comprehensive writings on Moon's life and works, Norquay has noted the difficulties she faced when researching Moon. Solid facts of Moon's life are, Norquay considers, 'difficult to trace' as she was 'inclined to invent suitably exotic biographies for herself,' with Moon providing different dates of birth frequently and often embellishing her relationship to a mythical and romanticised Scotland.<sup>197</sup> However, Moon achieved a level of notoriety socially (both in terms of her private life and later her tuberculosis diagnosis and treatment), for her

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<sup>194</sup> See: Glenda Norquay, 'Finding a Place: the Voice of Lorna Moon', *Études Écossaises*, 9 (2003–4), 91–103; Glenda Norquay, 'Geographies of Self: Scottish Women Writing Scotland' in *The History of British Women's Writing, 1880 – 1920*, ed. by Holly Laird (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 150 – 161; Glenda Norquay, 'Lewis Grassie Gibbon and Women' in *International Companion to Lewis Grassie Gibbon* (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2015), pp. 76 – 88; Glenda Norquay, 'Transitory Thresholds: Geographic imaginings of adolescence in women's fiction from North-east Scotland' in *Scottish Literary Review* 3.2 (2011), 81 - 99.

<sup>195</sup> Kirsteen McCue, 'A survey of work on Scottish women's writing from 1995' in *Women's Writing*, 10.3 (2003), 527 – 533 (p. 531).

<sup>196</sup> Glenda Norquay, 'The Far Side of Lorna Moon' in *ScotLit* (2002).

<sup>197</sup> Glenda Norquay, 'Introduction', in *The Collected Works of Lorna Moon*, ed. by Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Black & White Publishing, 2002), pp. ix – xxiii (x).



fiction, and her skill as a screenwriter. Moon was, however, determined for this notoriety to be at least partially on her own terms. In 1907, Moon abandoned her husband and her hometown of Strichen. Later in her life, she also abandoned her children. McCulloch suggests that this is indicative of Moon's 'independence of mind', but it also demonstrates a ruthless refusal to be confined within the boundaries of wifedom and motherhood.<sup>198</sup>

Writing on Moon often refers to her striking looks; Rachel Devine, for example, refers to Moon as a 'spectacular beauty with dark red hair', and Moon's son Richard de Mille in his 1998 book *My Secret Mother: Lorna Moon* also refers to his mother's appearance and her vivid red hair in particular.<sup>199</sup> Coupled with her reputation for boldness – Dwyer writes that Moon was 'a standard bearer for audacious living' and 'demonstrate[d] a confidence and self-possession that women, quite simply, weren't supposed to have in 1925' – Moon would have been difficult to overlook; it seems Moon was content with this.<sup>200</sup> Webster, de Mille, and Norquay all reflect on the impact her fiction had on the residents of Strichen. Webster writes that *Dark Star* 'appalled the local populace' with the 'unmistakable clarity' by which Moon depicts them in fictional form, and that the 'local library committee decided not to stock' her fiction as a result.<sup>201</sup> De Mille notes that 'her former neighbours found their own private habits, base deeds, and farcical pretences sharply drawn for all to see.'<sup>202</sup> The rejection of Moon's work by Strichen is a reflection of Lorna Moon herself, and the renunciation of Helen Nora Wilson Low as a Strichen resident.

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<sup>198</sup> Margery Palmer McCulloch, 'Interwar Literature' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Women's Writing*, ed. by Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), p. 103.

<sup>199</sup> Rachel Devine, 'Dark side of Lorna Moon; The extraordinary life of a young Scottish writer is being brought to life in a film of her novel *Dark Star*', in *The Sunday Times* (September 20, 2009), p. 5.

<sup>200</sup> Elizabeth Dwyer, 'Lorna Moon: A Woman of a Certain Influence', in *When Women Wrote Hollywood: Essays on Female Screenwriters in the Early Film Industry*, ed. by Rosanne Welch (California: McFarlane & Company, 2018), pp. 117 – 125 (pp. 117 – 119).

<sup>201</sup> J. Webster, *Grains of Truth* (Edinburgh: Black and White Publishing, 1994).

<sup>202</sup> De Mille, 'Foreword', p. vii.

Moon herself was a victim of watchfulness. Her success in Hollywood led to a rapid rise in interest in her personal life; when Moon was suffering with tuberculosis in 1929 ‘her fame in America was such that newspapers carried regular bulletins about her health.’<sup>203</sup> Moon was aware of such interest in her illness and was determined that her tuberculosis diagnosis and treatment did not come to define her as a writer. In a letter to David Laurance Chambers, a publisher at Bobbs-Merrill, Moon writes to Chambers about the potential for extracts from Moon’s journals which refer to her illness to be used for publicity. Moon writes that the only time she would wish for this to happen would be when she was ‘dead, or later when [she was not] so well and so far removed from this condition, that there will be no question of seeming to ask for sympathy.’<sup>204</sup> She continues to discuss her fear that, were her health used to publicise *Dark Star*, ‘all the dignity of [it would be] gone’, ‘people [would] forget it has merit or beauty [as already on] the coast, where well-meaning but misguided people are at work, *Dark Star* is “a book written by a consumptive”.’<sup>205</sup> Moon is adamant that she must not be thought of as ‘the kind of creature [she] most loath[es]’: ‘a poor brave girl’, or a ‘sick woman’<sup>206</sup>. Instead, Moon negotiated with her publishers to remove all mentions of her illness, so that her work may instead be celebrated for its accomplishments.

Moon’s written work – her short stories from the collection *Doorways in Drumorty* in particular – received positive reviews on initial publication. A review in *The Scotsman* in 1926 critiquing ‘new fiction’ said of *Doorways in Drumorty* that it displayed a ‘mastery of humour’ and complimented Moon’s ‘considerable mastery of a difficult medium’.<sup>207</sup> In 1929,

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<sup>203</sup> Webster, *Grains of Truth* (Edinburgh: Black and White Publishing, 1994).

<sup>204</sup> Lorna Moon, ‘Letter to David Laurance Chambers: 2 May 1929’, in *The Collected Works of Lorna Moon*, ed. by Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Black & White Publishing, 2002), pp. 271 – 273 (p. 271).

<sup>205</sup> Lorna Moon, ‘Letter to David Laurance Chambers: 2 May 1929’, p. 272.

<sup>206</sup> Lorna Moon, ‘Letter to David Laurance Chambers: 2 May 1929’, p. 272.

<sup>207</sup> ‘New Fiction: “Doorways in Drumorty”’ in *The Scotsman* (Sep. 30, 1926).

a review of *Dark Star* similarly commented on Moon's 'deft handling and fine characterisation'.<sup>208</sup> Augustus Muir also complimented Moon's 'rugged realism' and the 'storehouse of truth' that is *Doorways in Drumorty*, stating that this is where Moon's writing surpasses that of Barrie.<sup>209</sup> Like Muir and Shepherd, Moon also disrupts and reimagines traditions of Scottish literature and similarly contributes to a new understanding of Scottish literary Modernism – particularly in a rural sense. However, Moon's work more explicitly highlights the tensions between the Kailyard and modern Scottish writing. Norquay's introduction in *The Collected Works of Lorna Moon* refers to the 'uneasy mixing of forms' of *Dark Star*, simultaneously too modern to appeal to those expecting 'anecdotes in Kailyard style' and too parochial for readers seeking a satisfying *bildungsroman*.<sup>210</sup> Whilst Moon was adamant that *Dark Star* be marketed as a modern novel 'with a message that transcends Scotland', the content itself – with its frequent returns to oral and written myth and storytelling, Romanticism, and emphasis on Scotland's rural community – remains intrinsically Scottish.<sup>211</sup>

There is scant evidence of Moon attempting to centralise herself within literary networks of other Scottish women writers or broader literary networks. Similarly, it is unknown whether Moon engaged with any networks in Canada. Whereas Muir and Shepherd both had close relationships and regular correspondence with literary peers sharing feedback on drafts of work and navigating the politics of Modernism and the Scottish Literary Renaissance, Moon was markedly more separate. Norquay's work suggests that Moon's writing may be difficult to place in either the Scottish literary renaissance or Scottish literary Modernism,

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<sup>208</sup> *The Outlook and Independent: An Illustrated Weekly of Current Life* 152 (August 1929).

<sup>209</sup> Letter to Lorna Moon from Laurance Chambers, 23 November 1925 in *The Collected Works of Lorna Moon*, ed. by Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Black & White Publishing, 2002), p. xiii.

<sup>210</sup> Norquay, 'Introduction', p. xvii.

<sup>211</sup> Norquay, 'Introduction', p. xx.

partially because her life does not follow conventional literary patterns. Indeed, Norquay explicitly separates Moon from other women writers of the early-twentieth century such as Violet Jacob, Jessie Kesson and Nan Shepherd, and instead suggests that the literary ‘demons [Moon] wrestled with were predominantly those of the Kailyard’.<sup>212</sup> Moon’s literary focus was, largely, challenging the conventions of Kailyard literature and interrogating the male Scottish literary tradition, rather than negotiating her space within Modernist networks. Likewise, whilst Moon’s fiction was celebrated, Carli Beauchamp maintains that her ‘dream [was of] making “real money” by selling [the rights to *Dark Star*]’ and adapting it into a film.<sup>213</sup> That said, Moon’s work contains many Modernist characteristics: she disrupts social and literary conventions and combines experimental techniques with satirical sentimentalism, she considers the ways in which traditional rural communities were changing, and she repeatedly questions the role of religion in society. Her fiction foregrounds women of nuance and sexuality, who seek ways to break tradition or expectation; Moon was adamant that *Dark Star*’s Nancy Pringle ‘is 1929’ and that she has ‘the clear-thinking of bravery of 1929 girlhood’, thus separating her from the women written by Barrie, Scott, and Stevenson.<sup>214</sup> Indeed, *Dark Star*’s frequent references to Nancy’s lifelong ‘desire to have a door of her own’ – a ‘home that was *her* home’ – is reminiscent of Virginia Woolf’s call for a room of one’s own, and both texts were published in 1929.<sup>215</sup> *Dark Star* also alludes to the appeal of Europeanism and presents life in the cities of Europe as a marker of success. In *Dark Star*, Nancy Pringle notably claims W. B. Yeats as her favourite poet, despite protests from her neighbours who mock his style (‘Why couldn’t he *say* divots, then?’ / ‘There he goes. Why

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<sup>212</sup> Norquay, ‘The Far Side of Lorna Moon’ in *ScotLit* (2002).

<sup>213</sup> Carli Beauchamp, *Without Lying Down: Frances Marion and the Powerful Women of Hollywood* (California: University of California Press, 1998), p. 264.

<sup>214</sup> Moon, letter to David Laurance Chambers, January 1929, p. 267.

<sup>215</sup> Lorna Moon, *Dark Star* in *The Collected Works of Lorna Moon*, ed. by Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Black & White Publishing, 2002), pp. 79 – 248 (p. 95, p. 245).

couldn't he say loud bees and have done with it?') and insist that Alfred Tennyson 'is the poet for a nice girl to study', or that to have Shakespeare as a favourite poet 'is as it should be.'<sup>216</sup> The circuses and carnivals of *Dark Star* can be read as a metaphor for the transformation of rural Scottish life, the 'shapes and sounds [which] were moving into it from everywhere' an image of disruptive and disconcerting but alluring newness.<sup>217</sup> A 1926 *The Scotsman* review of *Doorways in Drumorty* determined that Moon falls victim to 'the curse of Scottish writers [who] cannot get away from tradition, and meekly accept the stock figures and situations that have become accepted as typical.'<sup>218</sup> Moon does consciously engage with aspects of tradition – and my focus on grief and mourning rituals in Moon's fiction attests to that – but she also challenges them with markers of Modernism; there is nothing 'meek' about Moon's approach.

Shepherd's approach to modernity in her desire to see the revitalisation of the Scottish literary voice was also not meek. The majority of what is now known of Nan Shepherd's life is gleaned from her published writing, fond anecdotes from former friends, neighbours, and students, and what remains of the many private letters sent between Shepherd and friends such as literary figures Jessie Kesson and Neil Gunn. Charlotte Peacock writes that Shepherd would habitually toss letters, private writings, and work she was unsatisfied with onto the fire or into the bin.<sup>219</sup> She was hesitant to give many interviews and publicly discuss her writing, notably insisting to Neil Gunn that she felt great discomfort at 'the too flattering ejaculations' of praise for her fiction.<sup>220</sup> Shepherd instead wished to channel her energy into teaching and

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<sup>216</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 159.

<sup>217</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 89.

<sup>218</sup> *The Scotsman* (1926).

<sup>219</sup> Peacock, *Into the Mountain*.

<sup>220</sup> Nan Shepherd to Neil Gunn (Deposit 209, Box 19, Folder 7, Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland) 14 March 1930.

into her exploration of the Cairngorms where she ‘drank and drank’ the landscape but was never ‘done drinking that draught’.<sup>221</sup> As such, much writing on Shepherd relies on anecdotal evidence and – fittingly, given the focus of this thesis – speculation. As remains clear in her writing, Shepherd relished the pursuit and attainment of knowledge, frequently receiving acknowledgements and prizes for her academic achievements.<sup>222</sup> Shepherd attended Aberdeen High School for Girls. Peacock writes that the school was a pioneering institution in further advancing women’s rights, and provided ‘a steady stream of its scholars [to Aberdeen’s university and] further south’ to Cambridge’s colleges. The school was instrumental in aiding women’s education in North-East Scotland, which would almost certainly go on to impact how Shepherd wrote her own female characters in her fiction, and their own educational achievements. Peacock’s 2017 biography of Shepherd establishes her as a woman who led ‘an outwardly conventional, but quietly archaic life. [...] She rebelled against the power structures, laws and social conventions that conspired to keep women servile, subordinate and second best, while on the surface, at least, she appeared to conform.’<sup>223</sup> Her solo walking, decision to remain teaching and editing rather than marrying which would – according to Shepherd’s friend Cameron Donaldson – have meant ‘[giving] up [her] job,’ and her writing of feminist, multi-dimensional female characters in her fiction each serve as examples of her quieter rebellions.<sup>224</sup>

Like her education and teaching career, her published work was also largely based in and around Aberdeenshire. Shepherd published three novels: *The Quarry Wood* (1928), *The Weatherhouse* (1930) and *A Pass in the Grampians* (1933), a poetry volume called *In the Cairngorms* (1934), her non-fiction celebration of the Cairngorms *The Living Mountain*

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<sup>221</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 108.

<sup>222</sup> Peacock, *Into the Mountain*, pp. 102 – 104.

<sup>223</sup> Peacock, *Into the Mountain*, p. 25.

<sup>224</sup> Peacock, *Into the Mountain*, p. 25.

(1977) and *Descent from the Cross*, a short story published in 1943. However, her writing looks beyond the immediacy of the Aberdeenshire surroundings to consider an ‘infinity’<sup>225</sup> in which ‘the focal point is everywhere.’<sup>226</sup> Others, such as Robert Macfarlane and Peacock, have wondered whether Shepherd’s declaration that it is ‘a grand thing to get leave to live’ reflects a sensation of stasis on her part and an unfulfilled desire to leave Aberdeenshire and explore more of the world.<sup>227</sup> Shepherd held a duty of care for her sick mother, and was her primary carer for many years at Dunvegan, leaving her options for broader exploration limited. However, Shepherd’s reflections on infinity counter this; based in Aberdeenshire though she may have been, her spiritual outlook on the world focuses more on connections, widespread roots and links rather than boundaries. Shepherd’s leave to live, then, comes in her freedom to attain self-knowledge and place herself within the elemental.

On the frontispiece to ‘Gleanings’, Shepherd’s scrapbook filled with quotations and snippets of poetry, she wrote without any attribution the line ‘I am as I am and I can’t be any ammer’.<sup>228</sup> Shepherd’s statement demonstrates her self-assurance, her acknowledgement of the state of being, and the underlying implications of seeking and understanding what comprises her selfhood. However, the statement also raises the simultaneous question of whether it is possible to change, to grow, and to adapt or, indeed, whether there is a central elemental self that is separate from an adaptable outer-self. *The Living Mountain* itself can be read as Shepherd’s journey into the mountain mirroring her discovery and appreciation of the elemental self until she is able to say: ‘I am’.<sup>229</sup> Shepherd finds joy in the ‘expanse of space’ and ‘liberation of space’ and the way in which the altitudes of the Cairngorms ‘released her’ in *The Living Mountain*, and this cements the companionship between understanding the

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<sup>225</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 98.

<sup>226</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 11.

<sup>227</sup> Shepherd, *The Quarry Wood*, p. 208.

<sup>228</sup> Peacock, *Into the Mountain*, p. 33.

<sup>229</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 107.

elemental and realising what comprises the self.<sup>230</sup> These same ideas are recurrent in each of Shepherd's works, wherein the interrogation of selfhood is framed within a broader exploration of elemental forces and societal upheaval. Kurt Wittig in *The Scottish Tradition in Literature* suggests that this framing of the self – wherein 'it is no longer men as members of village communities, but Man and the immensities of destiny, death and eternity' – is central to the move from Scottish Romanticism to the modern school of Scottish literature.<sup>231</sup> The exploration of such tensions, as for many Scottish women writers of the interwar period was, Peacock argues, an answer to Ezra Pound's modernist 'war-cry [to make it new, which] meant exploring their identity and new position in society.'<sup>232</sup> Indeed, the tensions inherent in the modern self are discussed in Michal Rozynek's *A Philosophy of Nationhood and the Modern Self* wherein he argues that the modern self can be characterised as 'the uneasy relationship between political freedom and social belonging', and, further, that it 'thrives on a tension between' a sense of belonging and individual autonomy.<sup>233</sup> Wittig further notes that the writing of other Scottish women writers such as Violet Jacob and Marion Angus paved the way for 'something greater, more daring, to come' in Scottish literature partly in their depictions of the 'secret inner life [of the individual] against a village background' and the fuller 'emancipation' of the individual.<sup>234</sup> Unfortunately, Wittig's tone is often dismissive and patronising when including women writers in his discussions (which, itself, is disappointingly rare). He, for example, refers to Jacob's 'delicate touch', Angus's 'delicate [womanly] hand', and is surprised that 'remarkably enough, the Scots poems of Violet Jacob and Marion Angus

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<sup>230</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, pp. 7 - 8.

<sup>231</sup> Kurt Wittig, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1978), p. 288.

<sup>232</sup> Peacock, *Into the Mountain*, p. 255.

<sup>233</sup> Michal Rozynek, *A Philosophy of Nationhood and the Modern Self* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 57; p. 14.

<sup>234</sup> Wittig, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature*, pp. 277 – 278.



had most depth.<sup>235</sup> However, the references to emancipation and individuality demonstrate that, in linking Shepherd's grasp on her 'I am' with broader societal and ecological concerns, Shepherd is well-placed within such a discussion of the modern self and the battle between belonging and autonomy.<sup>236</sup>

Shepherd's writing style garnered many positive reviews from other writers of the Scottish literary Renaissance – such as Gunn, MacDiarmid, Agnes Mure Mackenzie and Kesson – and literary critics. Shepherd's position within the Renaissance and modernist schools was cemented by her membership in the PEN club (which Willa Muir was also a member of), public speaking engagements – such as at the 1934 annual Burns supper of Edinburgh's Scottish Women's Club – and her experimentation with Scots in her novels. Anne Pirrie suggests that Shepherd 'was singularly well equipped to lean against the prevailing winds [of the Cairngorms and of gender] – literally as well as metaphorically' and refers to Shepherd as 'a lodestar for all those of independent mind and free spirit.'<sup>237</sup> Wittig cites Gunn as the model modern Scottish writer, crediting the way he 'strives to relate the past to the present, and in doing so [...] uses the past to provide symbols which could express the contemporary issues with which he is ultimately concerned.'<sup>238</sup> These praises could – and should – be awarded to Shepherd too; each of her novels, and *The Living Mountain*, explore how Scotland's past impacts the present and future, and vice versa, in ways that are more contemporary than Gunn, particularly in relation to the position of women. Shepherd also acknowledges the impact of modernity in various forms – such as technological advancements and developments within the arts – but consistently reinforces the centrality of

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<sup>235</sup> Wittig, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature*, pp. 277 – 278.

<sup>236</sup> See also: Morag Shiach, *Modernism, labour and selfhood in British literature and culture, 1890 – 1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>237</sup> Anne Pirrie, 'It's a Grand Thing to Get Leave to Live: The Educational Legacy of Nan Shepherd' in *Scottish Educational Review*, 50.2 (2018), 73 – 85 (p. 76).

<sup>238</sup> Wittig, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature*, p. 338.

rural people to these developments. In an amusing aside, Garry Forbes and Miss Barbara share the following exchange:

‘That’s better than jazz, aunt.’

‘And what might jazz be?’

‘A thing some people do.’

‘Don’t you come here, my lad, with your things some people do. This is a decent house.’<sup>239</sup>

Similarly, Mary in *A Pass in the Grampians* – who holds a city-based job as an editor and typist – receives a manuscript and notes that she ‘couldn’t make head nor tail of what it meant [as] the words were all in the wrong places [b]ut the author thanked [her] for the beautiful typing so [he must have] meant them like that’,<sup>240</sup> satirising the aesthetics of modernist literature, and the meandering nature of stream-of-consciousness prose and experimentalism.

In the interwar years, Shepherd was described by journalist Coley Taylor as ‘a novelist to put alongside Virginia Woolf’,<sup>241</sup> and in *The Scotsman* as ‘a pioneer of narrative technique’.<sup>242</sup> In his introduction to *The Quarry Wood*, Roderick Watson likewise comments on Shepherd’s unique writing style as ‘a creative triumph’, all the more remarkable given that Shepherd’s first novel *The Quarry Wood* was published two years after MacDiarmid’s *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* and four years prior to Lewis Grassie Gibbon’s *Sunset Song*.<sup>243</sup> Watson’s stance is that Shepherd’s writing is such a triumph largely due to her ‘wry and humane vision [which] utterly eschews sentimental naturalism, and she never once slips

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<sup>239</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 58.

<sup>240</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 30.

<sup>241</sup> Taylor, Coley, *Dutton’s Weekly Book News*, 1928.

<sup>242</sup> ‘Cynthia’, ‘Scottish Women Writers’, *The Scotsman*, 14. November 1931.

<sup>243</sup> Roderick Watson, ‘Introduction’ in *The Quarry Wood* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996), p. ix.

into Kailyard or polemical anti-Kailyard postures.<sup>244</sup> Indeed, Shepherd veers away from sentimentality in favour of a form of ‘interiority [and] self-awareness’ which Eleanor Bell argues is central to the writing of ‘many of the women writers associated with the Scottish literary revival’ in regards to a search for personal self-determination.<sup>245</sup> Bell also notes at this stage that writers such as Shepherd and Muir are searching for personal self-determination *rather* than national self-determination, but I would argue that there is more nuance to these writers than this. Willa Muir’s relationship with Scotland and, indeed, Scotland’s relationship with itself, with Britain, and with Europe is interlinked with her discussions of *herself*.<sup>246</sup> Shepherd’s writing is similar in this sense; indeed, when writing to Christopher Grieve (Hugh MacDiarmid) she said that ‘there is something to be said for seeing to it that the droves of youngsters who descend on the schools have at least heard that Scotland has a literature, and that a country’s poets are much more significant than her press.’<sup>247</sup> Shepherd was certainly engaged in her personal search for self-determination, but also in safeguarding for future generations the production and education of Scottish literature.

#### Theorising the Watchful Community: A Close Look at the Panopticon

Each of these writers foregrounds the relationship between a watchful community and the lived reality of rural Scottish life and it is clear that there is an intertwined relationship between rurality, watchfulness, and social performance. This thesis draws on a critical-theoretical framework combining Jeremy Bentham’s original Panopticon design, Michel Foucault’s subsequent treatment of Bentham, feminist readings of Foucault, and an analysis

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<sup>244</sup> Watson, ‘Introduction’, p. x.

<sup>245</sup> Bell, ‘Into the Centre of Things’, p. 3.

<sup>246</sup> Bell, ‘Into the Centre of Things’, p. 3.

<sup>247</sup> Nan Shepherd to Hugh MacDiarmid (22<sup>nd</sup> October 1938).

of rural Scotland as a panopticonic site. This framework demonstrates the purposes and effects of watchful communities, and is considered specifically in regard to the experiences of women and the behaviours that they are expected or compelled to exhibit. Whilst a certain hierarchy of power is indeed present, in this specific relationship there also exists a widespread ability to gaze. The ever-present threat of being watched leads to complicit behaviour wherein women perform in a certain way to ensure that they adhere to community-determined regulations and therefore avoid negative scrutiny. There is also friction between what is believed to be consensual, mutual and supportive watchfulness and harmful surveillance. Widespread gazes therefore have the power to maintain stability but also to cast aside an individual who does not adhere to the status quo, with individuals simultaneously being watchers whilst being watched.

Foucault's treatment of Bentham's traditional panopticon design provides a thorough insight into the relationship between gazing and being gazed upon. Bentham's original design, as expressed in a series of letters in 1787, served the purpose of weaponizing surveillance. In the design, watchfulness could be adopted as a tool to correct, educate and reform those living within its confines. Writing in his first letter, Bentham suggests that the design could be applied 'without exception, to all establishments whatsoever, in which, within a space not too large to be covered or commanded by buildings, a number of persons are to be kept under inspection.'<sup>248</sup> With 'ideal perfection' – wherein each person within the institution should be inspected at all times – impossible, the Panopticon design achieves 'the next thing to be wished for': 'at every instant, seeing reason to believe as much, and not being able to satisfy himself to the contrary, he should *conceive* himself to be [observed].'<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Jeremy Bentham, *The Panopticon Writings*, ed. by Miran Bozovic (London: Verso, 1995), pp. 29 – 95 (p. 32).

<sup>249</sup> Bentham, *The Panopticon Writings*, p. 32.

As such, the circular structure of the Panopticon, with an inspector housed in a lodge wherein any of the institution's cells were visible, allowed for the Panopticon's central purpose: that the inspector can see 'without being seen.'<sup>250</sup> Therefore, the combination of the structural design of the Panopticon and the weaponization of surveillance would – Bentham hoped – produce subservient prisoners. The design prioritises psychological correction, whereby the threat of being watched encourages the desired behaviour.

Bentham regarded his design as 'an ideal prison *or* other reformatory/welfare institution energised by the *positive* ambition of mending the minds, bodies and conductions of disparate "problem" populations'.<sup>251</sup> Bentham posits that his design could be adopted to treat the ills of societies, 'whether it be that of *punishing the incorrigible, guarding the insane, reforming the vicious, confining the suspected, employing the idle, maintaining the helpless, curing the sick*' and so on.<sup>252</sup> Despite Bentham's insistence that the design could be adapted widely to suit a variety of institutions or purposes there are, of course, some crucial differences between Bentham's original design and the analysis within this thesis of rural panopticons in the writing of Muir, Moon, and Shepherd. For instance, Bentham notes that each cell is positioned so as 'to cut off from each prisoner the view of every other'.<sup>253</sup> The construction of a building wherein the inmates, wherever they were, could be observed without knowing when the observance was occurring also encouraged the spatial separation of inmates. Structurally, therefore, inmates could be collectively observed whilst also being isolated and observed as one. This thesis, however, considers the interweaved watchfulness of rural and semi-rural residents. With the exception of the 'pastor' figure in an analysis of pastoral power, which is explored in Chapter 2, the texts in this thesis do not contain the

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<sup>250</sup> Bentham, *The Panopticon Writings*, p. 39.

<sup>251</sup> Bentham, *The Panopticon Writings*, p. 39.

<sup>252</sup> Bentham, *The Panopticon Writings*, p. 32.

<sup>253</sup> Bentham, *The Panopticon Writings*, p. 33.

singular ‘inspector’ figure. Rather, I consider residents *as* simultaneously inspector and inspected as opposed to a central ‘inspector’ as in Bentham’s design. Indeed, the lack of spatial separation in the texts further contributes to the sense of heightened visibility.

Although Bentham believed that his design could be transferred to a wide variety of other institutions aiming to cease miscreant misbehaviour, naturally there must be a socially defined appropriateness of behaviour in order to have behaviours which are supposedly *inappropriate*. That is to say that, ‘the panopticon worked in conjunction with explicitly articulated behavioural norms’, and these behavioural norms differ from community to community, meaning that there must be a boundary between behaviours deemed good or bad.<sup>254</sup> As such, Foucault transfers the design to other areas and considers how the concepts behind the building itself were far stronger than the proposed structure itself.<sup>255</sup> In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault begins his discussion on the idea of panopticism with an in-depth exploration of the specific partitioning of towns that occurred during the plague.

This enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, in which an uninterrupted work of writing links the centre and periphery, in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined and distributed among the living beings, the sick and the dead – all this constitutes a compact model of the disciplinary mechanism.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Kevin D. Haggerty, Richard V. Ericson, ‘The surveillant assemblage’ in *British Journal of Sociology*, 51. 4 (2000), 605 – 622 (p. 607).

<sup>255</sup> Chris Philo, Hester Parr, Nicola Burns, ‘The Rural Panopticon’ in *Journal of Rural Studies*, 51 (2017), 230 – 239 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2016.08.007>>.

<sup>256</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), p. 197.

Foucault's language specifically highlights the deliberate segregation and subsequent claustrophobia that occur directly from the layout of a panopticonic town – and indeed a panopticonic institution. The repetition of the phrase 'in which' serves to emphasise the constancy of surveillance and the impossibility of being unseen. Foucault also ironically juxtaposes the pervasive surveillance and ideas of 'segmented space' with the phrase 'power is exercised without division'. People are separated and categorised by their movements and their fixed space but the exercising of power, on the other hand, is completely fluid: 'the gaze is alert everywhere'.<sup>257</sup> Alongside the fluidity of power-through-watching is the belief that the intense regulations of the plague community helped to ascertain the truth about a person: 'his "true" name, his "true" place, his "true" body, his "true" disease'.<sup>258</sup> The link is again demonstrated between visual surveillance and knowledge of a person's character, and the way in which a community that observes can assign truths according to their own knowledge and judgement. Likewise, by focusing on the idea of truth there is a suggestion that individuals could also harbour falsities or, indeed, that prior to strictly enforcing modes of surveillance people had a degree of inherent untrustworthiness. In a similar vein, Foucault notes that 'this surveillance is based on a system of permanent registration'.<sup>259</sup> An act of 'registration' is suggestive of a collaboration between surveyed individual and surveying community; by registering to this system there is an agreement to adhere to the rules. Foucault notes that this is a 'permanent' registration, thereby emphasising the finality of living within these boundaries. However, it is of course important to remember that Foucault is, at this stage, referring to the panoptic plague town, wherein constant surveillance was utilised to monitor community health and ensure that deaths could be safely noted.

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<sup>257</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 195.

<sup>258</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 198.

<sup>259</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 196.

Transferring ideas behind the panoptic plague town to healthy communities allows for a fresh consideration of the links between visibility, performance and truths.

Foucault furthers the idea of panopticonic spaces outwith the plague-stricken town he earlier describes as having the power to reveal ‘true’ people when he states that these spaces ‘are like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible. The panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately’.<sup>260</sup> Foucault combines language of entrapment with language of performance, simultaneously comparing panoptic spaces to cages and theatres. By paralleling ideas of imprisonment with theatrics, the intertwined relationship between watchful communities and social performances can be considered. Whereas earlier Foucault explicitly states that individuals regulated by rules in plague-stricken spaces did ‘not [have] masks that were put on and taken off’, his reference to theatricality here is arguably contradictory.<sup>261</sup> That he refers to individuals as actor in theatres is telling in itself and, whilst Foucault is not unambiguously stating that individuals are playing a part, the language he uses implies to some degree that a performance is taking place for the benefit of an audience whose role it is to watch, recognize those taking part, and judge. Karen Jacobs likewise suggests that, for Foucault, ‘surveillance and spectacle are really two sides of the same coin.’<sup>262</sup> The sinister implications of encaged individuals also implies that these are not willing actors, but in fact feel forced into behaving in a certain way. Unlike regular theatrical performances which last only for a few hours, the visibility of these caged actors is – as Foucault repeatedly emphasizes – constant. Therefore, a panoptic space

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<sup>260</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 200.

<sup>261</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 198.

<sup>262</sup> Karen Jacobs, *The Eye’s Mind: Literary Modernism and Visual Culture* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 15.



enrols actors (individuals) onto a lifetime of performance, where their work (day-to-day lives) is instantly recognizable by any member of the audience (wider society).

The power of watching – and the fear of being watched – is discussed by Foucault earlier in *Discipline and Punish* in relation to an increase in collective societal discipline wherein the movement of an entire community ‘towards salvation [and the] permanent competition of individuals being classified in relation to one another’<sup>263</sup> was caused by ‘hierarchical observation’.<sup>264</sup> Foucault is specifically referring to the disciplinary merits of exercise here, ‘that technique by which one imposes on the body tasks that are both repetitive and different, but always graduated.’<sup>265</sup> Yet, it can also be viewed specifically in terms of the relationship between observation and the overbearing threat of inter-community comparison and competition. At the heart of this is the idea of a movement toward salvation. If salvation is taken to mean an idealised way of living or place to live in, protected from harm or sin, it is clear that the indication is that a society’s drive towards collective betterment induces a willingness to watch and to judge and, further, to convert watching into the validation of punishment. The focus on the power of observation as a simultaneous threat and benefit of a self-regulating society is encapsulated by Foucault’s statement that in such a society there are ‘multiple and intersecting observations, of eyes that must see without being seen’.<sup>266</sup>

Foucault does not say that a person must be able to see without being seen; the powerful imagery utilised by Foucault reduces individuals down to their eyes alone. Evidently the eyes – wherein lies the ability to watch – are the most powerful part of a person. Similarly, the emphasis on the multiplicities of gazes heightens the element of threat and the importance of

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<sup>263</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 162.

<sup>264</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 170.

<sup>265</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 161.

<sup>266</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 171.

individualism; there is no one gaze that holds more power, and no single direction that gazes come from.

Foucault uses the word ‘observatories’ to describe such communities or similar institutions wherein the technique is utilized (a military camp, for example).<sup>267</sup> By making sinister the image of a scientific observatory, we are encouraged to draw comparisons between vast networks of stars and constellations, and communities (their individual members and their wholeness), the ultimate purpose of which is to watch, analyse, map and chart movements, and gain knowledge. Foucault specifically acknowledges the cyclical nature of discipline-by-visibility as ‘although surveillance rests on individuals, its functioning is that of a network of relations from top to bottom, but also to a certain extent from bottom to top and laterally’.<sup>268</sup> The highlighting of multi-stranded surveillance which does not, typically, hold any particular person or group in a much higher position of power than another is another example of the emphasis on individual local knowledge wherein ‘power comes from below and is executed in society’s smallest units’.<sup>269</sup> As will be discussed throughout this thesis, an amalgamation of individual local knowledges can create a powerful watchful community. As such, the crossing of these many disciplinary gazes – a ‘network of gazes’<sup>270</sup> in Foucault’s words, which in itself highlights the simultaneously interconnected yet individual motives of looking – creates a community which further provokes the very thing they fear; the more ‘they’ look, the more ‘they’ fear being looked at.

Similarly, one of the most notable features of the Panopticon design or of the transfer of the design to an alternative institution or wider society is of the relationship between

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<sup>267</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 171.

<sup>268</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 176.

<sup>269</sup> Karen Victoria Lykke Syse, ‘Expert Systems, Local Knowledge and Power in Argyll, Scotland’ in *Landscape Research*, 35.4 (August 2010), 469-484 (p. 479).

<sup>270</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 171.

surveillance and fear. Foucault states that whilst assumptions can be made as to whether one is being observed at a particular moment, these assumptions are ‘unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being watched at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so’.<sup>271</sup> Therefore, the system is built on the constant threat of surveillance rather than surveillance itself. By living in a state of constant visibility and unknowingness, those living within the panopticon adapt their behaviour as a precautionary measure. In this sense, Foucault compares the design to ‘a laboratory [that] could be used as a machine to carry out experiments, to alter behaviour, to train or correct individuals’.<sup>272</sup> In both a laboratory and a machine, those living in the panopticon are seen more as products or samples than as people. The design allows for trial and error, to ensure that ultimately the machine will run without any glitches. Foucault’s language implies that, ultimately, the aim of the panopticon is to *produce* the perfect individual as much as it is to *correct* behaviour. To continue with the machine metaphor wherein the panopticon is a factory and the key element of the machine itself is oppressive watchfulness, individuals enter the panopticon on a conveyer belt to be moulded and adapted to fit and behave a certain way. Crucially in this analysis, the aim is for all individuals to behave the same way and for unsavoury behaviours to be removed entirely.

Thinking about this more broadly and in a societal sense, the result of a panopticonic society is that behaviours are regulated and – crucially – unwanted behaviours are eliminated entirely. In his lecture on utopias and heterotopias Foucault discusses the best examples of perfect heterotopias. Discussing Jesuit colonies in South America he writes that ‘human perfection was effectively achieved [and] existence was regulated at every turn [and] each

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<sup>271</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 201.

<sup>272</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 203.

person carried out her/his duty'.<sup>273</sup> In a similar way to a panopticonic society, then, heterotopias rely on the regulation of behaviours and the determination of duties and responsibilities in order to achieve human – and therefore societal – perfection but these communities are ultimately at least partially fake. Whilst Foucault refers to regulation by spatial control and routine in this lecture rather than the focus being on surveillance, the similarities are striking. In both cases, free will in its purest sense is replaced by strictly regimented lifestyles and the moulding of individuals.

### Foucault and Gender

Although Foucault's work is critical to an understanding of the role of watchfulness within rural modernity, much of his work – including *Discipline and Punish* – does not thoroughly or explicitly consider gendered approaches or consequences. This oversight is particularly remarkable when considering Foucault's focus on hierarchical power structures within societies. Many critics have since sought to address this oversight – indeed, Angela King argues that Foucault's gender-neutral approach exposes 'glaring omissions' in his theoretical framework.<sup>274</sup> Chloë Taylor's chapter on feminist re-readings of Foucault in *A Companion to Foucault* aims to 'problematize Foucault's failure to attend to gendered power relations'.<sup>275</sup> Taylor considers the overwhelming presence of 'sovereign power in [women's] everyday lives', wherein the sovereign power – formed of husbands and fathers – were figures of cruelty, restriction and danger, rather than protection.<sup>276</sup> Adrian Howe similarly critiques

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<sup>273</sup> Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias' [Translated by Jay Miskowiec for *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuite*: 1984], pp. 8-9.

<sup>274</sup> Angela King, 'The prisoner of gender: Foucault and the disciplining of the female body' in *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 5.2 (2004), 29 – 39.

<sup>275</sup> Chloë Taylor, 'Infamous Men, Dangerous Individuals, and Violence against Women: Feminist Re-readings of Foucault' in *A Companion to Foucault*, eds Christopher Falzon et al. (West Sussex: Blackwell, 2013), pp. 419 – 435 (p. 419).

<sup>276</sup> Taylor, 'Infamous Men, Dangerous Individuals, and Violence against Women', pp. 423 – 424.

Foucault's treatment of the Pierre Rivière memoir and condemns Foucault's 'staggering blindness' to the implications of violence against women and the gendered imbalance of power,<sup>277</sup> and Julie Marcus states that Foucault's work frequently omits an understanding of 'the most immediate relations of power'; that of men's power over women.<sup>278</sup> Similarly, Patricia Amigot and Margot Pujal consider that although Foucault's work insists that every subject is subjected to the exercise of power and 'although "power is everywhere" and in all relationships, the *dispositif* of gender specifically functions to subordinate women.'<sup>279</sup> Amigot and Pujal's argument echoes King's, who suggests that 'gender, specifically femininity, is a discipline that produces bodies and identities and operates as an effective form of social control'.<sup>280</sup> Indeed, King regards Foucault's passivity regarding gender as dangerous as 'failing to be specific about just what kinds of bodies (discursively constructed or not) he's discussing implies that gender has no impact.'<sup>281</sup> Therefore, in understanding how widespread societal surveillance and watchfulness operates, it is crucial to ensure that the impact of these power structures on women is accurately represented. Certainly, my own stance is that watchfulness is shown to overwhelmingly impact women in the writing of Muir, Moon and Shepherd. The traditions and regulations of the communities of which these authors write demand women to have certain characteristics and motivations, and these regulations are maintained by patriarchal power structures. As such, to deny the impact of gender would be senseless. The issue of gendered watchfulness within societies which demand for the protection of tradition is by no means as simple as men being the sole

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<sup>277</sup> Adrian Howe, *Sex, Violence and Crime: Foucault and the "Man" Question* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 101.

<sup>278</sup> Julie Marcus, 'The Death of the Family: Pierre Riviere, Foucault and Gender' in *Criticism, Heresy and Interpretation*, 2 (1989), 67 – 82 (pp. 81 – 82).

<sup>279</sup> Patricia Amigot and Margot Pujal, 'On Power, Freedom, and Gender: A Fruitful Tension between Foucault and Feminism' in *Theory & Psychology*, 19.5 (2009), 646 – 669 (p. 647).

<sup>280</sup> King, 'The prisoner of gender', p. 30.

<sup>281</sup> King, 'The prisoner of gender', p. 30.

enforcers of strict moral and societal codes. Rather – and certainly within the writing of Muir and Moon – women are often the enforcers and upholders of ritual, and their surveying eyes are the keenest. Although the roots of community rules are patriarchal in these texts, there is ample evidence of women adopting and adapting the role of judge to access or maintain a level of power or protection. To be generally perceived as respectable or ‘womanly’ allowed for a degree of safety within a carefully regulated community and, as will be demonstrated, rural spaces are ideal sites for such regulations to flourish and they increase the pressures on women – in particular – to adhere to strict societal codes.

### A Rural Approach to Modernity and Watchfulness

Rural sites can be strictly coded. The same principles set out by Bentham and Foucault in producing panoptic sites, which in turn produce regulated bodies, can be applied to rural landscapes. The following section examines the presence of the rural panopticon in Scotland, in order to contextualise the watchfulness critiqued by Muir, Moon, and Shepherd. Callum G. Brown writes on the regulation of communities within Scotland specifically. In his essay looking at popular culture in twentieth-century Scotland, Brown argues that the focus of the ‘elites’ was to ‘regulate and eliminate’ so called ‘rough culture’.<sup>282</sup> The fear was that, by indulging in unsavoury activities (Brown makes reference specifically to gambling and the rise of football culture) the overall purity and moral fibre of the society and its residents was under threat. Attempted regulation in this case came in the form of laws and prohibitions that directly and consistently attacked these pockets of society that were unwanted by those in powerful positions. Alongside legal restrictions, Brown highlights the role of religion and the Church in trying to ‘convert plebians from the pernicious hedonism of drink and urban ‘low

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<sup>282</sup> Callum G. Brown, ‘Popular Culture and the Continuing Struggle for Rational Recreation’ in *Scotland in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, eds T. M. Devine and R. J. Finlay (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), pp. 210 – 229 (p. 211).

life' and create new loyalties to God'.<sup>283</sup> Whilst the relationship between Scottish religious communities and surveillance will be explored further later in the dissertation, the Church can be seen both as a site of power and a site of regulation. Foucault also briefly mentions the Church as a key feature of the heterotopic Jesuit community, and in both Brown's and Foucault's analyses the Church is linked to suppression and regulation. These characteristics of a claustrophobic and imposing religion are key to Muir's novels, for example, wherein the patriarchal regulations of Muir's Calderwick are rooted in religious language.

Brown's chapter also makes reference to the widespread power in twentieth century Scottish communities in terms of monitoring others. With the combined legal and religious rules and regulations in place, the responsibility of enforcing the rules fell on society as a whole. For example, in order to prevent widespread drunkenness every 'licence-owner was required not to "knowingly permit or suffer persons of notoriously bad fame" on the premises'.<sup>284</sup> Whilst the responsibility of refusing service or entrance to the individual rests on the licence-holder themselves, their decision requires the judgements of others. Therefore, as well as being a legal requirement, the public knowledge available about an individual played a key part in carrying out the requirement. The link between public image and regulation therefore hints towards a widening of surveillance, which is further explored in the work of Chris Philo, Hector Parr and Nicola Burns. By examining Bentham's original Panopticon design and Foucault's treatment of Bentham, Philo, Parr and Burns look directly at what they call 'rural panopticism'.<sup>285</sup> Philo et al. note that the term 'rural panopticism' has so far been used in at least two other instances, once in a PhD thesis by S. Weller on the links between rural spaces of exclusion and creativity in teenagers, and then in Gerlach et al in

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<sup>283</sup> Brown, 'Popular Culture and the Continuing Struggle for Rational Recreation', p. 210.

<sup>284</sup> Brown, 'Popular Culture and the Continuing Struggle for Rational Recreation', p. 219.

<sup>285</sup> Philo, Parr, and Burns, 'The Rural Panopticon', p. 230.

analysis looking at the increased necessity of farmers to be involved in the surveillance system against their neighbours.<sup>286</sup> In the work of Philo et al., rural panopticism is considered specifically in regards to the relationship between surveillance and mental ill health in the Scottish Highlands. In particular, the article considers the ‘palpable sense in which all community members are enmeshed in the lives of each other, partly by their exposure to the detailed routines of other people’s everyday existence’.<sup>287</sup> Crucially in their examinations of mental health, Philo et al. do not explicitly suggest that this overlapping of lives and visibility *causes* mental illness. Rather, they suggest that in individuals who already suffer from mental illnesses (such as anxiety or depression) their conditions can be exacerbated by living under the gazes of the ‘curtain twitchers’ of the Highlands.<sup>288</sup> With this in mind, to consider community members’ lives as enmeshed signifies the diffuse power structures of Highland communities. Similarly to the reference to regulating the behaviour of anyone of ‘notoriously bad fame’ in Brown’s chapter, rural panopticism has the potential to ‘[stigmatise individuals] as an unworthy, suspect member’ of society.<sup>289</sup> Rod Bantjes’ research indicates that what he refers to as countryside ‘Benthamism’ is a centuries’ long phenomenon. Bantjes notes that in the nineteenth-century in rural areas, and ‘particularly the country village, deference to constituted authority was guaranteed by the moral suasion embodied in concrete persons, their powers of surveillance confined to a place and their knowledge to a history in common with those under their authority.’<sup>290</sup> Bantjes is demonstrating that local knowledge – having a ‘history in common’ – allows for site-specific surveillance. The enmeshment of lives –

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<sup>286</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, ‘The Rural Panopticon’, p.231.

<sup>287</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, ‘The Rural Panopticon’, p. 234.

<sup>288</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, ‘The Rural Panopticon’, p. 235.

<sup>289</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, ‘The Rural Panopticon’, p. 236.

<sup>290</sup> Rod Bantjes, ‘Benthamism in the Countryside: The Architecture of Rural Space, 1900 – 1930’ in *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 10.3 (1997), 249 – 269 (p. 251).



thereby the enmeshment of visibility – implies that rather than there being a hierarchy in place whereby one person or one select group holds sole power over viewing, in this case all individuals hold the power of surveillance and therefore the power of judgement and analysis of what is seen.

In the same vein, in this scenario there is no one person or group that an individual is observed *by*. One of the key results from this, according to Philo et al, is that Highland communities are comprised of intimidating ‘stores of shared knowledge’.<sup>291</sup> Again, the emphasis is on the power of diffuse surveillance. By pooling together information from various sources, in the way that evidence would be collated for a court case, one profile is moulded for an individual based on gossip, passed-on bites of information and observations. It could therefore be impossible to ascertain where one rumour may have come from as there is so much shared and discussed and ‘gossip commonly involves embellishment of situations, symptoms and behaviours’ to such an extent that one’s own actions may be unrecognisable to oneself once the gossip has gone full circle.<sup>292</sup> The result of pervasive gossip and surveillance is said to be that individuals adapt themselves and ‘self-monitor, self-control, conceal and deny’.<sup>293</sup> In other words, in order to escape scrutiny, individuals perform a day-to-day ritual that prevents them from being ‘stigmatised as an unworthy, suspect member of the community’.<sup>294</sup> That it is such a grave concern to be considered a member of the community whom others do not trust or wish to be associated with, particularly for those with mental illnesses, is reflective of the benefits of performances in social situations.

Similarly, the distinction is made by Philo et al between unconscious observation and purposeful surveillance. The argument in the article is that rural panopticism can be innocent,

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<sup>291</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, ‘The Rural Panopticon’, p. 235.

<sup>292</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, ‘The Rural Panopticon’, p. 236.

<sup>293</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, ‘The Rural Panopticon’, p.238.

<sup>294</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, ‘The Rural Panopticon’, p. 236.

that in small societies you see the same people daily and therefore develop – without meaning to – an understanding of individual routines. Where houses and population are sparse, movement and change are more noticeable; indeed, Bantjes notes that ‘the manageable numbers of individuals and the limited compass of their interactions [rends] them visible and accountable’.<sup>295</sup> An event that is, by all accounts, out of the ordinary can lead to gossip and, again, Philo et al are keen to note that gossip is not always intended to be negative, and Bantjes refers to the ‘positive appreciation of mutual responsibility’ in such environments.<sup>296</sup> For example, the banding together of community members to discuss a certain person could be out of support or concern. It can, however, just as often ‘descend into the “bitchiness” and “nastiness” [commonly] experienced [and] is seen as malicious and might increase the risk of rejection by other community members’.<sup>297</sup> Perhaps therefore it is the inconsistency of the nature of surveillance that causes the potential for further psychological damage as a result of the ‘formation of shared knowledges about everyone and everything local’.<sup>298</sup> Whilst there are opportunities for surveillance to be either accidental or out of concern, there is an equal chance that malicious rumours can be utilised in order to formulate a distasteful picture of an individual, therefore culminating in their rejection from society.

The ‘reality of observation’<sup>299</sup> present in everyday lives is that knowledge of one another is – rather than carefully and methodically curated as in Foucault’s analysis of panopticism – tangled and disordered. The potential inconsistencies of collated ‘knowledge’ and the flimsy nature of gossip led to the attractive alternative for the observed to ‘self-discipline [and] perform sanity’ (or, indeed, perform in a way that others in the community

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<sup>295</sup> Bantjes, ‘Benthamism in the Countryside’, p. 252.

<sup>296</sup> Bantjes, ‘Benthamism in the Countryside’, p. 252.

<sup>297</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, ‘The Rural Panopticon’, p. 236.

<sup>298</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, ‘The Rural Panopticon’, p. 234.

<sup>299</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, ‘The Rural Panopticon’, p. 234.

attribute to sanity).<sup>300</sup> The analysis of rural panopticism by Philo, Parr and Burns explicitly considers the Scottish Highlands as ideal sites for Bentham's original Panopticon design. The sparsely populated locations mean that it is normal for 'community members to make judgements about what might be "normal" or "routine" for a given individual and start drawing inferences accordingly'<sup>301</sup> in a way that would not be possible in a city or in any location with a higher population. Due to the heightened visibility of individuals (as a result both of low population and sparse buildings), rural areas are the idea space for panoptic communities. Routines and social performances must remain intact and any deviance from a routine risk the individual 'being stigmatised as an unworthy, suspect member of the community'.<sup>302</sup> Foucault's statement that 'it is society that defines, in terms of its own interests, what must be regarded as a crime'<sup>303</sup> can therefore be seen here. It is considered to be for the greater good of society that routines are maintained, and appearances are kept and this requires the conversion of 'the external eye of inspection (in the rural panopticon, multiple eyes) into the internal eye of self-command' and therefore anybody that does not fit the mould of the perfect individual, when all individuals actively attempt to fit that mould, is instantly noticeable.<sup>304</sup>

The focus on those suffering from mental ill health in the analysis of Philo et al highlights the implications of the sharing of either intimate knowledge or assumptions based on surveillance. In interviews with residents of Highland communities such as Alness and Mallaig, there are repeated instances of being fearful of being stigmatised, treated differently and ultimately being rejected due to their differences. As mentioned, the consensus by

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<sup>300</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, 'The Rural Panopticon', p. 236.

<sup>301</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, 'The Rural Panopticon', p. 234.

<sup>302</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, 'The Rural Panopticon', p. 234.

<sup>303</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 107.

<sup>304</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, 'The Rural Panopticon', p. 236.

residents as to how to restrict any of the above happening is to perform normality. For example, one resident notes that she has to ‘try to carry on through the daily routine’<sup>305</sup> and another feels that ‘if you make one mistake and you are mentally ill, you get locked up [so] you’ve got to be careful, really careful...you’ve **got** to be really careful’.<sup>306</sup> The effect of not abiding by a routine is seen as a life-threatening action, particularly for those who are already vulnerable. Therefore, whilst routines can provide a form of stability and protection for those who feel as though they do not belong, they can also cause claustrophobia and ‘paranoid fears’ as there is no alternative but to be constantly alert to your own actions and the actions of others.<sup>307</sup>

The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate the ways in which these forms of rural panopticons, and the watchful communities they create, can have a significant impact on women and to utilise the works of three Scottish women writers to explore their responses to the pressures of such a community in the interwar period. Indeed, the watchfulness becomes so pervasive that it becomes an internal practice as well as an external pressure. Helen O’Grady explores the impact of self-policing behaviour in women in *Woman’s Relationship with Herself: Gender, Foucault and Therapy*, and states it is ‘debilitating.’<sup>308</sup> In a society bound by surveillance and regulations, the ‘compelling need to conform to other people’s/society’s expectations’ and the ‘daily exposure to [a] discriminating gaze’ can ultimately result in the self-imposed or enforced isolation of a woman who does not belong.<sup>309</sup> O’Grady elaborates that ‘this type of personal exile reflects the starkest aspect of

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<sup>305</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, ‘The Rural Panopticon’, p. 236.

<sup>306</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, ‘The Rural Panopticon’, p. 8. (Emphasis in original).

<sup>307</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, ‘The Rural Panopticon’, p. 236.

<sup>308</sup> Helen O’Grady, *Woman’s Relationship with Herself: Gender, Foucault and Therapy* (East Sussex: Routledge, 2005), p. 4.

<sup>309</sup> O’Grady, *Woman’s Relationship with Herself*, p. 2.

panoptical power as it involves a belief that: I alone have failed at this particular this [sic]; that there is something wrong with me; that the shame of knowing this puts a barrier between me and others'.<sup>310</sup> It becomes clear in the analysis that watchfulness provides the ability to recognise points of difference. When considering the overwhelming societal changes occurring in the early-twentieth century, the divergence between tradition (as a marker of respectability and propriety) and modernity (as a marker of rebellion, and a break *from* tradition) allow for these points of difference to become heightened. It is with this in mind that this thesis considers watchfulness – as a product of the rural panopticon – to be central to Scottish literary modernism, with particular significance to Scottish women's writing.

Watchfulness within the rural panopticon therefore becomes a tool by which to measure a woman's respectability and her adherence to tradition. For Muir, watchfulness is primarily a religious tool and her writing responds directly to the pressures of life for women living within a Presbyterian community. In Moon's fiction, watchfulness disturbs natural grieving and mourning processes and encourages performed rituals of emotion. Shepherd's writing suggests that although watchfulness can strengthen the bonds within a community and can be utilised to protect the environment, when misused – or overused – it can permanently damage the reputations of individuals. In the case of each of these writers, watchfulness is a central theme. Utilising watchfulness as an analytical tool benefits the broader discussions of rural Scottish literary modernity, and provides further nuance to scholarship on women's contributions to – and responses to – modernity.

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<sup>310</sup> O'Grady, *Woman's Relationship with Herself*, p. 32.

## Chapter 2: Presbyterianism and Pretence: Escaping Tradition in the Writing of Willa Muir

### Introduction

This chapter on Willa Muir examines various potential avenues of escape from the form of rural panopticon consistently presented by Muir as being stagnant, claustrophobic, and unable to offer women nuanced lives. Whereas the chapter on Lorna Moon considers the specific rituals surrounding death and mourning, and my analysis of Nan Shepherd considers the reclamation of the changing rural space and the chance to return the gaze (therefore offering a sense of rebirth), this first chapter of close literary analysis on Muir instead explores the experience of everyday life for women in small rural communities. In her conclusion to *Mrs Grundy in Scotland*, Muir appealed for a ‘reevaluation of the function of women in the world: a new understanding of the proper function of an environment and its relation to the individuals it fosters.’<sup>311</sup> Through this chapter, Muir’s desire for a reevaluation, and a closer analysis of the relationship between an individual and their environment, will be provided. Muir’s writing centralises the overbearing influence of Presbyterianism, and her work demonstrates how many of the expectations of womanhood are reliant on the patriarchal beliefs and structures of religion. As such, the watchfulness of Calderwick is often presented through the lens of Presbyterianism. Muir presents escape – in various forms – as her response to this watchfulness, and in her fiction the narratives of escape are presented with the most hope.

Existing Muir scholarship now accepts Muir as a key writer of Scottish literary Modernism, and critics often consider Muir’s critique of traditional or restrictive societal

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<sup>311</sup> Willa Muir, ‘Mrs. Grundy in Scotland’ in *Imagined Selves*, ed. by Kirsty Allen (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 1996), p. 86.

structures in semi-rural Scottish towns. Scholarship on Muir is increasingly nuanced, yet a deeper analysis of Muir's approach to Presbyterianism is still required. Muir's attitude to religion is often acknowledged to be negative, for example, which aligns her with the anti-Calvinist approach of Hugh MacDiarmid and Edwin Muir that has been criticised by scholars such as C.R.A Gribben. Gribben argues that the rejection of Calvinism in twentieth-century Scottish literature further relegates women from a Scottish literary canon.<sup>312</sup> Yet, I argue that Gribben's approach does not consider the restrictiveness of earlier literature for women, and does not take into account the nuances of women's modernist writing. Muir's position is not simply that Presbyterianism should no longer be embraced, for instance, but rather that modern women are presented with choices formerly not available to them: Presbyterianism can be embraced, manipulated, or escaped. Therefore, this work provides a new perspective to these existing discussions on Muir, expanding broader discussions of religion, to demonstrate that although the environments that Muir writes of are claustrophobic, the women that inhabit these spaces have greater agency and are more tactical than much criticism suggests. The tactical responses to the claustrophobia of Muir's semi-rural Calderwick in her novels is also shown to be an example of Michel Foucault's pastoral power in which the individual aims for salvation of themselves, but also of the entire flock. Utilising Foucault's theory, I argue that Muir both manipulates the structures of pastoral power, and produces tactics in which to escape them entirely.

Prior to examining Muir's forms of escape, initially it will be established what the female characters in her texts (and, indeed, Muir herself) are escaping from. Utilising the Willa Muir Papers archive at the University of St. Andrews and Muir's non-fiction texts *Women: An Inquiry* (1925) and *Mrs Grundy in Scotland* (1936) alongside her two published

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<sup>312</sup> Crawford Gribben, 'Introduction' in *Literature and the Scottish Reformation*, eds Crawford Gribben and David George Mullan (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 1 – 18.

novels the chapter will review Muir's interpretations of Scottishness and Scottish culture, particularly in terms of what she presents as simplified representations of womanhood. Muir particularly criticises the expectations of womanhood that she proposes are characteristic of Scotland, and questions the benefits of patriarchal family structures that are rooted in Presbyterianism. The chapter's literary analysis will divide Muir's presentations of potential modes of escape into three primary sections. In terms of spiritual escape, some characters are seen to seek solace in the rigidity of Presbyterianism and, like Annie Rattray in *Mrs. Ritchie*, view religious watchfulness as an indicator of individual salvation. Conversely, other characters – such as Elizabeth Shand in *Imagined Corners* – eschew the central facets of Presbyterianism to instead seek comfort in individual philosophies which transcend the limitations of the rural panopticon. Both *Imagined Corners* and *Mrs. Ritchie* consider political escape, and though Muir's interest in women's suffrage in the texts offers a promise of positive change, the financial restraints faced by women as a result of legal gendered imbalances reinforces Calderwick as a place of stasis. Finally, therefore, physical escape as the final form of escape (abandonment of the rural panopticon) is ultimately the only option which can enable women to access the opportunities of modernity. The chapter begins by foregrounding the centrality of Calvinism to literature of the Scottish Renaissance, in order to consider the implications of a patriarchal Presbyterian community on its' community's residents.

### Calvinism and the Scottish Renaissance

Muir adopts religious tropes in her fiction, whilst critiquing the repercussions of these tropes, particularly in regard to their impact on women. Muir's two published novels both consider the multi-generational impacts of patriarchal religious repression, and her diary entries and other published work uncover an unsavoury Godliness that threatens the liberation of women. William W. J. Knox similarly notes that Muir 'attacked institutions such as marriage and the



church for the role they played in the subordination of women'.<sup>313</sup> Indeed, Muir's anti-Calvinist writing criticises what she considers to be a 'deformed' Scotland, and 'Calvinism [...keeps the] deformation rigid.'<sup>314</sup> In Muir's opinion, Calvinism was central to everyday twentieth-century Scottish life. In a diary entry where she is researching and planning for her 'Mrs. Grundy' and 'Mrs. MacGrundy' stories, Muir compiles a list of what she considers to be essential features of Scottish culture:

(In Scotland – Saturday night drunks, whisky [...] High tea [...] football [...] Presbyterian Church [...] “but and ben” + box beds [...] reels [...] porridge [...] common stairs [...] Robert Burns [...] Scots law [...] belief in the Devil etc etc).<sup>315</sup>

Muir's list is an entanglement of artistic, religious, and philosophical values, alongside other markers of everyday life. The references to the Presbyterian Church and a common 'belief in the Devil' emphasises that Muir felt that Scotland has a strong religious presence, but also that this religion is rooted by a fear of – or acceptance of – punishment. A belief in the Devil signifies a belief in the consequences of sin. Although this is a brief and rather light-hearted diary entry, it is significant that Muir does not list a belief in heaven or salvation as an essential Scottish characteristic. In comparison, her notes reflecting on English culture consider England's 'increasing wealth [...] the rise of middle classes [...and] weak religion.'<sup>316</sup> There is a comparative fragility of English religion to the apparent significance

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<sup>313</sup> William W. J. Knox, *Women: Women and Scottish Society 1800 – 1980* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 199.

<sup>314</sup> Muir, Journal, 1951 – 53: first page (St Andrew Library, Willa Muir Archives, Box 5: MS384666/5/3).

<sup>315</sup> Willa Muir, 'Miscellaneous', Item MS38466/5/2, Willa Muir Papers in Special Collections at University of St. Andrews.

<sup>316</sup> Willa Muir, 'Miscellaneous', Item MS38466/5/4, Willa Muir Papers in Special Collections at University of St. Andrews.

of Presbyterianism and the Devil in Scotland in these two entries, and Muir's accusation that England's religion is weak, serves to exaggerate the strength of Presbyterianism in Scotland.

Muir is part of an anti-Calvinist response which opposed the Reformation, and critics consider that this response began with (or was 'engineered by') Edwin Muir and Hugh MacDiarmid.<sup>317</sup> Muir refers to the Reformation in *Mrs Grundy in Scotland* as 'a kind of spiritual strychnine of which Scotland took an overdose.'<sup>318</sup> Paul Robichaud comments on MacDiarmid and Edwin Muir's sense that Calvinism had 'debilitating effects' on the Scottish character;<sup>319</sup> indeed, Edwin Muir's *John Knox: Portrait of a Calvinist* (1929) pinpoints the Reformation as leading to the 'decimation of a rich medieval tradition'.<sup>320</sup> Lyall notes that Edwin Muir believed that Calvinism's 'injunction against poetry and poetic drama' led to the decline of Scotland, and Edwin Muir's biography of Knox thus aimed to 'attack the true believers'.<sup>321</sup> In Patrick Scott's introduction to the edited collection *The Ghost at the Feast: Religion and Scottish Literary Criticism*, Scott suggests that the 'anti-Calvinist' bias – stemming from Edwin Muir and MacDiarmid's opposition to Calvinism – 'has excluded women writers from the Scottish canon'.<sup>322</sup> An analysis of Muir's literary focus on Calvinism and its impact on women is therefore crucial in attempts to rebalance such a bias. Dunnigan and Gribben trace their analysis of Calvinism to the early-modern period, and they both note that a substantial amount of the writing of early-modern Scottish women was written of or

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<sup>317</sup> C. R. A. Gribben, 'The Literary Cultures of the Scottish Reformation', in *The Review of English Studies*, 57.228 (2006), 64 – 82 (p. 64).

<sup>318</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Grundy*, pp. 75 – 76.

<sup>319</sup> Paul Robichaud, 'MacDiarmid and Muir: Scottish Modernism and the Nation as Anthropological Site' in *Journal of Modern Literature*, 28.4 (2005), 135 – 151 (p. 147).

<sup>320</sup> Gribben, 'The Literary Cultures of the Scottish Reformation', p. 15.

<sup>321</sup> Scott Lyall, "'That ancient self': Scottish Modernism's Counter-Renaissance' in *European Journal of English Studies*, 18.1 (2014), 73 – 85 (pp. 81 – 82).

<sup>322</sup> Patrick Scott, 'Introduction' in *The Ghost at the Feast: Religion and Scottish Literary Criticism*, ed. by Patrick Scott (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2020), p. vi.

from religious contexts. These ‘contexts often provided early modern women with rare access to a socially acceptable and authoritative literary voice.’<sup>323</sup> One of Gribben’s critiques of the impact of the Muir-MacDiarmid anti-Calvinist agenda during the Scottish literary Renaissance, is that establishing Calvinism as a ‘very necessary “other”’ in part further rejects the contributions of women to a Scottish literary canon.<sup>324</sup> If, as is Gribben’s argument, Presbyterianism provided a rare route to literary creativity and publication for women, demonising the inspiration also demonises the material and authors inspired. Gribben also argues that ‘when opposition to Calvinism is itself identified as part of the criteria of Scottish essentialism, those writers concerned to articulate their voice within religious parameters discover that there is no room for them at the canonical inn.’<sup>325</sup> Gribben clearly proposes this as a negative impact of what he refers to as a canon-shaping rejection of Scottish Calvinism’ ‘engineered’ by Edwin Muir and MacDiarmid.<sup>326</sup> Gribben’s argument implies that it is more beneficial for women writers to have a limited creative output that echoes existing attitudes (in this case, a pro-Calvinist attitude). However, Gribben does not consider that the creation of a new canon creates more space for women’s voices. Gribben’s argument – that the rejection of Calvinism rejects women’s voices – is flawed, as the vocal opposition to Calvinism of Modernist Scottish authors in the twentieth-century in fact places Willa Muir at the heart of an anti-Calvinist response. Patrick Scott notes that ‘where previously Scotland and Scottishness had regularly been identified as “Protestant”, “authentic” Scottish literature has, since Muir and MacDiarmid, repeatedly been defined in

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<sup>323</sup> Crawford Gribben, ‘The Literary Cultures of the Reformation’ in *The Ghost at the Feast: Religion and Scottish Literary Criticism*, ed. by Patrick Scott (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2020), pp. 9 – 29 (pp. 12- 13).

<sup>324</sup> Gribben, ‘The Literary Cultures of the Reformation’, pp. 12- 13.

<sup>325</sup> Gribben, ‘The Literary Cultures of the Reformation’, p. 12.

<sup>326</sup> C. R. A. Gribben, ‘The Literary Cultures of the Scottish Reformation’, in *The Review of English Studies*, 57.228 (2006), 64 – 82 (pp. 64 – 65).

opposition' to Calvinism.<sup>327</sup> Scott's reference to an apparently authentic Scottish literature – one which is explicitly resistant to Calvinism – further centralises Muir's anti-Calvinist fiction in an 'authentic' Scottish literary tradition. Juliet Shields argues that Muir's anti-evangelical narratives set her apart not only from traditional Scottish literature, but from other Scottish women's writing of the interwar period, as much of it was still largely in support of Presbyterianism.<sup>328</sup> Therefore, to build on Shield's argument, Muir's presence in such a tradition signifies an expansion of the modes and means of literary expression for women during the Renaissance, able to critique religious structures which would previously have been a rare source of socially accepted creativity.

Indeed, Muir's writing specifically confronts the patriarchal foundations of Presbyterianism, and suggests that women are overwhelmingly repressed by its doctrines. Carmen Luz Fentes-Vasquez similarly notes that Muir criticizes the 'Calvinist foundations [of Scotland], because of their contribution to the oppression of people, especially women.'<sup>329</sup> What Fentes-Vasquez refers to as the 'delusory religious morality' of Muir's Scotland relates to the disparity between opportunities, experiences, and freedoms for men and women, wherein women's actions are more heavily monitored and their supposed transgressions more heavily punished.<sup>330</sup> Dobash and Dobash in *Violence Against Wives: A Case Against the Patriarchy* argue that religion saw the equating of man to God, stating that 'what was manmade, enforced by men, and to the benefit of men was attributed not to men [...] but to

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<sup>327</sup> Scott, 'Introduction: The Ghost at the Feast', p. 4.

<sup>328</sup> Juliet Shields, 'A Celebration of Scottish Women's Writing with Juliet Shields', unpublished talk delivered at the conference 'A Celebration of Scottish Women's Writing with Juliet Shields' (National Library of Scotland, 16 November 2021).

<sup>329</sup> Carmen Luz Fentes-Vasquez, *Dangerous Writing: The Autobiographies of Willa Muir, Margaret Laurence and Janet Frame* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013), p. 74.

<sup>330</sup> Fentes-Vasquez, *Dangerous Writing*, p. 77.

God, and therefore both just and immutable.<sup>331</sup> Dobash and Dobash infer that manmade rules and community regulations were designed to benefit men, but were suggested to have been decreed by God. Muir's texts examine such neighbourly surveillance in detail, particularly in terms of religious discipline and in the imbalance between men and women. In Muir's *Mrs. Grundy in Scotland* she writes, with irony, that man is an 'individual reaching to the skies: [but] woman, being more akin to the earth, [is] a lesser individual [...] not to be trusted, even with her own children, unless she obeyed the precepts of the Kirk.'<sup>332</sup> Muir's fiction condemns this inequality. In *Mrs. Grundy*, Muir reflects on the ways in which 'Scottish imagination was long haunted by formidable women [...] They lurked in the anonymous ballads. They troubled the Kirk, which was kept busy denouncing them as witches. They obsessed even Sir Walter Scott [...]'.<sup>333</sup> Muir's fiction – and, indeed, perhaps Muir herself – can be read as an extension of such a tradition of formidable women haunting Scottish imagination and disrupting religious tradition.

### Womanhood and the Structures of Family and Religion in Muir's Non-Fiction

Alongside an intended disruption of patriarchal religious structures, Muir also challenges other expectations placed on Scottish women, and she displays a general discontentment with gender imbalances in Scotland. Indeed, when Muir references the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes in an article for *The Left Review* in 1936, she notes that 'even in purely feminine movements [such as the S.W.R.I.], the ordinary women let themselves be run by their

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<sup>331</sup> R. Emerson Dobash and Russell Dobash, *Violence Against Wives: A Case Against the Patriarchy* (New York: Free Press, 1979), p. 8.

<sup>332</sup> Willa Muir, 'Mrs. Grundy in Scotland' in *Imagined Selves*, ed. by Kirsty Allen (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 1996), p. 49.

<sup>333</sup> Muir, 'Mrs. Grundy in Scotland', p. 51.

“country” as they remain too timid for the focus to be on representing themselves.<sup>334</sup> Muir also references the high mortality rates in urban Scotland in the interwar period, and writes that this is partly due to the unwillingness of social and political leaders to incorporate women into public life and appropriately utilise ‘female’ skills. Muir’s primary argument in the article is that Scotland requires a complete socio-economic overhaul in order to become a fully functioning modern nation, and that Scottish men should ‘co-opt [their] women’ rather than endeavour to advance without the assistance of Scottish women.<sup>335</sup> Muir’s resistance to ‘purely feminine movements’ can therefore be seen in similar terms; her frustration (a frustration that is voiced in much of her writing) is that she feels that the S.W.R.I movement does not promote equal partnerships between men and women.

Muir’s *Mrs Grundy in Scotland* was published as part of the Hogarth Essays Series, alongside pieces by Neil Gunn, A. S. Neill, Edwin Muir and others. In the essay, Muir contrasts societal power structures in England and Scotland and considers the ways in which women (through the figures of England’s ‘Mrs Grundy’ and Scotland’s ‘Mrs MacGrundy’) are the figureheads able to uphold these structures. Whilst the threatening figure of England’s Mrs Grundy focuses more on class-structures and the relationship between femininity and domesticity, the rival Mrs MacGrundy is representative of Scotland’s religious atmosphere and an atmosphere of conformity and unease. Indeed, Kirsteen Stirling argues that Mrs Grundy – in England and in Scotland – ‘is a personification of a social fear’.<sup>336</sup> This text, which Margaret Elphinstone posits is ‘perhaps Muir’s most overtly radical’, provides crucial

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<sup>334</sup> Willa Muir, ‘*Women in Scotland* from ‘Left Review 1936’ in *Imagined Corners* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 1996), p. 1.

<sup>335</sup> Muir, *Women in Scotland*, p. 3.

<sup>336</sup> Kirsteen Stirling, *Bella Caledonia: Woman, Nation, Text* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), p. 55.

insights into Muir's views on Scottish religion, and the gendered way in which it operates.<sup>337</sup> Joy Hendry considers *Mrs Grundy* to be 'an appeal for a reappraisal of women's roles',<sup>338</sup> though Aileen Christianson fairly contends that the text 'centres more on the repressions and shortcomings of Scotland than on a re-examination of Muir's feminist analysis.'<sup>339</sup> I would argue that both of these readings of *Mrs Grundy* are true; the focus *is* more on a repressive Scotland, however Muir makes it clear that the impact of such repression is felt more keenly by women. As such, Muir provides ways in which women's roles can be re-evaluated or more radically viewed. Although Muir indicates that men outwardly hold more power (as Kirk elders, for example) the text highlights the covert power of women. She states that a man can 'draw his "conceit" of himself directly from God' and is 'nourished on the belief that he is one of God's elect.'<sup>340</sup> However, the Kirk itself is 'the veil of that Bride of Christ', and though 'the Scottish Kirk might claim to speak with the tongues of men and of angels [its] voice became more and more unmistakably the voice of Mrs MacGrundy.'<sup>341</sup> Whilst the face of Presbyterianism appears to be led by and for men, Muir suggests that Scottish religious structures are upheld by the female figure of Mrs MacGrundy. Indeed, Mrs MacGrundy is 'the heir of the Kirk Sessions, [and] derived her authority mainly from the men'.<sup>342</sup> Thus, although the existing structure of Presbyterianism is led by male authoritative figures, Mrs MacGrundy as the heir is set to inherit this structure. The text is key therefore to

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<sup>337</sup> Margaret Elphinstone, 'Willa Muir: Crossing the Genres' in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, ed. by Gifford and McMillan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), pp. 400 – 415 (p. 413).

<sup>338</sup> Joy Hendry, 'Twentieth-century Women's Writing: The Nest of Singing Birds' in *The History of Scottish Literature*, ed. by Cairns Craig (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), pp. 291 – 309 (p. 303).

<sup>339</sup> Christianson, *Moving in Circles*, p. 72.

<sup>340</sup> Muir, 'Mrs. Grundy in Scotland', pp. 11 – 12.

<sup>341</sup> Muir, 'Mrs. Grundy in Scotland', p. 12.

<sup>342</sup> Muir, 'Mrs. Grundy in Scotland', p. 44.

an understanding of Muir's approach to gender and the spaces available to women in oppressive societies to gain or manipulate societal power.

Muir's contentious essay *Women: An Inquiry* (1925), her first published work, is a further invaluable resource when considering her approach to womanhood. The text often seems to promote rather than challenge inequalities between men and women, and as such is frequently contradictory. When considering Muir's approach to these discussions, Margery McCulloch finds the essay 'puzzling',<sup>343</sup> and Elphinstone considers it to be 'uncomfortable'.<sup>344</sup> However, what *Women: An Inquiry* offers is an illumination of some of the structures of family and womanhood which were rooted in Presbyterianism. Dorothy Porter McMillan notes that Muir 'is better at defining the problems and asking the questions than she is at providing the answers [...but] her essay remains a significant landmark',<sup>345</sup> and Christianson praises the 'intellectual courage Muir shows in her explorations', and asks contemporary critics not to 'too easily dismiss Muir's views.'<sup>346</sup> Muir discusses the specifics of what women would be expected and enabled to do, and likewise what would have been denied to her at the time of writing (1925):

The wife and mother is excluded from independent access to the sources of external power: and she is expected to be obedient and loyal to her marriage contract [...] The stock moral virtue required of her is chastity; she must have sexual relationships only within the pale of marriage. All women, because they are potential wives, must copy

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<sup>343</sup> Margery Palmer McCulloch, 'Edwin and Willa Muir: Scottish, European and Gender Journeys, 1918 – 1969' in *Modern Transformations: New Identities, The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 84 – 94 (p. 91).

<sup>344</sup> Elphinstone, 'Willa Muir: Crossing the Genres', p. 405.

<sup>345</sup> Dorothy Porter McMillan, 'Heroines and Writers' in *Tea and Leg-Irons: New Feminist Readings from Scotland*, ed. by Caroline Gonda (London: Open Letters, 1992), pp. 17 – 30 (p. 29).

<sup>346</sup> Christianson, *Moving in Circles*, p. 70.



her virtues and avoid what is forbidden to her. [...] Women are treated exactly as an inferior class with a definite function, that of child-bearing.<sup>347</sup>

Muir's view is that women are moulded to have two key purposes: to be a wife and to be a mother. Furthermore, within these roles the woman is expected to be obedient, loyal to the contractual binds of marriage, and persistently virtuous. A woman is not only born to be a woman, but she is born as a potential wife and mother. She is, in other words, never born for herself but born to be subject to others and with strict moral guidelines. These expected social behaviours are also tied to local moral systems. Muir says:

The follower of a systemic morality has always a black list [...] In such a morality the individual is considered only as one who conforms or does not conform to the code required, never as an individual in himself [and] systemic morality depends on fear of punishment. The kind of punishment imposed has only an arbitrary relation to the nature of the offence committed, and no relation at all to the psychological problems in which the offender is involved: it is designed merely to make him suffer, and, if he persists in offending, to remove him.<sup>348</sup>

Muir's language here is distinctly Foucauldian. The references to 'codes', 'punishments', and 'offenders' all mirror Foucault's in *Discipline and Punish*. In the 'Docile Bodies' section of his text Foucault discusses, for instance, a 'carefully measured combination of forces' wherein 'all the activity of the disciplined individual must be punctuated and sustained by injunctions' which 'trigger' required behaviour that adhered to a 'prearranged code'; 'place the bodies in a little world of signals to each of which is attached a single, obligatory response.'<sup>349</sup> Similarly, in 'Complete and Austere Institutions', Foucault considers how the

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<sup>347</sup> Willa Muir, *Women: An Inquiry*, in *Imagined Selves*, ed. by Kirsty Allen (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 1996), p. 10.

<sup>348</sup> Muir, *Women: An Inquiry* p. 126.

<sup>349</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 166.

combination of an ‘external respect for the law’, a ‘fear of punishment’, and the ‘workings of the conscience’ which culminates in a ‘profound submission [...and] a change of “morality”’ that encourages a change in behaviour is more effective than a fear of punishment alone.<sup>350</sup> Muir’s reference to a ‘systemic morality’ and the threat of expulsion if the morality is not adhered to is thus akin to Foucault’s ‘profound submission’.

There are several elements to consider within Muir’s passage. Firstly, the presence of differing systems between societies/institutions, which mirrors Foucault’s ‘prearranged code’; secondly, the existence of coded morality within these systems; thirdly, the importance of fear and punishment in enforcing the adherence *to* these codes; and, finally, the potential of removal from the system. Central to these elements is the bind between codes of moral standards and conformity. Muir suggests that there is a degree of performance – or, certainly, conscious self-adaptation – required by those who live within such a society, as ‘followers’, as she refers to them, are recognised either by their conformity or their offences. Therefore, given her earlier clarifications of the supposed function of women as wives and child-bearers, it is safe to assume that a nonconforming woman would be unmarried and childless and would thus also have bypassed the crucial performative act of marriage. The implication here is that certain degrees of conformity and performance are required as Muir examines both the socially expected role of women and the consequences of diverging from these expectations, and her own individual response to a widespread belief that women ought to be wives and mothers.

The essay considers the oppression and exclusion of women that in Muir’s later writing and in her private diaries and letters she criticised more directly, and it was not well received on its publication. Writing to folklorist Florence Marian McNeill, Muir pondered the potential reasons as to why *Women: An Inquiry* had fallen flat. She wrote:

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<sup>350</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 238 – 239.

I don't think people realise its implications – perhaps because of the purposely moderate & reasonable tone. *The Nation* said it was as unexciting as boiled rice. *Time & Tide* has not reviewed it at all! I thought women's societies & associations would have been interested. However – I shall launch bombs next time.<sup>351</sup>

That *Time and Tide*, the periodical determined to embody modernity and the progress of new women, neglected to review Muir's essay speaks further of the extent of these partitions in womanhood. The essay considers the idea of women and womanhood in a simplified way, eschewing nuances. However, in doing this Muir is disrupting an existing understanding of women provided by patriarchal narratives, rather than presenting a counter-narrative. By exploring – and dismantling – existing generalizations, Muir's essay is a strong foundation to the later more nuanced and bolder fiction of *Imagined Corners* and *Mrs. Ritchie*, and perhaps these texts are the bombs she promised to launch. For example, *Women: An Inquiry* maintains an insistence that women are widely considered as inferior. Muir notes that 'inferior classes [such as women], whether actually enslaved or not, are kept in their place by being excluded from the sources of external power, such as the possession of wealth, the command of armies, the exercise of political rights'.<sup>352</sup> Each of these exclusions are later manipulated in her fiction. Elise Shand in *Imagined Corners* is wealthy and appears to be (and seems to believe herself to be) self-sufficient, yet men remain the source of her wealth. Similarly, the titular character of *Mrs. Ritchie* is portrayed as having control over her family's finances; it is through her own orchestration of her family's upward social mobility that she becomes more economically secure than she was in her youth. Ultimately, however, when widowed she is not entitled to what is legally her husband's money or property.

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<sup>351</sup> Willa Muir, 'Letter to F. McNeill, 26 January 1926', Item MS26194-98 Willa Muir Papers in Special Collections at University of St. Andrews.

<sup>352</sup> Muir, *Women: An Inquiry*, p. 10.

Whilst women do not leave Calderwick to command armies in Muir's texts, they do frequently command families and the textures of everyday life. In 1958 – thirty-three years after the initial publication of *Women: An Inquiry* – a diary entry of Muir's reflects on the structure of a family:

Wherever there is a centralisation of authority, a hierarchy, a dictator at the top, you have a fighting movement, using violence in emergencies. Husband-dictator means that family is a unit in a power world, fighting to survive, to climb, to 'progress'. The burden thus laid on the husband is now intolerable. Domination = a power world, fighting [...] partnership does not equal a peaceful world, but is a necessary condition for one.<sup>353</sup>

The entry forms part of a collection of musings on family and Muir's dissatisfaction with her translation partnership with her husband Edwin, but like many of Muir's diary entries the above passage is left without further expansion. However, the depiction of a fascistic family unit – with its male dictator, and interest in 'progress' – provides an insight into Muir's view of family structures. Ultimately, a 'husband-dictator' unit is doomed to fight, whereas a 'partnership' is necessary for peace. In Muir's passage, the family structure outlined by Muir is a violent, fighting movement with a clear centralisation of authority, and the purpose of the structure is survival. However, the 'dictator at the top' of the family in *Mrs. Ritchie* is Mrs. Ritchie herself with her ruthless and unshakable drive towards 'progress'. Indeed, a review of *Mrs. Ritchie* in *The Times* in 1933 by Agnes Mure Mackenzie refers to Mrs. Ritchie as a 'domestic despot'.<sup>354</sup> Similarly, Aunt Janet attempts to manipulate the outward appearance of Elizabeth and Hector's relationship in *Imagined Corners* in order to preserve the structure of

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<sup>353</sup> Willa Muir, 'Miscellaneous', Item MS38466/4/4, Willa Muir Papers in Special Collections at University of St. Andrews.

<sup>354</sup> Agnes Mure Mackenzie, 'Mrs Ritchie' in *The Times Literary Supplement* 1641 (13 July 1933), 478.

Calderwick society. Finally, Muir's suggestion that women are excluded from the ability to exercise their political rights is challenged by the experiences women have with the suffragette movement and the engagement in political discussion in *Mrs. Ritchie* and *Imagined Corners*. As such, Muir's fiction acts as a space in which existing patriarchal structures are disrupted and manipulated, in order to promote greater agency for women. Muir's explicit discontent with gender imbalances expressed in her non-fiction, and her attempts to expose the tensions between everyday small-community morality and rigid roles for women, are thus addressed in her fiction.

#### The Devil is in the Detail: Pastoral Power, Oppressive Watchfulness and Womanhood in Muir's Fiction

Thus far, this chapter has established both the religious atmosphere of which Muir writes, and some of the ways in which Muir's non-fiction challenges expectations placed on women. I will now unite these two topics by analysing *Imagined Corners* and *Mrs. Ritchie* to demonstrate that Muir's fiction highlights the claustrophobia of the rural panopticon for women. Rather than operating as two parallel – yet equally dangerous – structures within society, Presbyterianism and patriarchal oppression unite in these novels. Indeed, the latter is seen to rely on the former. The impact of this union is that, as Gramich reasons, the 'misogynist prejudices' of small-town Scotland and the 'patriarchal attitudes infiltrate the lives' of everyone in Calderwick.<sup>355</sup> The role of religion and the distinct forms of power and watchfulness related to religion in Muir's fiction can be considered through Foucault's discussions of pastoral power. At its core, pastoral power is:

salvation oriented (as opposed to political power). It is oblativ (as opposed to the principle of sovereignty); it is individualising (as opposed to legal power); it is

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<sup>355</sup> Gramich, 'Caught in the Triple Net?', p. 226.

coextensive and continuous with life; it is linked with a production of truth – the truth of the individual himself.<sup>356</sup>

Foucault's theory thus suggests that religious pastoral power sees individuals focus on the idea of salvation (indeed, Foucault suggests that salvation is 'the ultimate aim'), and to live in a way in which religious beliefs blend into all facets of the individual's life.<sup>357</sup> Foucault also considers that pastoral power does not simply command behaviours, but ensures that individuals are prepared to sacrifice themselves for the wider good – the 'salvation of the flock'.<sup>358</sup> Therefore pastoral power requires individuals to uphold two core aims: self-preservation, and preservation of the 'flock' (the religious community). In order to best serve a pious flock, each individual must maintain their own religious piety. Alistair Mutch's article on Protestant pastoral power in Scotland sees the use of Foucault's conceptualisation of 'pastoral power' (in which there is an interest in the 'mastery over souls rather than land, and a form of power concerned with the good of each individual in the flock')<sup>359</sup> to explore the regulation of populations, particularly of examination, accountability, ecclesiology, and organizing 'as a good in its own right.'<sup>360</sup> Lauri Siisiäinen similarly reflects on Foucault's theory of pastoral power, considering how 'Christian relations of power, knowledge, and truth are attached with a surveying gaze that is both totalizing as well as individualizing.'<sup>361</sup> Similarly to this thesis' established use of the rural panopticon, pastoral power relies on a watchfulness that considers the whole community as well as the individual, with the aim to

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<sup>356</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Subject and Power* <<https://foucault.info/documents/foucault.power/>> [accessed 18/02/2022].

<sup>357</sup> Foucault, *The Subject and Power* <<https://foucault.info/documents/foucault.power/>>.

<sup>358</sup> Foucault, *The Subject and Power* <<https://foucault.info/documents/foucault.power/>>.

<sup>359</sup> Alistair Mutch, "'Decently and order": Scotland and Protestant pastoral power' in *Critical Research on Religion*, 5.1 (2017), 79 – 93 (p. 80).

<sup>360</sup> Mutch, 'Decently and Order', p. 79.

<sup>361</sup> Lauri Siisiäinen, 'Foucault, pastoral power, and optics' in *Critical Research on Religion*, 3.3 (2015), 233 – 249 (p. 233).

achieve knowledge ‘concerning the life of the multiplicity.’<sup>362</sup> Although both Mutch and Siisiäinen argue that pastoral power leads to ‘the possibility of examination of conduct at all levels’, neither explicitly considers gender imbalances which would have implications on the severity of judgement.<sup>363</sup> This chapter therefore extends such research, by centralising the experiences of women and by considering escapes as a direct response to religious watchfulness and judgement.<sup>364</sup>

Unlike much of Foucault’s other discussions of power dynamics, there is comparatively little secondary criticism of Foucault’s pastoral power, particularly in how it relates to literature and there is certainly no existing analysis of Muir’s work and pastoral power. Religion and communities are embedded in Muir’s work, and indeed the majority of the scholarship on Muir acknowledges as much, in considering how Muir critiques the claustrophobic Calvinism of semi-rural Scotland. However, there is scope to now broaden this existing scholarship to consider more explicitly the foundations of Muir’s Calvinism. What is most striking in Foucault’s depiction of pastoral power when considering Muir’s work is the idea of a ‘production of truth’.<sup>365</sup> As is the case in Muir’s fiction, characters are seen to produce and perform variations of truth, particularly in regard to their individual relationships with religion. For such a truth to be ‘produced’, this power must be harnessed and directed by the individual; it requires people to be both aware of power constructs, and aware of how to utilise these constructs. Jeremy Carrette notes that, alongside the importance of salvation, Foucault’s pastoral power holds a ‘focus on confession and discourse’.<sup>366</sup> As

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<sup>362</sup> Siisiäinen, p. 235.

<sup>363</sup> Mutch, ‘Decently and Order’, p. 86.

<sup>364</sup> See also: *Soft Shepherd or Almighty Pastor: Power and Pastoral Care*, ed. by Annemie Dillon (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2015).

<sup>365</sup> Mutch, ‘Decently and Order’, p. 86.

<sup>366</sup> Jeremy Carrette, ‘Foucault, Religion, and Pastoral Power’ in *A Companion to Foucault*, ed. by Christopher Falzon, Timothy O’Leary and Jana Sawicki (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2013) pp. 368 – 383 (p. 369).

with this thesis' earlier analysis of the rural panopticon and widespread watchfulness, the relationship between religion and the individual confession (or public dissection) of personal sin suggests a necessity to perform daily life in accordance with community rules. For there to be a confession, naturally there must be an acknowledgement of personal wrongdoing, regardless of whether the individual who has 'sinned' views it as such. The vocalising of sin is a crucial component to Christianity, and to Foucault's pastoral power. In *Mrs Grundy in Scotland*, Muir considers this discourse of sin and confession as 'the fearful thrill of contemplating one's own iniquity [...and] the iniquity of others' and notes that the 'Scottish Kirk found its excitement narrowing down to denunciations and jealous inquisitions.'<sup>367</sup> Likewise, Ben Golder notes that Foucault's pastor maintains a necessary 'concern with the minutiae of the quotidian' and he must 'observe daily life in order to form a never-ending knowledge of the behaviour and conduct of the members of the flock he supervises.'<sup>368</sup> Muir's reduction of the Kirk to a hunt for sinners is therefore a telling depiction of the dynamics of pastoral power. The individual contemplates their own potential sins, whilst observing and highlighting the sins of others. However, Muir's fiction highlights women that attempt to destabilise this power by emphasising the fallacy of a beneficial watchfulness, or manipulate it for personal gain whilst performing womanly piety. In this expansion of existing critical work on Muir that considers her reaction to Calvinism, by considering Muir's fiction through Foucault's pastoral power this chapter contributes a new analysis of how women can utilise the resources and dynamics of pastoral power in order to manipulate the confines of Presbyterianism.

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<sup>367</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Grundy*, pp. 22 – 23.

<sup>368</sup> Ben Golder, 'Foucault and the Genealogy of Pastoral Power' in *Radical Philosophy Review*, 10.2 (2007), 157 – 176 (p. 167).



The domineering presence of the church and patterns of enforcing codes of behaviour are united, and the patriarchal structure of the Church ensures that women are more directly impacted by these codes and are more heavily judged should they fail to adhere to them. Elizabeth Ritchie's research on gender and social control in nineteenth-century Scotland provides a similar analysis of the ways in which efforts to regulate behaviour more keenly focused on – and punished – any transgressions of women. She argues, for example, that 'stability (and patriarchy) was maintained through neighbourly surveillance, particularly of and by women.'<sup>369</sup> Therefore, although codes of conduct were likely to be established by 'ordinary men', the rules enforced more commonly related to the behaviour of women. Ritchie's analysis considers the 'co-dependent relationship' between communities and structures of social control (such as the church). Muir similarly utilises weekly sermons in *Imagined Corners* as an opportunity to unite societal watchfulness and gossip, with religious thought. William Murray's sermons are analysed by the congregation to identify links between his words and an individual. Ritchie argues that little is known about how 'communities responded to perceived internal threats, such as breaking rules of sexual behaviour [...or] how townships functioned in ordinary moments.'<sup>370</sup> I would argue, however, that Muir's fiction specifically explores such threats, and furthermore how the breaking of rules (such as those of sexual behaviour) which are built upon a religious foundation can directly influence the ordinary moments of rural life.

The unavoidable presence of Presbyterianism is emphasised throughout *Imagined Corners*. Muir writes that on a Sunday 'one could distinguish the various bells [of the United Free Church, the Congregational, the Wesleyan, the Baptist, the Roman Catholic and

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<sup>369</sup> Elizabeth Ritchie, 'The Township, the Pregnant Girl and the Church: Community Dynamics, Gender and Social Control in Early Nineteenth-Century Scotland', in *Northern Scotland*, 10.1 (2019), 41 – 67 (p. 42).

<sup>370</sup> Ritchie, 'The Township, the Pregnant Girl and the Church', pp. 42 – 44.

Episcopal] but all were overborne by the peal from the Parish Kirk.<sup>371</sup> The ‘commanding’ bell of the Kirk was also the only Church ‘whose deep note rang curfew every night at ten o’clock.<sup>372</sup> The Kirk is thus instantly established as a domineering force, whose rules and ‘summons’ are adhered to by ‘streams of soberly clad people.’<sup>373</sup> It is similarly explicit that the structures of society in *Mrs. Ritchie* stem from Presbyterianism specifically, rather than a more general connection to Christianity. Muir, when describing the three Carnegie sisters, writes that ‘they were not only Christians, but heirs of the Reformation; they were Protestants, and not only Protestants but Presbyterians, and not only Presbyterians but adherents of the Free Church of Scotland.’<sup>374</sup> The narrative is therefore explicitly situated within a Presbyterian and Scottish context, and the characters are described as descendants of the Reformation heavily critiqued by MacDiarmid, Fionn MacColla, Lewis Grassie Gibbon, and Edwin and Willa Muir. This context sees an inheritance, according to Muir, of ‘a broad human desire for security in the bosom of a family [and] an exclusive and private relation to God [...and] the devil.’<sup>375</sup> Presbyterianism is here suggested to be comprised of three things: family; individual relationships with God; and individual relationships with the devil.<sup>376</sup> As such, in this mirroring of the core facets of Foucault’s pastoral power, Muir’s depiction of a collective family coincides with independent battles for personal salvation and sinlessness. It is important to stave off the devil by never neglecting to question whether something is from God or the devil, and as ‘the devil is so cunning that the brightest of colours, the most alluring scents, the most seductive shapes must be suspect unless they are obviously

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<sup>371</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 67.

<sup>372</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 67.

<sup>373</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 67.

<sup>374</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 67.

<sup>375</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 68.

<sup>376</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 68.

dedicated to a moral purpose.<sup>377</sup> Presbyterian life is therefore marked by not only an appropriate family unit, but by sober retreats ‘from the seductions of the devil.’<sup>378</sup>

There is evidently a clear suggestion that to lead an acceptable, Presbyterian life there must be modesty and intense self-regulation. As explored in the previous chapter, Brown explores how the focus of the elites in society was to ‘regulate and eliminate’ so called ‘rough culture’.<sup>379</sup> The fear was that, by indulging in unsavoury activities (such as gambling and the rise of football culture) the overall purity and moral fibre of the society and its residents was under threat. These concerns, which are notably Foucauldian in their desire to manufacture idealised citizens, are present in *Mrs. Ritchie*. For example, Miss Julia condemns the rise of ‘drinking and gambling’ amongst working-class Englishmen, and holds a belief that Scotland’s ‘God-fearing’ nature could prevent such moral corruption in Calderwick.<sup>380</sup> Brown considers the regulatory efforts of Scottish societies to maintain moral fibre, through laws and prohibitions that directly and consistently attacked these pockets of society that were unwanted by those in powerful positions. Alongside legal restrictions, Brown highlights the role of religion and the Church in trying to ‘convert plebians from the pernicious hedonism of drink and urban ‘low life’ and create new loyalties to God’. Brown directly considers the Church both as a site of power and a site of regulation, yet his research neglects the crucial consideration of women whose access to such activities would itself be regulated.

Presbyterianism – when adhered to as fervently as by Annie Rattray and the Carnegie sisters whom she admires – is even more restrictive for women than for men, as the continuation of family life ‘was committed exclusively to the hands of the female sex’, and

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<sup>377</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 68.

<sup>378</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 69.

<sup>379</sup> Brown, ‘Popular Culture and the Continuing Struggle for Rational Recreation’, p. 211.

<sup>379</sup> Brown, ‘Popular Culture and the Continuing Struggle for Rational Recreation’, p. 210.

<sup>380</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 79.

‘every woman must therefore be more scrupulous in moral and religious obligations than any member of the opposite sex.’<sup>381</sup> Aileen Christianson explicitly considers *Mrs. Ritchie* to be a ‘sustained attack on both the patriarchal control of women’s options and the life-denying nature of Calvinist belief.’<sup>382</sup> Ritchie similarly argues that society ‘was not primarily concerned with the private emotional satisfaction of marriage’, and that the main purpose of marriage was ‘the establishment of a stable household [...] and the reproduction of a family lineage.’<sup>383</sup> Through establishing the moral burden of Presbyterianism, it is clear that self-regulation is as important as the weight of societal judgement. It becomes an individual responsibility to salvage one’s own soul; in essence, though the outward appearance of an apparently sinful or excessive life can be observed by others – and a ‘sinner’ cast aside from a community – the individual must hold the responsibility for their shortcomings. As with the analysis of the rural panopticon considered by Philo, Parr, and Burns in the previous chapter, there is a union between individual responsibility and the power of diffuse surveillance. The result of pervasive gossip and surveillance is said to be that individuals adapt themselves and ‘self-monitor, self-control, conceal and deny’.<sup>384</sup> The necessity for individuals to perform a day-to-day ritual that prevents them from being ‘stigmatised as an unworthy, suspect member of the community’, when combined with patriarchal Presbyterianism results in an unbearable pressure on women to portray an unblemished morality.<sup>385</sup> This, too, is indicative of the pastoral power of Calderwick. Research by Angela C. Henderson, Sandra M. Harmon and Jeffrey Houser on surveillance and motherhood demonstrates that surveillance is often

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<sup>381</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 73.

<sup>382</sup> Aileen Christianson, *Moving in Circles: Willa Muir’s Writings* (Edinburgh: Word Power Books, 2007), p. 174.

<sup>383</sup> Ritchie, ‘The Township, the Pregnant Girl and the Church’, p. 47.

<sup>384</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, ‘The Rural Panopticon’, p. 239.

<sup>385</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, ‘The Rural Panopticon’, p. 237.

directed towards Mothers by Mothers; as such, punishment is not enforced by social institutions but by other women and the self and persistent surveillance perpetuates impossible standards of perfection on an interpersonal level.<sup>386</sup> Though Henderson, Harmon and Houser are examining the impact of surveillance on modern motherhood, similar effects can be seen in Muir's fiction. Whilst the pastor (the Kirk Minister) may deliver character-damaging sermons, it is the ensuing reaction to the sermons and the tendency to self-monitor which is the most punishing. As such, there is immense pressure for women to produce and to maintain a stable household.

Muir continues to critique the patriarchal Presbyterianism of Calderwick throughout *Mrs. Ritchie*, with metaphors that mirror that of *Women: An Inquiry* and extracts from Muir's unpublished diaries and letters. For example, there are references to family 'ranks' who 'guard' the pews on Communion Sundays,<sup>387</sup> which echoes the 'fighting movement' of Muir's family structure in *Women: An Inquiry*.<sup>388</sup> Similarly, Muir's comparison to the father figure as a dictator is echoed in *Mrs. Ritchie* wherein the Father figure is akin to God. Given Muir's condemnation of Presbyterianism and the entrapment of women within it, it seems reasonable to assume that the patriarchal dictator figure in *Women: An Inquiry* and the Godlike father figure of the family unit in *Mrs. Ritchie* are paralleled. Indeed, Annie seeks to replace her biological Father *with* God. Following a series of disappointments wherein Annie feels increasingly disconnected from (and superior to) her family, she denounces her own father in favour of 'Our Father which art in Heaven.'<sup>389</sup> In a 'moment of exaltation,' Annie 'discarded her earthly father for ever'; 'God was her Father', and from then on she walked

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<sup>386</sup> Angela C. Henderson, Sandra M. Harmon and Jeffrey Houser, 'A New State of Surveillance? Applying Michel Foucault to Modern Motherhood' in *Surveillance and Society*, 7 (2010), 231 – 247.

<sup>387</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 76.

<sup>388</sup> Muir, *Women: An Inquiry*, p. 10.

<sup>389</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 41.

‘soberly as befitted a daughter of God.’<sup>390</sup> There are several moments throughout the novel wherein Fatherhood is linked to Godliness, but there are – indeed, unsurprisingly – no such comparisons between motherhood and Godliness. Christianson also comments on Annie’s abandonment of one form of control for another, reasoning that these are ‘ultimately fruitless attempts at control of her environment [...and] her rejection of one kind of patriarchal law fails to protect her against the patriarchy of God in Scotland.’<sup>391</sup> Although Christianson’s point is important, I would argue that there is an important distinction to be made between Annie seeking protection *from* the patriarchy of God, and what I consider to be Annie attempting to protect herself *within* this patriarchy, and I believe Annie attempts the latter. Nonetheless, that Annie sees the replacement of her Father with God as one way in which to salvage herself highlights a central facet of the patriarchal and repressive form of Presbyterianism which Muir critiques: women are judged by the success of their relationships with men or male figures. The roles available to them are roles which see them as subservient or secondary to men. Annie, for instance, may have rejected her Father but she still sees herself as ‘a daughter’. She begins to feel at peace in her home with the Carnegie sisters before she is consumed by fears of being judged as an ‘old maid’ or a failure should she remain unmarried and without children; ‘any matron in the church, sitting comfortably beside her lawful husband, could despise Miss Carnegie and Miss Susan Carnegie and Miss Julia Carnegie – three old maids.’<sup>392</sup> Muir emphasises the imbalance between men and women, even in small moments. For example, ‘not even Miss Susan, who tramped about to auction sales just like a man, could stand beside the collection plate at the door’ or break free from

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<sup>390</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, pp. 41 – 42.

<sup>391</sup> Christianson, *Moving in Circles*, p. 108.

<sup>392</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 77.

the label of an ‘old maid’.<sup>393</sup> As such, there is a lingering implication that Presbyterianism is either punishing women for their failures, or overlooking them entirely.

Similarly, there are two moments wherein Elise Shand in *Imagined Corners* reflects on how womanhood itself is burdensome. The first is a dream sequence wherein:

A voice, a dry Scots voice, was saying: ‘You’ll be exactly as you were before, only the inconvenience will be removed.’ It was a surgeon, she realised: an operation had been performed; something had been cut out of her, and they were just going to remove the bandages.<sup>394</sup>

This passage could be read in many ways. For example, as Elise is thinking of the death of her husband Karl, perhaps what has been cut out of her is a heart, or her memories, and the ‘inconvenience’ could be read as grief. However, as the passage concludes with Elise’s resignation that to return to Calderwick is to be ‘shot out again at her starting-point, a resentful girl of nineteen’, I instead read this passage as a desire for a hysterectomy and an erasure of the physicality of womanhood.<sup>395</sup> Simone de Beauvoir refers to the ‘two modes of alienation’ faced by women.<sup>396</sup> To ‘play at being a man will be for her a source of frustration; but to play at being a woman is also a delusion: to be a woman would mean to be the object, the *Other*’.<sup>397</sup> In response, Judith Butler notes that ‘because women have been identified with their anatomy, and this identification has served the purposes of their oppression’ they must

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<sup>393</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 76.

<sup>394</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 152.

<sup>395</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 152.

<sup>396</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p. 57

<sup>397</sup> de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, p. 57.

now seek to identify through transcendence of their gender.<sup>398</sup> Elise demonstrates a refusal to ‘play at’ being a woman when in the repressive, Presbyterian community of Calderwick, and finds that attempts at doing so are claustrophobic. Indeed, Butler’s note that women’s anatomy is linked to the oppression of women supports my reading of Elise’s ‘inconvenience’ to *be* her anatomy. There is therefore a double entrapment felt by Elise; that of her anatomy, and that of the gendered performance expected of her. Indeed, on Elise’s first return to Church she becomes ‘the ghost of that impetuous and resentful small girl’.<sup>399</sup> The ‘narrow complacency of the worshippers’ is set against Elise’s fury at God, stemming from her entrapment within the burden of womanhood:

Her one positive conception of God that He was a miracle worker, an omnipotent magician, had been shattered on the day when she had prayed Him to turn her into a boy and nothing had happened. The God that remained was merely an enforcer of taboos, and a male creature at that, one who had no sympathy for little girls and did nothing for them.<sup>400</sup>

There is a clear suggestion here both that God – unequivocally male – overlooks women and that the religion of Calderwick is rooted in patriarchal confines. Praying to become a boy is shown to be Elise’s final attempt at feeling as though God could sympathise with her, as the needs of girls are ignored. God’s ‘omnipotence’ reinforces the overbearing weight of watchfulness, and the relationship between religious standards and the enforcement of gendered behaviour. The claustrophobia of Calderwick is such that ‘young girls faced with

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<sup>398</sup> Judith Butler, ‘Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir’s *Second Sex*’ in *Yale French Studies*, 72 (1986), 35 – 49 (p. 43).

<sup>399</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 185.

<sup>400</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 185.



the traditional doctrines of the Church were at a special disadvantage', and Muir again unites gendered repression with the structures of Presbyterianism.

Muir's fiction criticises the traditions of rural Scottish society – in relation to gender and religion specifically – but also demonstrates efforts to deconstruct and escape (from or within) these traditions and the structure of *Imagined Corners* reflects this argument. Indeed, the title itself is taken from John Donne's 'Holy Sonnet 7', which Christianson suggests indicates 'ways in which her fictional world, bounded by real and imaginary corners, also contains the infinity of the imagination and the unconscious.'<sup>401</sup> Such ideas are examined in more depth later in this chapter in terms of Elizabeth Shand's philosophical musings and her determination to experience a life beyond Calderwick's literal and metaphorical confines. Yet the novel's title, taken as it is from Donne's poem, also foregrounds a focus on the relationship between the self and the spiritual (whether religious or otherwise). As Christianson notes, the novel combines the 'worlds of the unconscious' with the 'social constructions and ideological framework of Calderwick.'<sup>402</sup> One such construction, which this chapter examines, is that of Presbyterianism. Indeed, Donne's poem which contains the narrator's appeals to God to 'teach me how to repent' aligns with the desperation displayed within *Imagined Corners* as characters seek to realign their union with religion, or with idealised womanhood.<sup>403</sup>

The corners which bind the fictional world of Calderwick can be identified by the structuring of the novel. Muir divides *Imagined Corners* into three books: 'Calderwick 1912', 'The Glass is Shaken', and 'Precipitation'. The novel's first book, 'Calderwick 1912',

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<sup>401</sup> Christianson, *Moving in Circles*, p. 86.

<sup>402</sup> Christianson, *Moving in Circles*, p. 86.

<sup>403</sup> John Donne, 'Holy Sonnet 7' <<https://poets.org/poem/round-earths-imagined-corners-holy-sonnet-7>> [accessed 04 August 2022].

establishes the setting of Calderwick, its central relationships, and the rhythms of the town. Muir's language in this first book emphasises that Calderwick is a self-enclosed community. The town 'turned its back on the sea', for instance, and there 'was not even a bus connecting it with outlying villages,' and this marks its semi-rural, isolated nature; it is also markedly easy to differentiate between 'a native, born and brought up in Calderwick' and 'a stranger'.<sup>404</sup> The short first book also hints at the weight of gossip and watchfulness. The reader learns, for example, of Elise Shand's departure 'with a married man, a foreigner' and her 'scandalous behaviour,'<sup>405</sup> and Sarah Murray refers to the 'local weekly' wherein she could review 'the movements of prominent citizens' such as the arrival of Hector Shand and his new wife Elizabeth.<sup>406</sup> The book also introduces the centrality of personal faith. Reverend William Murray, having comforted Ann Watson, ruminates on the 'firm basis' – the 'enduring reality' – of religion and personal relationships with God.<sup>407</sup> Muir writes that William Murray 'did not doubt the universal validity of his personal experiences,' which indicates that religious doctrine is assumed to be a communal experience. The Reverend's unwavering devotion to 'the firmament' established in the first book is representative of a widespread repressive Presbyterianism, which does not consider the possibility of alternative beliefs. In this way, the first book aligns with what Juliet Shields refers to as 'domestic materialism' – an unrelenting, entirely matter-of-fact focus on the events of everyday life that reveals the intellectual and material deprivation experienced by a certain class of

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<sup>404</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 2.

<sup>405</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, pp. 25 – 26.

<sup>406</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 27.

<sup>407</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 21.

Scotswomen.<sup>408</sup> ‘Calderwick 1912’ therefore establishes the claustrophobic routines of everyday life.

Book two, conversely, sees a steady unravelling of some of the certainties of everyday life introduced in ‘Calderwick 1912’. The title of book two – ‘The Glass is Shaken’ – itself suggests a disruption of stillness. The ‘late summer peace and fragrance’ of Calderwick in the early paragraphs of the novel has dissipated, and the town is now described as ‘a dull little hole,’ and ‘colourless – grey skies, grey pavements, grey people’.<sup>409</sup> Certainly, the second book focuses on the idea of dullness and boredom as Muir begins to challenge the repressive traditions established in the opening pages of the novel. Gossip increases, and seemingly happy marriages begin to unfurl as a result of mutual dissatisfaction yet there seems to be no tangible way to escape such regret. Both John and Mabel Shand indulge in private fantasies, for example, yet as a result hold ‘a secret feeling of guilt’.<sup>410</sup>

The novel’s final book – ‘Precipitation’ – sees a disruption of societal atmosphere. The book begins with Elise Shand (also Madame Mütze) returning to Calderwick. Elise, perhaps as a stand-in for Muir herself, criticises the structure of the town in its entirety. Whilst the second book attempts to manipulate tradition from within its confines (such as Elizabeth Shand debating Philosophy with the Reverend, or consciously engaging in acts of performance to please her neighbours) these efforts ultimately fail. The purpose of the third book is to demonstrate the power of explicit disruption of (and, crucially, escape from) traditions. Such disruptions to the fabric of semi-rural society are central to Modernist texts,

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<sup>408</sup> Juliet Shields, ‘The Unknown and Unknowns: Naturalism in Scottish Domestic Fiction’, in *The Bottle Imp*, 2 (2015) <<https://www.thebottleimp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/TBI2015-Supplement-2-The-Unknown-and-the-Unknowns-Naturalism-in-Scottish-Domestic-Fiction-Juliet-Shields.pdf>> [Accessed 28 February 2023].

<sup>409</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 1, pp. 81 - 82.

<sup>410</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 39.

but also serve to further illuminate the presence of pastoral power within Calderwick. Jennifer Rust examines the relationship between pastoral power and resistance, arguing that ‘as pastoral power pervades [other] areas of life, it also generates multiple forms of resistance.’<sup>411</sup> The dynamic between power and resistance is a familiar tenet of Foucault’s work, and it is equally crucial to an understanding of pastoral power. Rust reasons that ‘counter-conduct must be understood as itself part of pastoral power’ wherein ‘varied strategies of resistance’ are not only possible but are to be expected.<sup>412</sup> *Imagined Corners* therefore provides clear examples of women’s strategies of resistance, and of their varying levels of success. Muir’s work centralises the moments of rupture, the destabilisation of the power of the pastor figure, and the way women are able to manipulate their own power thereby cementing their individual agency.

Like *Imagined Corners*, *Mrs. Ritchie* is also divided into books. Whereas the categorisation of Muir’s first novel depicts the gradual changes in Calderwick as a whole (the established town, the rippling unrest, and a change in societal atmosphere), the categorisation of *Mrs. Ritchie* instead depicts the stages of female life and their foundations in repressive religious characteristics. The four books are: ‘The Child’, ‘The Girl’, ‘The Woman’, and ‘The Woman’. By separating the life of Mrs. Ritchie into these four categories, the novel’s structure mirrors Simone de Beauvoir’s statement in *The Second Sex* that ‘one is not born, but rather becomes’ a woman.<sup>413</sup> Annie is a genderless child, before becoming a girl, and finally a woman, and Muir therefore presents the stages of ‘becoming’ necessary to reach womanhood.

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<sup>411</sup> Jennifer R. Rust, ‘Political Theology, Pastoral Power, and Resistance’ in *Political Theology*, 22.1 (2021), 89 – 94 (p. 90).

<sup>412</sup> Rust, ‘Political Theology, Pastoral Power, and Resistance’, pp. 90 – 91.

<sup>413</sup> de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, p. 301.

Additionally, the novel's structure demonstrates the paralleled evolving understanding of Presbyterianism that Mrs. Ritchie has, and the ways in which she manipulates Presbyterianism to suit her fluctuating ideals. Susanne Hagemann in her reading of *Mrs. Ritchie* as 'one of the most disturbing explorations of femininity and masculinity in a patriarchal context' argues that 'Calvinism comes to function as a symbol of evil in Muir, as it does for several male authors of the Scottish Renaissance, but in *Mrs Ritchie*, the origin of evil is gender rather than religion.'<sup>414</sup> There is certainly evidence that the protagonist's worst actions are borne from her desire to exert the powers she has a woman in the spheres wherein this power is strongest (such as the home). Likewise, Annie's obsession with religion is a response to the limitations of girlhood. As a child, Annie Rattray hopes that through hard work in school, she will be able to forge an educated and accomplished life for herself. When this dream is quickly halted, as Annie's mother insists that Annie's destiny is not to go to the Academy but to 'gang to a job, or else [to gi'e a hand at home] wi' the washin' and the hoose', Annie's conscientiousness becomes fury as she determines it is she 'who was right in spite of everything'.<sup>415</sup> It is at this moment that Annie begins to obsess over religious righteousness, and rejects the watchfulness of society in favour of Godly watchfulness. In the second book, 'The Girl', Annie lives with the Carnegie sisters and further develops her relationship with God. Annie is consumed by the idea of individual salvation, and by ensuring she is worthy of God's forgiveness. At this point, Annie determines that in order to achieve a state of idealised womanhood – and therefore be accepted by God – is to marry and to produce a morally clean family. To elaborate on Hagemann's stance that the origin of evil is gender in *Mrs. Ritchie*, however, there is a paralleled evolution of Annie's relationship

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<sup>414</sup> Susanne Hagemann, 'From Carswell to Kay: Aspects of Gender, the Novel and the Drama' in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature Volume 3: Modern Transformations: New Identities (from 1918)*, ed. by Ian Brown et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 214 – 224 (p. 215).

<sup>415</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, pp. 23 – 31.

with gender and her relationship with religion which indicates that although gender is the origin of the protagonist's 'evil', it is the relationship with – and guidance of – religion that exacerbates this.

Book three, 'The Woman', sees Annie Rattray become Mrs. Ritchie. In marrying Johnny Ritchie and having two children, Mrs. Ritchie is determined that their family be free from shame, sin, and moral disrepute. That Muir begins a new book with the same title of 'The Woman' signifies several things. Firstly, that on feeling as though her family is beyond her help and is destined to go to Hell, Mrs. Ritchie emotionally separates herself and again focuses solely on the salvation of herself. Secondly, that there is a division in womanhood in this period. Mrs. Ritchie and her daughter Sarah-Annie are representative of the claustrophobic Calvinist pressures of society that Mrs. Ritchie would be used to, whereas Sarah-Annie represents the burgeoning Modern woman, more able to seek new opportunities and directly influenced by the Suffrage movement. Finally, the divide is representative of which women are suitable for life in Calderwick, and which have no choice but to flee. Butler, in considering de Beauvoir's use of the verb 'become', notes that 'gender is not only a cultural construction imposed upon identity, but in some sense gender is a process of constructing ourselves.'<sup>416</sup> The two versions of 'The Woman' portrayed by Annie Rattray and Mrs Ritchie therefore represents the combination of these constructions. Muir presents the possibility of choice, in that there are variations of womanhood to 'become', yet each of these choices remain simultaneously rooted in cultural ideals. Each version of womanhood contributes to the establishment of clear guidelines regarding the performance of idealised

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<sup>416</sup> Judith Butler, 'Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*' in *Yale French Studies*, 72 (1986), 35 – 49 (p. 36).

girlhood and womanhood in the novel. Governed by societal and religious rules, the weight of watchfulness is combated by skilled acts of self-preservation.

The caveat to the above forms of performance of idealised womanhood, however, is that there is equally the implication that incorrect forms of womanhood exist. Indeed, Johnny Ritchie's scathing remark that his wife is an 'unnatural woman' is testament to this implication.<sup>417</sup> Muir repeats the description 'unnatural' later in the novel, referring to Mrs. Ritchie as a 'hard woman, an unnatural woman.'<sup>418</sup> Instantly, hardness is marked as a characteristic of an unnatural woman, suggesting that softness is womanly. The phrase 'unnatural woman' also has historical connotations of lesbianism, and early twentieth-century attempts to suppress, quieten, and admonish lesbian women.<sup>419</sup> There are therefore similarities between Mrs. Ritchie's dour unnaturalness and other characters of the interwar years. Katherine Bischooping and Riley Olstead examine Dorothy L. Sayers' 'monstrous' lesbianism in *Unnatural Death* (1927) against Radclyffe Hall's 'unrepentant lesbian protagonist' in *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), and D. H. Lawrence's 'The Fox' (1923), and Clemence Dane's *The Regiment of Women* (1917) which they argue 'cast the lesbian as a

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<sup>417</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 183.

<sup>418</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 255.

<sup>419</sup> See: Shari Benstock, 'Expatriate Sapphic Modernism: Entering Literary History' in *Lesbian Texts and Contexts: Radical Revisions* ed. Karla Jay and Joanne Glasgow (New York: New York University Press, 1990), pp. 183 – 203; Diana Collecott, *H.D. and Sapphic Modernism, 1910 – 1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Gabriele Griffin, *Heavenly Love? Lesbian Images in Twentieth-Century Women's Writing* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993); Jodie Medd, *Lesbian Scandal and the Culture of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Adam Parkes, 'Lesbianism, History, and Censorship: The Well of Loneliness and the Suppressed Randiness of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*' in *Twentieth Century Literature*, 40.4 (1994), 434 – 460; Allen Young, Joanne Glasgow, Karla Jay and Renee Vivien, eds, *Lesbian Texts and Contexts: Radical Revisions* (New York: New York University Press, 1990); Suzanne Young, 'The Unnatural Object of Modernist Aesthetics: Artifice in Woolf's *Orlando*' in *Unmanning Modernism: Gendered Re-Readings*, eds Elizabeth Jane Harrison and Shirley Peterson (Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1997).

morally disordered figure.<sup>420</sup> Muir's terminology therefore deliberately casts Mrs. Ritchie as – if not explicitly a lesbian – oppositional to an idealised womanhood.

Another characteristic of idealised womanhood is piety; a good woman must be a Christian, and it is 'not enough to be a Christian [...] one needed to be as good a Christian as Miss Julia [Carnegie].'<sup>421</sup> For a significant duration of her childhood, Annie Rattray considers Julia Carnegie as a beacon of hope, and a symbol of idealised womanhood. Julia Carnegie 'was a real lady, who lived a Christian life behind a peculiarly solid and respectable front door.'<sup>422</sup> In *Mrs Grundy*, Muir considers the importance of maintaining a respectable home – or at least maintaining an image of a respectable home – in that 'a house must always stand as a concrete symbol of the woman-as-environment.'<sup>423</sup> The home thus comes to expose its inhabitants' piousness. Miss Julia's respectable front door therefore symbolises her admirable Christianity, and distances her from passing judgement. Miss Julia has a 'delicacy and propriety [of conduct as] expected from a lady dedicated to the domestic altar and the sacred hearth of home'.<sup>424</sup> Although unmarried and childless, Miss Julia's 'maternal duties, unhappily incapable of any but vicarious fulfilment, were supplied by the care of her Sunday-school class.'<sup>425</sup> To her Sunday-school class, Miss Julia reflects on her own childlessness 'in her most grave and solemn voice [...] reminding them that they were future wives and mothers, and candidates for immortality.'<sup>426</sup> These extracts are evidently similar to Muir's

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<sup>420</sup> Katherine Bischooping and Riley Olstead, 'A "Beastly, Blood-Sucking Woman": Invocations of a Gothic Monster in Dorothy L. Sayers' *Unnatural Death* (1927)' in *The Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies*, 12 (2013), 4 – 19.

<sup>421</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 53.

<sup>422</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 53.

<sup>423</sup> Muir, *Mrs Grundy*, p. 58.

<sup>424</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 57.

<sup>425</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 57.

<sup>426</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 58.



*Women: An Inquiry*, in that girls are primed for womanhood by having the importance of marriage and motherhood constantly reinforced. To be a good wife and a maternal mother are displayed not only as noble traits, but as the only respectable option for girls. Therefore, Annie Rattray gradually distances herself from the unmarried and childless Carnegie sisters. The separation is reinforced by Annie physically distancing herself from Miss Julia in church, ‘and she was now divided from her by more than the thickness of a pillar.’<sup>427</sup> There is a clear union between revered womanhood and religion, whereby Annie is hesitant to be either physically or spiritually close to her former muse, seeking instead to elevate her own social and religious standing.

Muir also emphasises the supposed spiritual distance between Mrs. Ritchie and Bet Reid, through a clash that lasts from girlhood to adulthood. In youth, Annie Rattray thought of Bet as a ‘limmer [a rascal]’ and longed for God to ‘strike [her] down’.<sup>428</sup> Callum G. Brown’s analysis of the increasing allure of – and fear of – ‘rough culture’ can also be noted in Mrs. Ritchie’s distrust of the adult Bet Reid. Upon hearing that her son, John Samuel, had been playing card games at Bet Reid’s home, she refers to the games as ‘the devil’s picture books’.<sup>429</sup> Mrs. Ritchie also ascertains that hers is a ‘godly Christian home’, with the implication that the Reid household, by contrast, is not.<sup>430</sup> To associate with the Reids is to be ‘wilfully trafficking with the devil,’ and Muir thus continues to unite the domineering presence of the church, and patterns of enforcing codes of behaviour.<sup>431</sup> Mrs. Ritchie’s obsession with the ways in which the Devil can manipulate the sanctity of the homes, by

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<sup>427</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 78.

<sup>428</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie* p. 89.

<sup>429</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 184.

<sup>430</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 184.

<sup>431</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 182.

abiding within people, leads to her scrupulousness with her own relationship to God as well as her judgement of others. As a result of the clear disparities between correct and incorrect constructions and performances of womanhood, Muir presents adherence to religious protocol as a form of escape from such pressures. Solace and safety are thus sought in the performances of Presbyterianism and womanhood.

Pastoral power, as demonstrated, can be viewed as the positive union between an individual and the flock wherein the overall focus is a morally strengthened community. However, in Muir's fiction, there is evidence that the focus on individual salvation can encourage an oppressive watchfulness. *Mrs. Ritchie* in particular exposes the drive for individual salvation as leading directly to striving towards an idealised womanhood (idealised in the sense of seeking a societally appealing form of femininity, and an idealised piety). As such, pastoral power in *Mrs. Ritchie* ultimately leads to an increased watchfulness, wherein the individuals are judged on the benefits or risks they pose to the flock. Therefore, Muir establishes the semi-rural community as claustrophobic, and the presence of Presbyterianism directly impacts the acceptable forms of womanhood.

#### Seeking Safety and Solace in Presbyterianism: Watchful Communities and Escaping through God in *Imagined Corners* and *Mrs. Ritchie*

Having established Presbyterianism as a claustrophobia-inducing presence in Muir's fiction, its ability to serve as a potential means of escape seems contradictory. However, there is a union between religion and community watchfulness wherein repressive rules are formed by the structures of religion; failure to adhere to such structures is deemed to be a personal failing, sinful, and a danger to society. Christianson's thorough reading of *Mrs. Ritchie* focuses on Muir's monstrous form of Calvinism, and the protagonist's 'inevitable trajectory'

towards an entirely destructive and extreme relationship to religion.<sup>432</sup> Isobel Murray also suggests that the novel presents ‘fears, of God, church and public disgrace, [as] the dominant weapons against rebellious’ youths.<sup>433</sup> However, there is also evidence of some less destructive side-effects of Calvinism. Namely, embracing spirituality can itself be a means of escape. That is not to deny the monstrosity of Mrs. Ritchie’s religious fervour that Christianson writes of, but there are attempts to bypass the pressure of community watchfulness and the fear of societal judgement by favouring God’s watchfulness and the judgement of God alone, and this offers moments of inner-peace, self-assurance and escape from external pressure. Other escape routes are shown to be inaccessible for women. For example, Annie Rattray is told that she would be an ideal candidate for further education and a career in teaching, yet her Mother forbids this as ‘it’s no’ even as if [she] were a laddie’ and her future is in the home.<sup>434</sup> *Imagined Corners* centralises dissatisfying marriages, built upon the importance of public appearance and women who deflect from this path – such as Elise Shand – are routinely criticised and shunned. Embedding oneself within religious expectation thus presents a means of certain self-protection from the watchfulness and gossip of society. By consciously engaging in what Luz Fentes-Vasquez describes as the ‘delusory religious morality’ of Muir’s Calderwick, women are able to spiritually escape.<sup>435</sup> Indeed, the spiritual escape prevents what Muir considers the biggest fear of those in Scottish society: ‘not the damnation of his soul to all eternity [...but] censorious gossip.’<sup>436</sup>

Elizabeth Shand in *Imagined Corners* struggles to maintain any sense of belonging in Calderwick, and ponders potential avenues for spiritual release or for the sensation or act of

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<sup>432</sup> Christianson, *Moving in Circles*, p. 104.

<sup>433</sup> Murray, p. 115.

<sup>434</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 23.

<sup>435</sup> Fentes-Vasquez, *Dangerous Writing*, p. 77.

<sup>436</sup> Muir, *Mrs Grundy*, p. 32.

escape. Although Elizabeth is flirting with escape, ‘it is difficult to see what current could have carried [her] away had she too been minded to drift.’<sup>437</sup> Despite the implication that Elizabeth is *choosing* to abandon rigidity and entrapment (as she would need to ‘mind to drift’), it is the force of a current that would take Elizabeth elsewhere, rather than the strength of a choice or direction of her own. Even in the act of escape, therefore, there are still mapped currents. Indeed, ‘in Calderwick wives are not so well provided for as husbands’ in terms of freedom, or the pursuit of recklessness.<sup>438</sup> They ‘do not forgather in drunkenness, so Elizabeth was denied that relief’, and Elizabeth ‘could not count on support [from any woman] except Emily Scrymgeour’.<sup>439</sup> Muir writes that ‘the only thing [Elizabeth] could have done was to be unfaithful to her husband, but for a Calderwick woman to do that is not to drift: the whole social current sets the other way.’<sup>440</sup> Again, there is only the outline of free choice. When observing the spring buds on an ‘old, old tree’, Elizabeth considers the ‘intolerable thought that such young things should burgeon only to be burned in the fires of autumn and stripped from the boughs by savage winds.’<sup>441</sup> Elizabeth and the other women of Calderwick are, like the spring buds on trees, fixed to something older and immovable. Indeed, Elizabeth’s pondering concludes with the thought that ‘like the leaves [...] when we flutter from the tree we think it is freedom, but it is death.’<sup>442</sup> Muir’s metaphors of currents and leaves equates the structured and predictable beats of a woman’s life to nature, and it is Elizabeth’s subsequent hopelessness (wherein she thinks that all are ‘born to die’, and there is an ‘apparent deadness of her own heart’) that prompts her to seek solace in a conscious

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<sup>437</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 118.

<sup>438</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 118.

<sup>439</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 118.

<sup>440</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 118.

<sup>441</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 118.

<sup>442</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 118.

performance of wifely, Godly duties;<sup>443</sup> as though conceding defeat, Elizabeth ‘yielded herself to the stream of traditional wifhood’.<sup>444</sup>

It is at this point that Elizabeth – steeling herself for the performance of ‘the Noble Wife’ to come – decides that she ‘had been a bad wife, and now, God helping her, she would be a good wife.’<sup>445</sup> Here, Muir links the idea of a ‘perfect wife’ with religion, by implying that Elizabeth’s path towards ‘the full sunshine of wifhood’ requires the help of God.<sup>446</sup> Furthermore, when listing the attributes of the Noble Wife – including being ‘sympathetic, understanding, tactful and, above all, charming’ – Elizabeth discovers the ‘cloak of charity which should cover her husband’s many sins’.<sup>447</sup> Muir’s Noble Wife also invites a comparison to Woolf’s ‘Angel in the House’ in ‘Professions for Women’. Woolf’s ‘Angel’, like Muir’s wife, is ‘intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish.’<sup>448</sup> Woolf felt the presence of this character when sitting to write, and ‘[the Angel] made as if to guide [Woolf’s] pen.’<sup>449</sup> Elizabeth is similarly guided by the ghost of an idealised femininity yet this encounter proves to be brief, as does Woolf’s. Woolf notes how she ‘did her best to kill’ the Angel as had she not the Angel ‘would have killed’ Woolf and ‘would have plucked the heart out of [her] writing.’<sup>450</sup> Elizabeth’s foray into sensitive, charitable wifhood displays similar tensions between presenting a particular vision of

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<sup>443</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, pp. 119 – 120.

<sup>444</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 126.

<sup>445</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 126.

<sup>446</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 127.

<sup>447</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 127.

<sup>448</sup> Virginia Woolf, ‘Professions for Women’ in *Women and Writing*, ed. by Michelle Barrett (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979), pp. 57 – 63 (p. 59).

<sup>449</sup> Woolf, ‘Professions for Women’, p. 59.

<sup>450</sup> Woolf, ‘Professions for Women’, p. 59.

femininity (Woolf refers to the necessity to ‘tell lies’ if women are to ‘succeed’) or experiencing life honestly.<sup>451</sup>

Elizabeth’s new self therefore appeals to Calderwick society’s constructs, but also protects her husband from receiving judgement or punishment for his sins. Indeed, the language Muir uses presents Elizabeth as a sacrificial body, and it is again evident that Calvinist societal structures are built to protect men and keep women in a position of servitude. Lesley Anne Orr MacDonald similarly notes that Calvinism denotes that ‘the natural order, created by God and knowable by all people, was for women to live in submission and obedience to men’.<sup>452</sup> Elizabeth’s brief foray into noble wifhood results in her ‘keen ecstasy’: she is ‘transfigured by happiness’ and the transformation is ‘miraculous’.<sup>453</sup> In briefly aligning herself to Calderwick’s values and mirroring patriarchal behaviours rooted in Presbyterianism, Elizabeth experiences a temporary dissolution of external pressure and disappointment. Christianson suggests that the rigidity of gendered standards is such that in *Imagined Corners* women are ‘both suffering from and trapped by their gendered assumptions that men, however useless, had the automatic right to positions of power, and that women had access only to the manipulation of men.’<sup>454</sup> Whilst there is certainly evidence of the manipulation of men in *Imagined Corners*, I would argue that this is not the ‘only’ manipulative and tactical access to power or change that women have. Elizabeth’s performance of the Noble Wife is an example of a tactical manipulation of the knowledge she has about idealised womanhood. Although Elizabeth’s aim is partly to appease her husband, she also wishes to appease other women in Calderwick and reduce

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<sup>451</sup> Woolf, ‘Professions for Women’, p. 59.

<sup>452</sup> Lesley Anne Orr Macdonald, *Women and Presbyterianism in Scotland c1830 to c1930* (PhD Thesis: University of Edinburgh, 1995), p. 27.

<sup>453</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 127.

<sup>454</sup> Christianson, *Moving in Circles*, pp. 93 – 94.

gossip; her performance is designed to convince everyone of her status as a ‘good wife’, not just her husband.

However, Elizabeth’s transformation – like Woolf’s experience with the ‘Angel in the house’ – is only brief. Elise’s arrival to Calderwick distracts Elizabeth from her newfound purpose, and disrupts her path. Elise as a ‘fallen woman’, and as a woman who has already broken away from Calderwick and its Calvinist principles, is able to illuminate other potential paths for Elizabeth. Despite the short duration of Elizabeth’s noble wifehood, Muir illuminates the temptation of succumbing to this version of womanhood; by allowing herself to be led by one of Calderwick’s currents and eschewing her philosophical desires, Elizabeth finds brief solace and emotional respite.

*Mrs. Ritchie* likewise considers the allure of mapped ‘currents’ for women, and the conscious performance of religious purity. Many of Mrs. Ritchie’s life decisions, though governed by religion, are simultaneously inextricably linked to societal conventions (such as her urge to get married, her focus on cleanliness and housekeeping, and the behaviour of her children). Therefore, there is also a layer of pretence to Mrs. Ritchie’s behaviour; her daughter Sarah-Annie insists that her mother is ‘play-acting most of the time’.<sup>455</sup> Mrs. Ritchie’s performance of widowhood and grief is one such example of the relationship between societal expectations and religion. At the funeral, ‘the widow’s Christian resignation was much commended. She accepted sympathy; she even went out of her way to seek it [...and the mourners] agreed that the widow [...] was taking it beautifully, beautifully.’<sup>456</sup> There are clearly expected behaviours attributed to funeral etiquette and the behaviour of a widow, and adhering to such expectations prevents negative judgement and scrutiny of the kind directed at ‘gruff’ Sarah Annie who ‘made a most unfortunate impression on the

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<sup>455</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 257.

<sup>456</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 228.

mourners.<sup>457</sup> As Chapter 3 examines in detail, the early twentieth century saw a transformation in the expectations of public and private grief and Muir – like Moon – presents a divergence between felt and performed feeling. Sarah Annie resents the ‘parade of grief’ and refers to Mrs. Ritchie as ‘an actress’ and as ‘the central figure in an irrelevant stage show.’<sup>458</sup> The performance is a ‘sham, sham, sham.’<sup>459</sup> Muir critiques the falseness of small communities and suggests that although performances can prevent judgement, such performances bear no truth or real feeling. These critiques align with Muir’s discussions of piety in *Mrs Grundy in Scotland*. Rather than sincere piety, Muir contests that ‘if [an individual] strikes an attitude of piety without necessarily being pious’ Mrs MacGrundy is satisfied.<sup>460</sup>

Although Muir critiques the performance of religious morality, for Mrs. Ritchie there is no visible or viable alternative to Godliness (whether an alternative is desired or not). Fentes-Vasquez asserts that Mrs. Ritchie represents the allure of Calvinism when there were limited alternatives for women to pursue:

Muir gives Mrs Ritchie her own ambitions, and some of her own real ability, but then denies her even the limited successes that she had herself. What would it be like, she asks, for a girl who had no resources, yet who sensed a real superiority: where could she turn? What would happen if she turned to the worst perversions of Calvinist belief? In a number of places, Muir criticizes institutions, particularly the church in Scotland, with its Calvinist foundations, because of their contribution to the repression of people, especially women.<sup>461</sup>

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<sup>457</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 229.

<sup>458</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, pp. 230 – 231.

<sup>459</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 230.

<sup>460</sup> Muir, *Mrs Grundy*, p. 32.

<sup>461</sup> Fentes-Vasquez, *Dangerous Writing*, p. 74.



Mrs. Ritchie has strengths; she is ambitious, forceful, ruthless, and determined. However, there are limited options but to adapt these strengths to fit the mould of life available to her. As highlighted previously the illusion of equality, which resulted from a journalistic preoccupation with new female voters, impacted the attempts of feminist movements to resolve further obstacles which continued to impede women. Muir similarly indicates that viable opportunities for women in semi-rural areas remained limited. Indeed, when Sarah Annie is declaring her Mother's performance a 'sham', she also questions: 'if this swelling drama of heaven and hell, of God and the devil [...] were all a sham, what was the reality?'<sup>462</sup> Though arguably a 'sham', seeking solace in Presbyterianism provides an escape, a purpose, and a feeling of moral righteousness that would otherwise be unobtainable for women such as Mrs. Ritchie. By aligning herself with the morality of Calvinism, Mrs. Ritchie's sense of superiority is fully realised. For Annie Rattray, the idea of a hierarchical watchfulness – wherein God's judgement is more important than any other – provides protection against the community. Alistair Mutch argues that religion can be performed as a social practice as much as a spiritual belief and Mrs. Ritchie's sense of superiority therefore mirrors the necessity for individual 'accountability [which] ran like a thread through Scottish Presbyterian policy.'<sup>463</sup> Mutch's assessment mirrors the salvaging of individual members of the flock in Foucault's pastoral power wherein confessional dynamics and self-government aids the pastor's congregational responsibilities. Yet, Mrs. Ritchie can be seen as the pastor of a flock of her own. She distances herself from those whom she harshly judges and aims to salvage the souls of her family. As the 'pastor is in a reciprocal and vulnerable position, as himself a sinner among his flock,' Mrs. Ritchie must assure her own salvation.<sup>464</sup> Indeed, Hagemann argues

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<sup>462</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 230.

<sup>463</sup> Mutch, 'Decently and Order', p. 86.

<sup>464</sup> Rust, 'Political Theology, Pastoral Power, and Resistance', p. 92.

that Mrs. Ritchie turns her house ‘into a (pseudo-) Christian fortress over which she rules as her God’s deputy.’<sup>465</sup> Mrs. Ritchie, as a vehicle for religious rule, attempts to preserve the sanctity of the family home and ensure both her own power as a pastor figure and the adherence of her family to Christian guidelines.

Mrs. Ritchie’s devotion to God in adulthood – cemented through her transformation from Annie Rattray to Mrs. Ritchie – sees her escape through the separation between her childhood self who was judged constantly by others, and her new self who can only be judged by God. Her marriage to Johnny Ritchie protects her from her feared fate of being an ‘old maid’ like the Carnegie sisters, and ‘a decent Christian marriage was more than a sanctuary from the world; it was a perpetual assertion of God.’<sup>466</sup> Mrs. Ritchie is afforded protection from society, by committing herself to marriage, and is also united with God. On her first night as a wife, Mrs. Ritchie hangs a frame above the bed with the words ‘Thou God Seest Me, printed in solemn black letters beneath a largely opened eye whose rays spread into the remotest corners of the white rectangle.’<sup>467</sup> There is a direct correlation between Godliness and watchfulness, and Mrs. Ritchie is consciously succumbing to the gaze of God. The sign also emphasises that this is an individualising gaze. Unlike the communal gaze of rural watchfulness, Mrs. Ritchie now focuses only on the singular gaze and her individual responsibility to God. Indeed, later in the novel Mrs. Ritchie’s son – John Samuel – felt a ‘curious disgust’ when looking at the sign and reflects on how ‘Thou God seest me: that was *her* spot-light’.<sup>468</sup> The relationship between women and religion is repeatedly presented as a personal one.

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<sup>465</sup> Hagemann, ‘From Carswell to Kay’, p. 216.

<sup>466</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 123.

<sup>467</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie* p. 123.

<sup>468</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 226.

Mrs. Ritchie's sign also invites a comparison to Foucault's discussion of the Mettray Penal Colony in *Discipline in Punish*. Foucault writes that 'the entire parapenal institution, which is created in order not to be a prison, culminates in the cell, on the walls of which are [sic] written in black letters: "God sees you."'”<sup>469</sup> The parallels between Muir's language and Mettray's cells are striking, and it further enhances the centrality of religious watchfulness to Muir's fiction. Additionally, the cells of Mettray establishes an individualised surveillance. Although the message to each inhabitant may be the same – that God is watching – the gaze is fixed upon the individual rather than the collective. Despite the similarities, there are differences between these two signs. In *Mrs. Ritchie*, Muir's object pronoun 'me' clearly signifies that God is watching Mrs. Ritchie only, and the wording is possessive; *thou* God sees *me*. Conversely, whilst the placement of the Mettray sign on the walls of cells indicates that the message is designed for the individual, 'God Sees You' could still refer to a singular or a collective 'you'. Muir's use of 'me' therefore strengthens Mrs. Ritchie's personal devotion to salvation, her self-delineated role as God's deputy, and her distancing from the Godless. Again, this relates to pastoral power's goal of individual salvation in order to preserve the flock; if each individual soul, observed by God, is salvaged, then so too will the flock be salvaged.

The combination of religion and incarcerated surveillance is echoed in Jill McCorkel's research on embodied surveillance and gendered punishment. McCorkel assesses the importance of purity in eighteenth and nineteenth-century prisons, utilising Foucault's treatment of Bentham's panopticon design. Though McCorkel's focus falls earlier than Muir's writing, McCorkel's reference to 'promoting the prisoners' spiritual connectedness with god [through the implementation of] a small window that allowed a single shaft of light

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<sup>469</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 294.

to penetrate a room' parallels Mrs. Ritchie's 'spot-light' with its 'rays' which spread out.<sup>470</sup> The incarcerated women McCorkel discusses 'were told that the ray of light was the "hand of God"', and as such they were to 'engage in intense and solemn deliberations about their character and the possibilities of reform.'<sup>471</sup> Certainly for Mrs. Ritchie, there is a focus on personal salvation and accountability wherein she maintains that if she adheres to religious conventions her relationship with God is secure and she can be free from negative judgement. The allure of Calvinism is therefore the ability to focus on only one judgement, and an escape from societal judgement.

### In Search of Modernity: Escaping the Rural Panopticon

As evidenced, Muir suggests that spiritual escape *can* provide women with some protection against the reality of early twentieth-century life, in that focusing solely on God's watchfulness reduces the felt impact of the rural panopticon. However, I believe that Muir's fiction implies that anti-Calvinist ways of living are incompatible with rural Scottish life; it is impossible for Elise, Elizabeth, or Sarah-Annie to live happily in Calderwick if not adhering to or at least accepting Calvinism. Alison Lumsden makes a similar point; Lumsden states that in *Imagined Corners* 'the local is represented simultaneously as a site where [...] modernist philosophical concerns may be explored and one which must ultimately be rejected as incapable of sustaining such enquiry.'<sup>472</sup> There are instances, for example, in *Imagined Corners* and *Mrs. Ritchie* wherein there are potential avenues for escape. Elizabeth and Elise

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<sup>470</sup> Jill A. McCorkel, 'Embodied Surveillance and the Gendering of Punishment' in *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 32.1 (2003), 41 – 76 (p. 58).

<sup>471</sup> McCorkel, 'Embodied Surveillance and the Gendering of Punishment', p. 58.

<sup>472</sup> Alison Lumsden, 'To Get Leave to Live: Negotiating Regional Identity in the Literature of North-East Scotland' in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature: Volume 3, Modern Transformations, New Identities (from 1918)*, eds Ian Brown, Thomas Owen Clancy, Susan Manning and Murray Pittock (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 95 – 105 (p. 102).

Shand engage in philosophical debate, for example, and consider spiritual and individualised alternatives to Presbyterianism. Elizabeth believes that her idea of God differs from the God she hears of in the Kirk and she favours a religious approach that combines nature with an unknown mysticism. These are examples of the exploration of modernist philosophical concerns that Lumsden refers to. There are also mentions of women's suffrage, and a sense of hope and the approaching reality of greater freedoms and opportunities for women. As discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, the Representation of the People Act and the broadening of political access and economic rights for women resulted in the overlap of multiple feminisms and, importantly, non-uniform womanhood. Muir's references to suffrage therefore situate her texts in the heart of such concerns. In both texts, Muir also considers the possibility of sexual escape and juxtaposes sexual expression against the repression and stiffness of Presbyterianism. However, these are only avenues for *escapism* and never a full *escape* from the claustrophobia of the religious rural panopticon.

Calderwick is consistently represented as static, and its inhabitants as predictable. In *Imagined Corners*, Sarah Murray 'mentally rehearses' her daily errands. Sarah would never 'expect to be surprised by anything in the streets. She could have predicted what was to be seen at any hour of the day [...] She would have been disturbed had things been otherwise.'<sup>473</sup> The town seems to run as if by clockwork, and the rhythms of the community are steady and expected by all. Calderwick's inherent watchfulness is such that a difference in rhythm would be enough to 'disturb' a Calderwick 'native', as 'everything had its time and place.'<sup>474</sup> Crucially, the only disruption to the 'orderly life of Calderwick' is the 'prolonged whistle of the express from King's Cross as it pulled out of the station.'<sup>475</sup> This piercing

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<sup>473</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*. p. 7.

<sup>474</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*. p. 7.

<sup>475</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*. p. 7.

sound of departure is the only explicit mention of sound in Muir's passage. Though there are mentions of vans, dust-carts, and children, everything seems to be suspended in motion, as though contained in a snow-globe. Sarah's experience of the town is described through the sense of sight alone, thereby presenting Calderwick and its community as existing through watchfulness. The 'prolonged whistle' of the train that ends Sarah Murray's reverie thus disrupts the stillness of Calderwick. The train's whistle symbolises the way in which departure from Calderwick can also represent departure from rigid watchfulness. Muir's writing depicts semi-rural spaces which are simultaneously greatly impacted by influences of modernity, yet which largely remain in a state of stasis. Departure from Calderwick and from Presbyterianism is thus positioned as the most likely means by which to access the opportunities offered by modernity.

There are discussions throughout *Imagined Corners* considering philosophical thought, and the potential for broader ways of considering spirituality. The religious and philosophical conversations in *Imagined Corners* are primarily held by and between women, or they are private musings. However, Elizabeth Shand occasionally discusses God and religion with the Reverend William Murray, to whom Elizabeth confesses she is 'not religious in the ordinary sense [and does not] think [she is] a Christian.'<sup>476</sup> Given the patriarchal structure of Presbyterianism, Elizabeth's transparency with William is striking, and is reflective of Muir's own critiques of religion. William Knox argues that Elizabeth 'rejects Christianity and its God as male contrivances to subordinate women and in doing so they also reject the land of Calvinism – Scotland.'<sup>477</sup> Elizabeth's calm refusal to align with Christianity with the Reverend is an example of this rejection of Scotland's patriarchal Calvinism. Additionally, Elizabeth and Elise both engage in philosophical debates,

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<sup>476</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 72.

<sup>477</sup> Knox, *Women: Women and Scottish Society, 1800 – 1980*, p. 190.

attempting to locate individual beliefs that offer more nuanced connections to life than they can find in Presbyterianism. Their spiritualities differ, ‘in following what Elise called Nature Elizabeth was following what she conceived to be God,’ but for both, there is an openness to the possibility of alternatives. Another discussion between Elizabeth and William focuses on whether ‘one should coerce other people for their good.’<sup>478</sup> William’s argument – that to ‘force ideas or conduct on another [...] is egoism; but to influence another, if it’s done in love [...] is surely the highest altruism’ – is mocked by Elizabeth (‘altruism my hat!’).<sup>479</sup> Knox argues that Muir uses *Imagined Corners* to depict women who are cornered into ‘passive acceptance of a patriarchal social structure,’ but I disagree with this. Muir certainly highlights the repressiveness of the patriarchal social structure Knox mentions, and there are visible struggles with finding happiness in Calderwick, but there is little passiveness.<sup>480</sup> Elise Shand refers to religion as a ‘hocus-pocus of nonsense [prevailing] over human intelligence’, for instance.<sup>481</sup> Elizabeth Shand, on her way to Kirk on a Sunday, considers how the congregation were ‘all going to worship the same God as herself, even although they had a partial and limited idea of the cosmic force which she acknowledged as the Godhead.’<sup>482</sup> Elizabeth here sees herself as being fortunate in her broader understanding of spirituality, and the Presbyterianism of Calderwick is comparatively limited and limiting. Although Elizabeth and William are not discussing religion in their conversation on influence, Elizabeth’s stance that it cannot ‘be altruism if we influence other people without knowing it’ reflects Muir’s appeal for the pursuit of knowledge rather than passively accepting a state of being.<sup>483</sup> In his

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<sup>478</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 51.

<sup>479</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 52.

<sup>480</sup> Knox, *Women: Women and Scottish Society, 1800 – 1980*, p. 189.

<sup>481</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 185.

<sup>482</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 183.

<sup>483</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 183.

reading of pastoral power, Jeremy Carrette presents a ‘tactic of counter-conduct’, whereby removing a ‘mask of power’ allows for a shift in authority. According to Carrette, mysticism allows for a ‘reversal of the gaze from being seen to seeing. It is a move towards a self-seeing [...which] “short-circuits the hierarchy” [...and] breaks the pastoral order’ to allow for a personal experience.’<sup>484</sup> To extend Carrette’s analysis and apply it to *Imagined Corners*, the insights into Elizabeth and Elise’s spirituality show such a ‘self-seeing’ approach, and they are able to observe and critique the rigidity of Presbyterianism. Indeed, Muir writes that if the seed of faith ‘should be tough enough in its kind, as a bush or a tree, it will break its prison by virtue of its faith.’<sup>485</sup> Muir’s metaphor suggests that Elizabeth and her spirituality are imprisoned, and it seems fair to suggest that this prison is the patriarchal society of Calderwick, or the pastoral order.

The passages in *Imagined Corners* set in the Kirk focus on the various ‘cues’ of the services and the stasis of Calderwick is exaggerated in the descriptions of the church. Elise notices ‘the same ornate chandeliers. The same flat white clock face. The same hideous yellow pine seats...’ and she feels as though she is in a ‘churchyard’.<sup>486</sup> Muir encourages the association of sameness and death with religion, and church as a place where things either remain the same or die. In comparison, there are moments in the novel wherein sexual experimentation and freedom is associated with life and freedom. When compared to *Mrs. Ritchie*, the women of *Imagined Corners* engage more freely in discussions of sex and are shown to have sexual longing and passion. Mrs. Ritchie has been shown to be explicitly and consciously aligned with the structures of religion. I would argue that Muir is therefore conflating Presbyterianism with excessive modesty and sexlessness. Mrs. Ritchie sees sex

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<sup>484</sup> Carrette, ‘Foucault, Religion, and Pastoral Power’, p. 379.

<sup>485</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 250.

<sup>486</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, pp. 183 - 184.



only as a 'price [to be] paid' when married.<sup>487</sup> Britta McEwen refers to Michael Glatterer's 1927 book *In the Light of Belief: Christian Thoughts of Sexual Life*, in which he decrees that 'marriage is a form of purity, because Christian married people deny themselves all forbidden forms of sexual enjoyment.'<sup>488</sup> McEwen continues to state that 'married people, who renounce all forms of non-procreative sex (including masturbation), are living at the most basic, minimum level of chastity.'<sup>489</sup> Similarly, for Mrs. Ritchie, sex is a test wherein she must 'contrive to pay the devil's price without falling victim to the devil'; in other words, she must fulfil her duties as a wife, without succumbing to the allure of sexual fulfilment or passion.<sup>490</sup> As she and her husband have sex for the first time, the 'devil was stirring in her bosom' but she remembers 'Thou God Seest Me'.<sup>491</sup> The watchful eye of God interrupts any potential for sexual freedom or enjoyment. In *Imagined Corners*, Mabel and John Shand's sexual relationship 'had been well regulated during the two years of their marriage', and their 'Sunday morning embraces now had the sanction of tradition'.<sup>492</sup> Sex is again linked to repression and is ritualistic rather than passionate, which is in keeping with Susan Kingsley Kent's assertion that in the interwar period 'sexologists acknowledged that sexual pleasure in marriage might not be attainable for many women.'<sup>493</sup> Further, that this married couple only have sex on a Sunday further links religion with staid sexualities; the weekly sermon and weekly sex are both necessities with no self-expression.

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<sup>487</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 126.

<sup>488</sup> Britta McEwen, *Sexual Knowledge: Feeling, Fact, and Social Reform in Vienna, 1900 – 1934* (Austria: Berghahn Books, 2012), p. 150.

<sup>489</sup> McEwen, *Sexual Knowledge: Feeling, Fact, and Social Reform in Vienna, 1900 – 1934*, p. 150.

<sup>490</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 122.

<sup>491</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 126.

<sup>492</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 38.

<sup>493</sup> Susan Kingsley Kent, *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), p. 109.

Muir's inclusion of sex in her fiction is in keeping with a growing interest in – and openness about – sex and sexualities in the interwar period.<sup>494</sup> Lisa Z. Sigel's *Making Modern Love: Sexual Narratives and Identities in Interwar Britain* considers the increasing search for sexual advice and a growing interest in personal desires following the First World War.<sup>495</sup> Elizabeth Shand's self-exploration in *Imagined Corners* differs. Following an argument with Hector, Elizabeth 'takes refuge' by reconnecting with herself: 'Mechanically she moved her arm and crooked her little finger as she had done before. It's me making the finger move; I am behind my eyes, but I'm in the finger too.'<sup>496</sup> It is unclear whether Muir intended for this passage to represent sexual self-exploration, or simply Elizabeth meditatively grounding herself in her body. Although Christianson suggests that the passage is imbued with the 'language of sexual orgasm,' the argument can be expanded to consider contextual attitudes to sex and pleasure, or its relevance to religion.<sup>497</sup> *Imagined Corners* bears parallels to Dr Marie Stopes' books, such as *Married Love* (1918) and *Wise Parenthood* (1919) which both campaigned for contraception, and mutual pleasure in sex. Muir's engagement with self-exploration and her critiques of sex for purely procreative purposes also coincide with Helena Wright's views in *The Sex Factor in Marriage* (1935) and her later book *What is Sex?* Lesley A. Hall considers Wright a pioneer and 'practically unique in [...] referring not merely to [the existence of the clitoris] but also to the fact that it was for "conveying the sensation of

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<sup>494</sup> See also: Katie Sutton, *Sex Between Body and Mind: Psychoanalysis and Sexology in the German-speaking World, 1890s-1930s* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2019); *Bodies, Sex and Desire from the Renaissance to the Present*, eds Kate Fisher and Sarah Toulalan (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Women in Twentieth-Century Britain: Social, Cultural and Political Change* (New York: Routledge, 2014); *Men, Masculinities and Religious Change in Twentieth-Century Britain*, eds Lucy Delap and Sue Morgan (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

<sup>495</sup> Lisa Z. Sigel, *Making Modern Love: Sexual Narratives and Identities in Interwar Britain* (Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 2012).

<sup>496</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 64.

<sup>497</sup> Christianson, *Moving in Circles*, p. 97.

pleasure”.<sup>498</sup> Angus McLaren suggests that ‘the decline of morality [was blamed on] women [who] were taking advantage of the dislocations occasioned by the conflict [of WW1] to free themselves of old restraint’ – beliefs which led to the increased eroticization of marriage, rise in sex manuals for women, and a desire for sexual freedom.<sup>499</sup> Mrs. Ritchie’s approach to sex is a depiction of McLaren’s ‘restraint’, as she aims to maintain her morality by detaching herself from her body and desired ‘to deny rather than to encourage her bodily functions’, and uses herself as a vehicle to serve religion.<sup>500</sup> In contrast, Elizabeth’s bodily exploration – which I would argue does have sexual undertones – allows her to be ‘simply herself ...[her] essential self’.<sup>501</sup>

However, despite such glimpses of progressive attitudes towards sexuality and moments of escape through sexual expression, the majority of Muir’s references to sex are negative. In *Mrs. Ritchie*, sex is feared, repressed, and scorned. In *Imagined Corners*, marital sex is often disappointing and perfunctory. Although Hector Shand prides himself on his ability to seduce women, women are not afforded the same attitude to their sexuality as ‘good women existed to keep in check men’s sexual passions [...] and his sole protection from himself is the decorum of women.’<sup>502</sup> In a parallel to Muir’s note in *Mrs Grundy* that ‘if a man has a wife he will expect her to be his conscience’, in *Imagined Corners* women are therefore not only responsible for their own purity, but for men’s too.<sup>503</sup> Markedly, sex is a means by which to judge others and sexual freedom is incompatible with a life within the

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<sup>498</sup> Lesley A. Hall, ‘In Ignorance and in Knowledge: Reflections on the History of Sex Education in Britain’, in *Shaping Sexual Knowledge: A Cultural History of Sex Education in Twentieth Century Europe*, eds Lutz D. H. Sauerteig and Roger Davidson (New York: Routledge, 2009) pp. 19 – 36 (p. 20).

<sup>499</sup> Angus McLaren, *Twentieth-Century Sexuality: A History* (London: WB, 1999), p. 10.

<sup>500</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 195.

<sup>501</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 65.

<sup>502</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 77.

<sup>503</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Grundy*, p. 35.

religious confines of Calderwick; women who do not comply risk being judged – as Elise Shand is – as women ‘of ungoverned passions’.<sup>504</sup> Sexual escape is therefore either temporary or impossible for women in Muir’s novels, as it is too frequently aligned with religious binds.

Therefore, although there are allusions to moments of escape, whether through discussion or action, Muir indicates that physical departure remains the only real means of escape from Calderwick, and the difference between freedom and deathliness. When in Calderwick, Elise considers that she and ‘Elizabeth, would make one damned fine woman between’ them both.<sup>505</sup> Yet, in leaving Calderwick entirely, they are able to be two separate women *together*. When Elise and Elizabeth board a train ‘from Paris to Ventimiglia’ having left Calderwick together Elise considers how ‘here she was, returning with a brand-new daughter, or sister, or wife, or whatever it was, having carried her off like a second Lochinvar.’<sup>506</sup> Alison Smith refers to this passage as ‘flirtatious’ and ‘clearly a seduction of sorts’,<sup>507</sup> and Christianson concurs that the ‘sexual possibilities [widen] beyond heterosexuality.’<sup>508</sup> However, both Smith and Christianson hesitate in assuming that the relationship between Elizabeth and Elise is a sexual one, with Smith considering the passage to be ‘highly ambiguous.’<sup>509</sup> Samantha Walton, though, refers to the conclusion of *Imagined Corners* as an opportunity for Muir’s ‘heroines [to embrace] new existences of freedom and sexual desire shared with each other.’<sup>510</sup> Though Muir offers ‘daughter’ and ‘sister’ as

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<sup>504</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Grundy*, p. 35.

<sup>505</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 246.

<sup>506</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 279.

<sup>507</sup> Alison Smith, ‘And Women Created Women: Carswell, Shepherd and Muir and the Self-Made Woman’, in *Gendering the Nation*, ed. by Christopher Whyte (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), pp. 25 – 47 (p. 40).

<sup>508</sup> Christianson, *Moving in Circles*, p. 98.

<sup>509</sup> Smith, ‘And Women Created Women’, p. 40.

<sup>510</sup> Samantha Walton, ‘Scottish Modernism, Kailyard Fiction and the Woman at Home’ in *Transitions in Middlebrow Writing, 1880 – 1930*, eds Kate Macdonald and Christopher Singer (New York (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 141 – 162 (p. 151).

options for this relationship, that Elise is compared to Lochinvar makes the third option – ‘wife’ – more fitting. Muir’s reference to Walter Scott’s Lochinvar sees Elise compared to the ‘faithful in love, and so dauntless in war’ Knight Lochinvar who prevents the marriage of ‘fair Ellen’ to a ‘laggard in love, and a dastard in war.’<sup>511</sup> Therefore, in leaving Calderwick together, Elise has rescued Elizabeth and they are able to explore a new, romantic relationship together and extricate themselves from the rigidity of the rural panopticon. In comparison to the freedom achieved by Elise and Elizabeth, Muir equates remaining in Calderwick with death. Although Mrs. Ritchie does not die at the end of the novel, the novel closes with the image of Mrs. Ritchie tending to the graves of her husband and son, ‘still patting the mounds, first one and then the other, saying, with tender possessiveness: “Poor Johnny...Poor John Samuel.”’<sup>512</sup> Mrs. Ritchie is left in the cemetery with the dead, destined to remain in her own purgatory before she too is freed by death. It is thus fitting that her daughter Sarah Annie ‘as if awakening from a deep sleep’ flees, running ‘for dear life out of the cemetery, even although it was Sunday’ to catch the afternoon train.<sup>513</sup> Muir emphasises the deathliness of Calderwick, in that to live there is to be asleep. Thus, Sarah-Annie’s freedom, her ‘dear life’, can only be found outwith Calderwick. Physical departure offers escape that is proven to be impossible to achieve from within Calderwick, away from watchfulness and the ritualised religious rules which restrict opportunities for women.

### Conclusion

This chapter on Willa Muir has examined various potential avenues of escape from the form of rural panopticon consistently presented by Muir as being stagnant, claustrophobic, and

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<sup>511</sup> Sir Walter Scott, ‘Lochinvar’, *Poetry Foundation* [n.d.] <<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/52300/lochinvvar>> [accessed 20 October 2021].

<sup>512</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, p. 273.

<sup>513</sup> Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie*, pp. 272 – 273.

unwilling to offer women nuanced lives. In focusing on the experience of everyday life for women in small rural communities in a world soon to be ruptured by war, this chapter expands existing research on the role of religion in Scottish literature and continues to extend the work of critics on the multi-generational impacts of religious repression. Muir's writing centralises the overbearing influence of Presbyterianism, and her work demonstrates how many of the expectations of womanhood and everyday life are reliant on the patriarchal beliefs and structures of religion. Whilst there continues to be critical work on Presbyterianism and its relationship to Scottish literature, this chapter specifically confronts the patriarchal foundations of Presbyterianism, and suggests that women are overwhelmingly repressed by its doctrines. Further, this chapter argues that Muir is not only integral to any discussion of Scottish literary Modernism but also that Muir's fiction acts as a space in which existing patriarchal Presbyterian structures are disrupted and manipulated. Rather than operating as two parallel societal structures, Presbyterianism and patriarchal oppression are united.

In encouraging departure from the rural panopticon, Muir's fiction indicates that broader opportunities are available for women and there is a sense of hope in the narratives of escape which is otherwise absent from Muir's work. Centrally, the possibility of anonymity is present when absent from Calderwick. On the train, Elise and Elizabeth are observed by a fellow traveller who wonders whether they were Russians 'and was extremely surprised to hear them exchange a remark in English.'<sup>514</sup> This simple sign of anonymity, after the many instances of gossip, shared knowledge, and expectation throughout the novel, signals a hopeful new start for the women. In comparison, the final image of Mrs. Ritchie alone in the cemetery symbolises the slow decay of traditional expectations of womanhood; Muir allows the younger generation of women to flee and to board trains to Europe, but Mrs. Ritchie –

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<sup>514</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 279.

who throughout the novel is an exaggerated caricature of piousness and Presbyterianism – is, in all senses, left behind. In *Imagined Corners*, Muir writes: ‘one did not cut and prune oneself; one simply grew. One grew and took one’s chances.’<sup>515</sup> Muir too refuses to prune herself in her fiction. Her work fearlessly critiques Presbyterianism, and lauds women who devise ways to manipulate repressive religious and social binds. In exposing the experiences of everyday life in rural Scottish communities, and centralising the tensions in womanhood, Muir’s work is undeniably central to critical discussions of Scottish literary Modernism and in gaining a deeper understanding of the impact of patriarchal Presbyterianism on the everyday lives of women.

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<sup>515</sup> Muir, *Imagined Corners*, p. 250.

Lorna Moon

Introduction

More so than this thesis' two other focus authors, Lorna Moon's writing exaggerates the negative aspects of rurality: regulatory communities, societies of watchers, surveillance, the intense scrutiny of minutiae, and feelings of entrapment. Moon's response to these issues of rural modernity is to demonstrate the ways in which the majority of her female characters consciously adapt to the particular societal values in the fictional towns of Drumorty (in the *Doorways in Drumorty* collection of short stories) and Pitouie (in the novel *Dark Star*). Those women who do not adapt are largely cast aside by the watchful community. Moon's writing magnifies the rural experiences of women, and in her own words she writes 'from the inside': her writing is a response to these experiences particularly for women who also recognise these experiences.<sup>516</sup> Individual adaption is therefore Moon's response to the pressures of rural watchfulness, and her fiction suggests that this can act as a protective tool against the dangers of watchfulness. Whereas Muir's fiction – and indeed her personal life – presents departure as the key to escaping the pressures of rural modernity, Moon's fiction demonstrates the impact of assimilation and acclimation. Particularly when comparing Moon's fictional response to her actual response (leaving her husbands, her children, and her life behind, and being vilified by her community in Scotland), the routes taken by the characters in her story indicate the impacts of assimilation when departure is not an option.

Adaption and acclimation to societal regulations rely, to a degree, on the ability and willingness of an individual to perform certain behaviours or responses appropriately. This chapter focuses on the performance of griefs and traumas and the rituals attached to them.

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<sup>516</sup> Lorna Moon, 'Letter to Hewitt Hanson Howland: 30 April 1925', in *The Collected Works of Lorna Moon*, ed. by Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Black & White Publishing, 2002), pp. 256 – 257 (p. 257).



Public grieving in the interwar period itself was in a period of change, due in part to the ways in which trauma and death increasingly saturated every-day life. In the introductory theoretical section of this chapter, I combine Freud's theory of mourning and melancholia with contemporary grief theorists such as Linda Machin and Herbert Anderson to establish the variations in the presentations of grief, as well as hierarchies of acceptable grief and mourning, prior to considering the historical grieving context of the early twentieth century. The chapter expresses the ways in which Moon mocks the pre-War traditions of excessive grief, and gradually adopts interwar suppressive attitudes.

The chapter also foregrounds scholarship in trauma studies to consider Moon's representation of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder; in analysing Moon's depictions of grief through the lens of 'modern' trauma and grief, it can be suggested that she thought the traditions attached to death, mourning, and grief were increasingly frivolous, but that they were also inseparable from women's necessary public roles. Looking particularly at grief and trauma there is a balance in Moon's fiction between adaption and rebellion. There is a similar tension between an appreciation of rural ritual and tradition, and the view that these rituals are trite and indulgent. These tensions are neatly mirrored in the style of Moon's fiction as much as they are in the content, and she displays a clear familiarity with the people and places of which she writes. Yet, her satirical tone sees Moon write from the position of the derisive insider. This chapter thus demonstrates that the assimilation and private rebellion of Moon's female characters in response to rituals attached to grief and trauma represents women's broader interwar experiences of grief. Similarly, this in-depth analysis of rural grief and trauma reconsiders the impacts of both national and local ideals on rural communities.

This chapter expands outwards structurally, to mirror the trajectory of Moon's attitudes to grief and mourning in her fiction. Initially, my focus is on her short story collection *Doorways in Drumorty*. The chapter demonstrates Moon's tendency to mock and

reject kailyard techniques and themes, in her conscious desire to distance herself from writers such as J.M. Barrie. Similarly, the chapter explores Moon's mockery of traditional – often elaborate – mourning practices which mirror pre-war rituals, and her disdain towards what she depicts as rural stagnation. In these sections, Moon's content and her tone will be shown to be oppositional; her fiction's content contains traditional mourning tropes and Victorian style deathbed scenes, for example, yet Moon's narration mocks these mourning practices. One of the facets of mourning critiqued by Moon is the watchfulness connected to public grief and I suggest that assimilation emerges as a tool to protect oneself against watchfulness. In part, this relates to Moon's openness to grieving experiences unrelated to death (such as illness or the loss of a sense of self); often, these losses are handled more sensitively by Moon, and characters are awarded with private grief away from the watchfulness critiqued by Moon.

Analysis of Moon's novel *Dark Star* will then suggest that both the content and tone unite to expose tensions between interwar mourning and private grief. Again, grief and mourning which occurs in private will be shown to have a more sympathetic approach by Moon than public and elaborate ritualised grief, proving Moon's adoption of modern attitudes towards mourning and death. Finally, the chapter will focus on the death of *Dark Star* protagonist Nancy Pringle with her suicide – and its occurrence after the death of Bella Pringle – given the most sympathy by Moon. I argue that Moon presents Nancy's death as an idealised and romanticised version of interwar death which is notably free of the constraints of watchfulness and ritualised mourning but is imbued with the imagery of war.

The chapter demonstrates that, for Moon, effective mourning practices cannot coexist with the expectations and weight of watchfulness. In keeping with national changes during the interwar period, Moon's writing promotes private grief, and is disparaging towards

elaborate public rituals for individual losses when mass-loss and trauma permeated all aspects of life. This close analysis of Moon contributes to a broader revision of Scottish literary modernism. By critiquing gendered mourning practices and highlighting constructed and idealised interwar deaths, Moon's fiction demonstrates how the rural experience of gendered grieving and trauma encapsulates rural modernity.

### Contextualising Grief

Lorna Moon's fictional depictions of grief do two things: firstly, Moon emphasises the importance of traditional grieving rituals to Drumorty and Pitouie whilst simultaneously mocking these rituals as frivolous; and secondly, Moon's writing suggests that there is a hierarchy which affords some grieving parties more time, space, and acceptance than others to complete the grieving process. Like other Modernist literature, Moon's work displays a transformation in mourning and grief. Mirroring the public distancing from Victorian attitudes to death and rituals of mourning (wherein a death was an event), Modernist writing instead infused death into the everyday. Indeed, Alice Kelly's work acknowledges women's interwar literary responses to death, highlighting ways in which the language of death often replaced death itself or individual grief surpassed community mourning. Therefore, this chapter's analysis of grief in Moon's writing draws upon distinct areas of Grief Studies looking at the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries to encapsulate the traditional appearance, psychological impact, and performance of grief, compared to later suppressed individual grief which is consumed by mass loss and collective grief in the inter-war period.

Sigmund Freud's pivotal essay 'Mourning and Melancholia', published in 1918, has been referred to by many critics of grief studies as offering crucial insights into the psychological appearance of grief. As such, this chapter's theoretical foundation also begins

briefly with Freud's text, before introducing more contemporary readings of the psychological and sociological appearance and behaviours of grief. Primarily, Freud's 'Mourning and Melancholia' suggests that there are notable differences between the two titular responses to various forms of loss. Freud's essay maintains throughout that whilst mourning and melancholia must be viewed as distinguished conditions, there are correlations which indicate they can be viewed under the same 'general picture'.<sup>517</sup> Fundamentally, both mourning and melancholia are personal, psychological responses to a form of loss. Freud notes their key differences: whereas mourning is 'regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one' (such as an ideal, a country, or a sensation), melancholia is 'in some way related to an object-loss which is withdrawn from consciousness'.<sup>518</sup> In other words, mourning is the reaction to loss which is attached to an external source (such as a person, or place), whereas melancholia is the reaction to an often unplaceable loss which then fixes itself on 'the ego itself'.<sup>519</sup> Analysing Moon's fiction, it is clear to see instances of what Freud would deem melancholia, wherein the individual suffers from a 'cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity', and so on.<sup>520</sup> In terms of grief, Freud suggests that aside from the 'disturbance of self-regard' common to melancholia, mourning and melancholia largely behave in the same ways.<sup>521</sup> Both mourning and melancholia leave the grieving individual with a sense of dejection, withdrawal, and emptiness. These are, Freud considers, normal responses to grief and individual instances of loss.

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<sup>517</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia' in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, translated by James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 2012), p. 243.

<sup>518</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', pp. 243 – 245.

<sup>519</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', p. 246.

<sup>520</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', p. 246.

<sup>521</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', p. 244.

More contemporary studies into grief and mourning often refer to Freud's earlier study but tend to provide more nuanced guidance into what could be defined as a normal grieving process. Like Freud's studies, contemporary readings of grief and loss are clear in that it is not only bereavement caused by the loss of a person that can lead to grief and the processes which follow it. Linda Machin's *Working with Loss and Grief: A Theoretical and Practical Approach*, for example, considers that 'equating grief with death and bereavement often obscures the reality that multiple losses are experienced across the life cycle'; Machin clarifies that 'these "little" losses' such as illness, developmental changes, damaged relationships, and disability can all act as 'rehearsals for more profound encounters' with grieving.<sup>522</sup> Therefore, whilst there are certain behaviours and emotions which are commonly attributed to grief and grieving, the cause (the loss) can vary widely. Herbert Anderson's 2010 article 'Common Grief, Complex Grieving' explores the field of grief studies from 1995 to 2010 to collate a broad overview of 'common grief'. Anderson refers to theorist Erich Lindemann, for example, who concluded that grief was both 'a normal response to traumatic loss [and with] identifiable syndrome[s]', whilst the 'intensity of grief was determined by the nature and intensity of the relationship to the lost person or object'.<sup>523</sup> *Grief*, the emotion, is thus positioned as the expected state whereas *grieving*, the process, fluctuates in duration and intensity. Anderson agrees with Lindemann's position, and notes that grief is a 'normal but bewildering cluster of ordinary human emotions', and Caroline Lloyd in *Grief Demystified: An Introduction* explicitly states that 'grief is therefore the normal response to the loss of the loved one'.<sup>524</sup> Eugenie Brinkema similarly separates the emotion of grief in *The Forms of the*

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<sup>522</sup> Linda Machin, *Working with Loss and Grief: A Theoretical and Practical Approach* (London: Sage, 2014).

<sup>523</sup> Herbert Anderson, 'Common Grief, Complex Grieving' in *Pastoral Psychology*, 59 (2010), 127 – 136.

<sup>524</sup> Anderson, 'Common Grief, Complex Grieving'; Caroline Lloyd, *Grief Demystified: An Introduction* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2018), p. 15.

*Affects*, from the processes of grieving and mourning where ‘grief is the private passion [...and] mourning the public manifestation of that interior state.’<sup>525</sup> Likewise, Harry Robert Wilson in ‘The Theatricality of Grief’ refers to grief as ‘the felt affect’ and mourning as ‘the naming of the emotion and subsequent cultural practice of working through that emotion.’<sup>526</sup> Lloyd also suggests that mourning and ‘working through’ the process of grief is crucial and normal, and suggests that the grieving party must accept a ‘re-organisation and adjustment of [their] world without’ the person or object loss.<sup>527</sup> The completion of such a re-organisation into an altered world is accompanied by the reintegration of the griever into society.

There are instances wherein the grieving process and the important period of re-organisation and adjustment can be disrupted. Similarly, certain griefs or grieving parties may not receive the same level of societal support. Machin suggests that there is a hierarchy of grief, and that this hierarchy influences the grieving process and the adjustment period. The hierarchy, according to Machin, has three key levels. At the top of the hierarchy is what Machin refers to as ‘visible grief’, wherein the grieving person is adjusting to the loss of a person due to bereavement or divorce.<sup>528</sup> Visible grief can thus be considered as the commonest forms of grief, and those which are most readily understood as experiences worthy of grief. ‘Obscured grief’ can occur as a result of developmental loss, childlessness, and disability.<sup>529</sup> Obscured grief therefore is grief that can be more readily understood and accepted when explained. Finally, ‘invisible grief’ refers to losses that occur alongside – for example – old age, a loss of cultural identity, and poverty.<sup>530</sup> Invisible loss, and invisible

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<sup>525</sup> Eugenie Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), p. 72.

<sup>526</sup> Harry Robert Wilson, ‘The Theatricality of Grief: Suspending movement, mourning and meaning with Roland Barthes’ in *Performance Research*, 24.4 (2019), 103 – 109 (p. 107).

<sup>527</sup> Lloyd, *Grief Demystified*, p. 24.

<sup>528</sup> Machin, *Working with Loss and Grief*.

<sup>529</sup> Machin, *Working with Loss and Grief*.

<sup>530</sup> Machin, *Working with Loss and Grief*.

grief, would receive the least societal support in aiding a grieving process and would result in the disruption of an adjustment period. Furthermore, the absence of an adequate grieving process restricts the likelihood of the griever being able to integrate, or re-integrate, into society.

The following section considers the specific rituals of grief in the interwar period. A reaction against elaborate or excessive grief complicated the processes of ‘working through’ grief elucidated thus far in this chapter. The section demonstrates how the transformation in grief exacerbated a belief that mourning is women’s work, and considers the relationship between such work and the necessary suppression of previously acceptable behaviours.

### Grieving Rituals in the Interwar Period

Moon’s fiction provides necessary insight into the relationship between watchfulness and grief. The divergence between pre-war and interwar mourning rituals is indicative of Moon’s Modernist approach to grief. Widespread death and bereavement during and immediately after the First World War saw a decline in the focus on lavish mourning rituals for individuals. Lucy Whitmore notes how, even though the ‘backlash against ostentatious Victorian mourning practices emerged around 1880’, this backlash only increased in severity in the inter-war period.<sup>531</sup> Indeed, Whitmore refers to the formation of the *National Funeral and Mourning Reform Association* in 1875 and the group’s campaigns ‘for “moderation” and “simplicity” instead of “unnecessary show”’.<sup>532</sup> Patricia Jalland similarly shows that the change between Victorian death rituals and suppressed interwar mourning was stark. Prior to

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<sup>531</sup> Lucy Whitmore, ‘A Matter of Individual Opinion and Feeling’: The changing culture of mourning dress in the First World War’ in *Women’s History Review*, 27.4 (2018), 579 – 594 (p. 581).

<sup>532</sup> Patricia Jalland, ‘A culture of silent grief? The transformation of bereavement care in 20<sup>th</sup> century England’ in *Bereavement Care*, 32.1 (2013), 16 – 22.

the War, Lisa Kazmier argues, Britain was already beginning to shift towards more muted acts of remembrance and the First World War accelerated these changes.<sup>533</sup> From a culture that was focused on the public grieving of one life, Jalland notes that ‘ignorance and silence about death and loss’ became standard after the outbreak of War and attitudes to death were ‘transformed’.<sup>534</sup> David Cannadine suggests that this ignorance was not due to a lack of care – indeed, he considers that British people were ‘obsessed by death in the face of widespread bereavement’ – but rather an awareness that Victorian rituals would seem ‘inadequate and inappropriate.’<sup>535</sup> Therefore, as Victorian practices were no longer suitable, ‘emotional restraint’ became the ‘customary code’ in the interwar period.<sup>536</sup>

Julie-Marie Strange’s research on working-class grief and mourning establishes the importance of respectable and respectful mourning, indicating that – pre-war – a respectable mourning process would include ‘the cathartic function of the funeral’, imbued with personal meaning, ‘a private grave, with all the attendant mourning paraphernalia’ and the facilitation of ‘expressions of community, neighbourhood and occupational identity.’<sup>537</sup> Conversely, the inter-war period, whilst retaining the notion of respectful and disrespectful grieving practices, reduced the focus on the cathartic public funeral for the individual. Kazmier argues that, alongside questions of propriety, ‘certain developments in commemorative practices favoured cremation’s growth, based on the simple fact that the dead, with the exception of the

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<sup>533</sup> Lisa Kazmier, ‘Leading the World: The Role of Britain and the First World War in Promoting the “Modern Cremation” Movement’ in *Journal of Social History*, 42. 3 (2009), 557 – 579.

<sup>534</sup> Jalland, ‘A culture of silent grief? The transformation of bereavement care in 20<sup>th</sup> century England’, p. 16.

<sup>535</sup> Jalland, ‘A culture of silent grief? The transformation of bereavement care in 20<sup>th</sup> century England’, p. 17.

<sup>536</sup> Jalland, ‘A culture of silent grief? The transformation of bereavement care in 20<sup>th</sup> century England’, p. 19.

<sup>537</sup> Julie-Marie Strange, ‘“She cried a very little”’: Death, grief and mourning in working-class culture, c. 1880 – 1914’ in *Social History*, 27.2 (2002), 143 – 161 (p. 143; p. 157).



Unknown Warrior, never came home.’<sup>538</sup> Likewise, there was a reduction in the pressure for working-class families to acquire ‘extraordinary items [...wherein] conspicuous consumption became synonymous with’ respectability.<sup>539</sup> As with Machin’s analysis of grief hierarchies, the interwar period saw a clear distinction between grievable and non-grievable deaths, particularly in terms of the level of warranted public mourning. Jillian Rogers, for example, states that public discourse implied that ‘the most grievable lives were those of soldiers who had died for [their countries].’<sup>540</sup> Grieving practices for deaths lower on the hierarchy became more subdued, with ‘too evident sorrow’ being met with disdain. Particularly considering the numbers of dead whose bodies were not returned to Britain to be buried, providing full burial services for those considered lower on a grieving hierarchy would not be respectable. Public grieving was thus reserved for the most grievable deaths, but also for shared, patriotic mourning, as mourners ‘began to articulate their sorrow in collective or national terms rather than in first-person narratives’.<sup>541</sup>

Jalland suggests that the ‘gender gap [in grieving] was reduced’ due to this encouragement to exercise restraint, as it would reduce the public pressure on women to perform and uphold aspects of the grieving practice. Whilst Jalland argues that the interwar period saw a reduction in ‘the gender gap’ of grieving as women moved towards a ‘male pattern’ of restrained grieving, Lucy Noakes instead suggests that this transformation itself was highly gendered.<sup>542</sup> Noakes states that women ‘were specifically advised’ to exercise restraint, and that this advice was ‘driven by women’s primary historical role as mourners

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<sup>538</sup> Kazmier, ‘Leading the World’, p. 564.

<sup>539</sup> Strange, ‘She cried a very little’, p. 156.

<sup>540</sup> Jillian Rogers, ‘Mourning at the Piano: Marguerite Long, Maurice Ravel, and the Performance of Grief in Interwar France’ in *Transposition*, 4 (2014), <<https://doi.org/10.4000/transposition.739>>.

<sup>541</sup> Rogers, ‘Mourning at the Piano: Marguerite Long, Maurice Ravel, and the Performance of Grief in Interwar France’.

<sup>542</sup> Jalland, ‘A culture of silent grief? The transformation of bereavement care in 20<sup>th</sup> century England’, p. 19.

[...and the stereotype] of women as being especially likely to be overwhelmed' emotionally.<sup>543</sup> Noakes suggests that this transformation again pressured women to adapt their approach to grief, and to mould their emotional responses to public advice. Similarly, Joy Damousi's work on inter-war motherhood and grief in Australia references that the pressure again rests on women to 'articulate a language of grief' which is unfamiliar.<sup>544</sup> Whitmore focuses on the change in mourning dress to illustrate the transformation in public grieving expectations on women. Victorian styles of mourning dress were no longer 'considered to be an appropriate expression of respect for those who had died fighting for their country' and comparably more discrete arm bands replaced heavy, full-body black dress.<sup>545</sup> Historically, 'mourning dress was understood to indicate the changed social status of the widow', and mourning dress was 'worn almost exclusively by women'.<sup>546</sup> As such, argues Whitmore, any changes in mourning culture 'could be presumed to have had a greater impact on women and the way they experienced bereavement.'<sup>547</sup>

Moon's fiction is one modernist depiction of mourning, amongst a myriad of narratives of death and loss.<sup>548</sup> As Lecia Rosenthal demonstrates, literary modernism was concerned with the question of 'how to represent, anticipate, mourn the fictive collectivity of

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<sup>543</sup> Lucy Noakes, 'Gender, Grief, and Bereavement in Second World War Britain' in *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 8.1 (2015), 72 – 85.

<sup>544</sup> Joy Damousi, 'Private loss, public mourning: motherhood, memory and grief in Australia during the inter-war years' in *Women's History Review*, 8.2 (1999), 365 – 378 (pp. 365).

<sup>545</sup> Whitmore, 'A matter of individual opinion and feeling', pp. 580 – 581.

<sup>546</sup> Whitmore, 'A matter of individual opinion and feeling', p. 580.

<sup>547</sup> Whitmore, 'A matter of individual opinion and feeling', p. 582.

<sup>548</sup> See, for example: Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier* (New York: Norton, 1995); E. M. Forster, *Howard's End* (New York: New American Library, 1973); Katherine Mansfield, 'The Garden Party' in *The Garden Party and Other Stories* (London: Penguin, 2007); D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love* (New York: Penguin, 1983); Virginia Woolf, 'Mrs. Dalloway' in *Virginia Woolf: The Complete Collection*, (Golden Deer Classics, 2016) Kindle edition.

(posthumous, remainderless, futureless) humanity.<sup>549</sup> Rosenthal reads ‘modernism’s aesthetic desire, that is to say its elevation of the new over the known, the experiment over tradition, as embedded within the related forces of catastrophe and mass culture.’<sup>550</sup> In other words, modernist literature is so entrenched within loss and destruction that it cannot be separated. Moon’s work displays the gendered pressures on women prior to the First World War – when extravagant, multi-layered public rituals were favoured – and in the interwar period, when such mourning was transformed, and women’s attempts to grieve became actively suppressed (primarily by male characters). Her fiction indicates both the saturation of death into everyday life – Rosenthal’s embedded forces of catastrophe within modernist aesthetics – and the necessity for women to navigate the transformation of respectable grieving rituals. Moon’s fiction warrants an interrogation into the suitability of prescribed mourning practices, and often implies that solitary mourning yields the best long-term results for individuals.

Virginia Woolf, Christine Purifoy argues, was similarly untrusting of grief which closely aligns with patriotism. Purifoy argues that in Woolf’s *The Waves*, ‘Woolf explores the obstinate bonds of attachment that bind us even to dysfunctional forms of communal identity’, implying that mourning warrants an individual response and cannot be dictated by community expectation.<sup>551</sup> Purifoy continues to suggest that ‘while in “Mourning and Melancholia” Freud seems most concerned with overcoming Melancholia, Woolf suggests that grief might be too quickly foreclosed.’<sup>552</sup> This demonstrates a deliberate rejection – or, at least, a questioning – of the interwar decrease in extended, individual grief. Further, there is

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<sup>549</sup> Lecia Rosenthal, *Mourning Modernism: Literature, Catastrophe, and the Politics of Consolation* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), p. 1.

<sup>550</sup> Rosenthal, *Mourning Modernism*, p. 5.

<sup>551</sup> Christine Purifoy, ‘Melancholic Patriotism and *The Waves*’ in *Twentieth Century Literature*, 56.1 (2010), 25 – 45 (p. 25).

<sup>552</sup> Purifoy, ‘Melancholic Patriotism and *The Waves*’, p. 30.

evidence of women writers actively questioning the gendered pressures of grieving, and simultaneously proposing alternative ways of exploring grief. Allyson Booth argues that the ‘gendering of tragedy’, wherein the narratives provided by men at war are favoured over women who remain on the home-front, contributes to the specific characteristics of Modernist women’s writing of grief (hostility towards patriotism, a willingness to dwell in grief, and a rejection of ritual).<sup>553</sup> Notably however, she argues for a focus less on ‘the space between men and women as in the space between civilians and combatants’.<sup>554</sup>

Patricia Rae’s *Modernism and Mourning* explores, in depth, ‘the phenomenon of the resistance to mourning in literary modernism’ wherein Modernist writers refused ‘to transcend or find redemption in loss [and] does not rise above sorrow, but becomes “immersed” in it.’<sup>555</sup> Purifoy likewise suggests that a characteristic of a Modernist approach to grief is a ‘narrative that dwells on pauses, digressions, moments rather than momentum’; that, in other words, allows for an individual, contemplative mourning process.<sup>556</sup> Rae’s work implies that the Modernist immersion in individual loss could be due to the disparity between grievable and non-grievable lives; in terms of public and community remembrance, ‘some people [could not] be mourned because they [were] always already lost, or rather, never ‘were’.’<sup>557</sup> This, again, can be identified in Moon’s fiction and is a further example of Modernist difficulties with mourning rituals and the attempts to forge a space for alternative modes of grieving.

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<sup>553</sup> Allyson Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches: Negotiating the Space Between Modernism and the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 8.

<sup>554</sup> Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches: Negotiating the Space Between Modernism and the First World War*, p. 9.

<sup>555</sup> Patricia Rae, *Modernism and Mourning* (New Jersey: Rosemont Publishing, 2007), pp. 13 – 14.

<sup>556</sup> Purifoy, ‘Melancholic Patriotism and *The Waves*’, p. 40.

<sup>557</sup> Rae, *Modernism and Mourning*, p. 20.

Alice Kelly's *Commemorative Modernisms* aims to further refine and extend studies of Modernist representations of death and mourning by critics such as Carol Acton, Patricia Rae, Allyson Booth, and Jay Winter. Kelly's main argument in *Commemorative Modernisms* is that the death toll of the First World War undeniably changed the ways in which death was represented in literature; this, she suggests, answers Katherine Mansfield's call for 'new expressions new moulds' for the 'new thoughts and feelings' that emerged from the First World War.<sup>558</sup> Centrally, Kelly refers to texts by Mansfield, Virginia Woolf, H.D., and a variety of non-fiction diaries from wartime nurses to examine the ways in which modernism's relationship to death evolved. She argues that death and mourning permeated reality and therefore permeated the text, and that 'death represented at a distance – [predominantly by women] – often led to abstraction.'<sup>559</sup> This abstraction could take the form of increased death and war metaphors, belated or shared public commemorations, and war-death replaced by home-death. For example, Mansfield's writing is a 'curious hybrid in which the non-combatant has made combatant language a means of modernist experimentalism.'<sup>560</sup> Furthermore, Kelly's argument, like my own, is that 'the burden of mourning was symbolically focused on women'.<sup>561</sup> Ariela Freedman also remarks on the role of women to 'bridge the distance [...] between the living and the dead', but that this is principally through their position in narratives of mourning as spectators.<sup>562</sup> However, *Commemorative Modernisms* does not explicitly compare urban and rural experiences, nor does it reference any Scottish experiences (examining, instead, English texts alongside

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<sup>558</sup> Alice Kelly, *Commemorative Modernisms: Women Writers, Death, and the First World War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), p. 1.

<sup>559</sup> Kelly, *Commemorative Modernisms*, p. 240.

<sup>560</sup> Kelly, *Commemorative Modernisms*, p. 121.

<sup>561</sup> Kelly, *Commemorative Modernisms*, p. 3.

<sup>562</sup> Ariela Freedman, *Death, Men, and Modernism: Trauma and Narrative in British Fiction from Hardy to Woolf* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 22 – 23.

European and North American literature). My own research will therefore extend that of Kelly's. For example, I suggest that the burden of mourning is not only focused on women, but that it is felt more heavily in rural areas due to the impossibility of an anonymity that *was* possible in urban areas. Therefore, writers such as Lorna Moon belong to a further 'new mould' in writing. Such writing encapsulates the experience of the rural woman who is susceptible to the judgements of watchful residents. For Moon's characters, they risk being scrutinised by neighbours for failing to uphold appropriate standards when it comes to mourning (particularly with regards to funeral arrangements), but also fall victim to the acerbity of Moon herself who mocks these traditions.

On a similar note, Kelly also argues that women overwhelmingly bore the weight of mourning regardless of whether wartime deaths were geographically or temporally proximate or distanced. As such, *Commemorative Modernisms* extends outwards with each chapter, beginning with the proximate war writings of front-line nurses, and concluding with modernist memorials which act as singular stand-ins for countless deaths. The gradual extension of the text allows for the inclusion of literature which contains no explicit war-death, but instead handles wartime corpselessness (wherein a person was presumed dead, but either no corpse was found, or the corpse was not sent back to a grieving family). In addition to the idea of corpselessness, Kelly suggests that the combination of the First World War's death toll and a governmental push towards national stoicism in the face of death increased the inevitability of a national change in the appearance of mourning. This angle of Kelly's helps me to situate Moon's writing as literature which features pre-War mourning content – with, for instance, deathbed scenes which mirror those found in Victorian literature – yet interwar in approach – with Moon's narration often satirising the traditional mourning practices adopted by rural communities or implying that they are frivolous.

### Critiquing Excessive Mourning Practices in *Doorways in Drumorty*

Characters in 'The Corp' and 'The Funeral' in Lorna Moon's collection of short stories, *Doorways in Drumorty*, are burdened by expectations from their community in terms of appropriate responses to grief and the subsequent performances that come from this. This burden is exacerbated by the rurality of the town due to the impossibility of anonymity. The sanctity of the ritual, and the centrality of watchfulness and shared experiences, are constructed to benefit the community in these stories. As such the maintenance of tradition is crucial. The adoption of rituals, and the acceptance of one's own role, is a way to protect oneself against negative scrutiny; this is a similar technique as utilised by Willa Muir in her fiction. However, Moon's characters often have private acts of rebellion wherein these protected rituals are manipulated for personal gain, and again like Muir these private rebellions are indicative of Moon's position on rural life. In terms of grief, the mourning practices in 'The Corp' and 'The Funeral' are mocked by Moon, and they are implied to be excessive and frivolous. The disparity between the content of these stories and the narrative tone offers a crucial insight into Moon's opinion of interwar grief. The rituals in these stories – viewing the dead, laying out the corpse, the expense of funerals attended by the community – are more familiar to Victorian and pre-war attitudes to death and mourning. Moon's third-person narration, in contrast, mocks and critiques these practices. Moon's fiction does not directly discuss the war, and the deaths in her writing are not war deaths. However, the discord between Moon's narration and the practices upheld in her stories indicates that she, like many commentators and other Modernist writers, was rejecting elaborate, public acts of remembrance for individuals when faced with the mass-death of the First World War.

'The Corp', Scots for 'the corpse', was originally published with the rest of the *Doorways in Drumorty* collection in 1926, is the first of eight short stories in the collection. 'The Corp' explicitly sets the role of public mourner as a performance and a job which is

‘unco thirsty work’.<sup>563</sup> Protagonist Kirsty faces dethronement as Drumorty’s most prized mourner, despite her skill being such that nobody ‘would think of being buried without Kirsty Fraser to cry as the lid was screwed down.’<sup>564</sup> It seems fitting that this collection, which focuses overwhelmingly on ideas of community and how the individual finds their place within it, opens with a story of loss and appropriate reactions to loss in a small rural town. Indeed, the very first line of this story explicitly combines watchfulness and mourning: ‘By shutting out the door to within three inches of the jamb, and moving her chair nearer the cat’s hassock by the fire, old Kirsty could see Mistress MacNab’s door and watch the mourners come and go.’<sup>565</sup> This opening line establishes that individuals contribute to the broader society of watchers, and also that ‘the mourners’ are a collective group representing the community. The line is repeated later in the story, when Kirsty is attempting to accept that she is no longer considered the best mourner: ‘through the small space between the jamb and the door Kirsty could see Mistress MacPherson knocking for admission to the house of sorrow.’<sup>566</sup> Elsewhere, ‘[Kirsty] saw Maggie Tate on her rounds doing the bidding’, and notes that Mistress MacNab was receiving ‘her tenth parcel since ten o’clock.’<sup>567</sup> Watchfulness – tied here to ritualised mourning – is a constant and routine behaviour, whereas the motive for it is changeable. It is so ingrained a facet of rural life that Kirsty ‘couldn’t give up watching’ despite being pained by what she saw.<sup>568</sup>

Similarly, ‘The Funeral’ – the penultimate story of the *Doorways* collection – establishes the ways in which watchfulness and death unite. ‘The Funeral’ follows Mistress

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<sup>563</sup> Lorna Moon, ‘The Corp’, in *The Collected Works of Lorna Moon*, ed. by Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Black & White Publishing, 2002), pp. 3 – 8 (p. 5).

<sup>564</sup> Moon, ‘The Corp’, p. 3.

<sup>565</sup> Moon, ‘The Corp’, p. 3.

<sup>566</sup> Moon, ‘The Corp’, p. 5.

<sup>567</sup> Moon, ‘The Corp’, p. 5, 6.

<sup>568</sup> Moon, ‘The Corp’, p. 6.



MacBride's increasing desperation as her young son Jimmy grows weaker with sickness, and she anxiously waits for money from her husband Tammas who has left to work in America. Just as 'The Corp' begins by establishing watchfulness as intertwined with mourning, 'The Funeral' begins with the fear of judgement from a watchful community. Mistress MacBride's 'silent prayer' to God is a plea for the swift arrival of money as she is 'loath, and *more* than loath, to let [Drumorty] know that Tammas is walking the streets o' America wanting work.'<sup>569</sup> In Mistress MacBride's state of stasis and prolonged waiting, she has 'nothing to do but watch' for the postman and for other peering eyes.<sup>570</sup> Drumorty itself watches back, as 'across the cobbled street the thatched cottages in a row stood white-washed and spotless like placid faces looking back at her,' and even when 'she ran [...] the shadow of the church ran with her, its steeple bent and followed her.'<sup>571</sup> The impossibility of anonymity ensures the continuity of watchfulness, to the extent that the town itself appears to watch. Moon's frequent references to 'all of Drumorty', 'Drumorty itself', and 'the whole of Drumorty' is a critique on the way in which the community and the place are united, preventing the individual from engaging in their own experiences.<sup>572</sup> Analysis of public mourning and rituals of grief and remembrance in these stories are crucial in demonstrating how the failure to adopt shared rituals could result in rejection. The conscious public adoption and private manipulation of mourning rituals *is* Moon's response to rural watchfulness.

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<sup>569</sup> Lorna Moon, 'The Funeral', in *The Collected Works of Lorna Moon*, ed. by Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Black & White Publishing, 2002), pp. 59 – 65 (p. 59).

<sup>570</sup> Moon, 'The Funeral', p. 59.

<sup>571</sup> Moon, 'The Funeral', p. 59, 63.

<sup>572</sup> Moon, 'The Funeral', p. 60, 61, 64.

‘The right balance between sorrow and salesmanship’: Expectations of Public Grief in ‘The Corp’ and ‘The Funeral’<sup>573</sup>

Both story titles – ‘The Corp’ and ‘The Funeral’ – demonstrate that death itself is not the focus. In ‘The Corp’, the corpse is not named in the title; it is not a particular person, as it serves a purpose for Kirsty rather than an individual to be honestly mourned. Likewise, ‘The Funeral’ refers to the public event; the title does not say whose funeral this is, but instead establishes the event as the subject. The focus on shared events of mourning leads to examples of excessive public mourning. There are clear expectations for mourners, to the extent that the performance of expected behaviours supersedes the private emotion. Catherine E. Foote and Arthur W. Frank consider the relationship between a Foucauldian disciplining of grief, and Freud’s theories of mourning and melancholia. Foote and Frank reason that grief is – like madness, medicine, prisons, and sexuality – a key ‘site of disciplinary power’ for Foucault as it, like the other institutions mention, ‘directs the exercises of a self working upon the self.’<sup>574</sup> In the example of ‘The Corp’, for instance, grief is a meticulously practiced art form which requires self-regulation and an ability to suit the requirements of onlookers. Grief, and the practice of mourning, therefore has an object; it aims to ‘produce the self required by the institution.’<sup>575</sup> Through Moon’s fiction, the forms of a grieving self required by the institution (Drumorty) can be tracked from pre-war ostentation to interwar restriction.

In ‘The Corp’, death is ‘so sure,’ and the mourning practices are made equally certain.<sup>576</sup> Kirsty’s performances at funerals become an expected part of the mourning routine, and it is the performance of grief that takes the place of actual mourning and sorrow in the public

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<sup>573</sup> Moon, ‘The Funeral’, p. 64.

<sup>574</sup> Catherine E. Foote and Arthur W. Frank, ‘Foucault and Therapy: The Disciplining of Grief’ in *Reading Foucault for Social Work*, eds Adrienne S. Chambon, Allan Irving and Laura Epstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 157 – 188 (p. 163).

<sup>575</sup> Foote and Frank, p. 163.

<sup>576</sup> Lorna Moon, ‘The Corp’, p. 3.

space. When Kirsty had ‘cried with envy’ at a funeral as she was jealous of the deceased’s ‘hand-made lace mutch to be buried in’, ‘the neighbours thought [her crying] was with grief.’<sup>577</sup> It is this moment that death itself is overtaken by the public reaction to grief, as the mourners collectively ‘turned their attention from Maggie and her braw mutch to Kirsty as her sobs grew louder.’<sup>578</sup> The performances grow more ‘masterly’ over time, and visual grieving cues become increasingly important to the mourners as Kirsty aims to give ‘a more convincing and gruesome fit’ with each funeral.<sup>579</sup> The performance of mourning becomes a carefully honed skill, and the excessive performance of grief from Kirsty is utilised as a shared emotion.

Moon’s emphasis on the benefit of shared mass mourning, wherein the focus moves away from the corpse but towards instead the expression of grief, signals her movement towards an adoption of interwar stances on appropriate public grief. Of course, for the families of the bereaved in ‘The Corp’, their focus is on how large Kirsty’s fit is; the larger the fit, the more grieveable and honourable the death. Furthermore, Kirsty’s fits, though ‘masterly’, adhere to pre-War gendered expectations of public mourning wherein women were expected to carry and express the emotional weight of death. While these performances are accepted and embraced by Drumorty residents, the excessive performances are never aligned with honest emotions or sadness for the deceased. Kirsty is herself resolutely separated from ‘the mourners,’ for example. Moon refers to ‘the secret gratitude of the mourners’, and ‘the mourners’ who come and go, and Kirsty is outside of this collective noun.<sup>580</sup> ‘The Corp’, then, shifts the focus from the deceased towards excessive and increasingly extravagant public displays of grief with visual cues that can be instantly interpreted by the mourners.

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<sup>577</sup> Moon, ‘The Corp’, p. 3.

<sup>578</sup> Moon, ‘The Corp’, p. 3.

<sup>579</sup> Moon, ‘The Corp’, p. 4.

<sup>580</sup> Moon, ‘The Corp’, p. 4, 3.

Due to the watchfulness and judgements of Drumorty, funerals become competitive rather than genuine attempts to remember the deceased.

‘The Funeral’ instead focuses on the public event rather than the performance of appropriate emotional displays of grief or, indeed, death itself. The ‘certain punishment’ of Jimmy’s death is announced bluntly by Moon, when ‘on a chill dawn it came’.<sup>581</sup> Death is instantly obscured by Mistress MacBride’s fears of watchfulness and the judgement that would result from a basic funeral. Neighbours’ words of sorrow ‘rattled without meaning about her head’, as without the assurance of a suitably impressive public funeral, sympathetic words hold little purpose.<sup>582</sup> Rather than words, the appearance of the funeral is crucial. The undertaker, with a ‘balance between sorrow and salesmanship’ in his voice pressures Mistress MacBride to opt for ‘an oaken casket wi’ silver mountings’.<sup>583</sup> When emphasising to Mistress MacBride that there ‘is dignity about an oaken casket’, the failure to purchase one would be explicit: her son would receive an undignified funeral and would be undignified in death.<sup>584</sup> Mistress MacBride’s inability to afford ‘even the plainest casket’ and her fear that ‘they must know it soon’, all appears to focus not on her maternal grief but on the importance of dignifying Jimmy’s death and fear of failing to afford material signifiers of mourning.<sup>585</sup> Indeed, the postman’s timely arrival at Mistress MacBride’s door with money from her husband Tammias, sees her instantly remark that she will ‘take the casket with the silver mountings [as] Tammias MacBride would no’ want his laddie buried skimpy.’<sup>586</sup> Brian Parsons refers to the funeral as a ‘complex social drama in which performance and rituals are

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<sup>581</sup> Moon, ‘The Funeral’, p. 64. (Emphasis is in the original).

<sup>582</sup> Moon, ‘The Funeral’, p. 64.

<sup>583</sup> Moon, ‘The Funeral’, p. 64.

<sup>584</sup> Moon, ‘The Funeral’, p. 64.

<sup>585</sup> Moon, ‘The Funeral’, p. 64.

<sup>586</sup> Moon, ‘The Funeral’, p. 64.

prescribed by social, religious and economic criteria together with personal preference.’<sup>587</sup>

Jimmy’s funeral itself is laden with tropes of a traditional pre-war funeral:

The laird himself had gone to rest with humbler trappings. Plumed and flower-laden it wound, stately with chant, along the road, choir boys singing plaintively, and pall-bearers with mournful tread. And with its passing passed also the last misdoubt of Tammas MacBride.<sup>588</sup>

Signifiers of wealth, alongside an adherence to traditional mourning rituals combine here to ensure that Mistress MacBride can escape the much-feared judgement of Drumorty. Absent, however, in Moon’s depiction of the dramatic funeral is evidence of actual grief, and emotional expressions of mourning.

In both stories, the adoption of rituals and the performance of extravagant public mourning benefits the protagonists. For as long as Kirsty Fraser is the primary griever in Drumorty, she is respected. She provides a crucial service to mourners in loudly grieving and mourning the deceased as her performances establish the individual’s death as a loss to the community. In return, she has been given a clear role and a way to aid the grieving process. Expensive funerals are explicitly linked to dignified deaths in a manner befitting pre-war attitudes to death. Mistress MacBride’s ability to provide her son with an extravagant funeral prevents negative scrutiny and further judgement of herself and her husband.

### Parodying the Kailyard

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<sup>587</sup> Brian Parsons, *The Evolution of the British Funeral Industry in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: From Undertaker to Funeral Director* (Bingley: Emerald Publishing, 2018), p. 3.

<sup>588</sup> Moon, ‘The Funeral’, pp. 64 – 65.

Whilst these examples of extravagant mourning performances have their roots in pre-war Victorian rituals, Moon, in encouraging interwar approaches to mourning, adopts a narrative voice in the stories which ridicules them as excessive. As noted already, there are several moments wherein death itself is separated from the rituals of mourning, and the deceased is abstracted from an event such as a funeral. Moon's critique of excessive rituals goes beyond this, however. Moon parodies the role of the neutral Kailyard narrator, giving the *Doorways* collection a tension between content and voice. Whilst many of the rituals depicted are traditional, the narration rejects the very traditions maintained by her characters. The parodic approach to a Kailyard-style narration critiques the Kailyard tradition and further signals Moon's movement towards her more experimental, Modernist style in *Dark Star*. Douglas Gifford observes that Moon '[occupies] a place which [...] explains the transition between [...] Barrie's *A Window in Thrums* and the change in perspective characteristic of *Sunset Song*'.<sup>589</sup> In viewing Moon as a writer whose texts occupy a liminal space between Scottish literary traditions, her appropriation of Kailyard narration neither nostalgically reveres nor sentimentalises the rural Scottish past, but instead critiques those who uphold it and restrict the potential for modernisation. In a private letter to Laurance Chambers in 1929, Moon declared that J.M. Barrie was a 'dear old "whimsical" bastard' who would not have understood her protagonist in *Dark Star*.<sup>590</sup> In other letters, she again rejected comparisons to Scottish literary traditions or as a Scottish writer. Her parodic approach to a Kailyard-style narration is then relatively unsurprising and fits with the wider response to the Kailyard of other Scottish Modernists and subsequent critics and theorists.

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<sup>589</sup> Douglas Gifford, 'Scottish Fiction 1980 – 81: The Importance of Alasdair Gray's *Lanark*' in *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 18 (1983), 210 – 253 (p. 224).

<sup>590</sup> Lorna Moon, 'Letter to David Laurance Chambers: 2 May 1929', in *The Collected Works of Lorna Moon*, ed. by Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Black & White Publishing, 2002), pp. 271 – 273 (p. 271).

Ronald Turnbull, in reflecting on Tom Nairn's *Break-Up of Britain*, argues that Scotland failed 'to follow the "normal" trajectory of nations towards development and democracy.'<sup>591</sup> Nowhere is this clearer, according to Turnbull's reading of Nairn, than in the 'sentimental escapism exemplified by the kailyard school of literature, and [the] celebration of the fake, show, "highlandist" identity.'<sup>592</sup> Thomas D. Knowles defines the kailyard as a school of writing which is 'characterised by the sentimental and nostalgic treatment of parochial Scottish scenes, often centred on the church community'.<sup>593</sup> Kailyard writing has received – and, indeed, continues to receive – intense scrutiny and criticism, in response to the overly 'sentimentalized [scenes of] rural life' and its depictions of 'caricatured backwards folk figures'.<sup>594</sup> Critics such as Tom Nairn and Richard Cook argue that much kailyard writing was not only historically inaccurate, but also contributed to a damaging inauthentic and biased constructed view of Scotland and Scottish people, wherein the rural and pastoral were revered as sacred, protected, and authentic spaces. Nairn, for instance, considers the kailyard as part of the 'tartan monster' that exemplified Scotland's political stasis.<sup>595</sup> That said, Ian Campbell counters that the kailyard school of writing was deserving of some praise for representing an alternative view of Scotland (both for those in Scotland and for international readership). Kailyard, Campbell notes, allows the reader to be 'presented with a credible picture of great attractiveness'; that is to say, not purely factual, but recognisable enough in essence to be an attractive and seemingly attainable version of Scotland. Indeed,

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<sup>591</sup> Ronald Turnbull, 'Nairn's Nationalism' in *Scottish Fiction and the British Empire*, ed. by Douglas S. Mack (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 35 – 49 (p. 37).

<sup>592</sup> Turnbull, 'Nairn's Nationalism', p. 37.

<sup>593</sup> Thomas D. Knowles, *Ideology, Art and Commerce: Aspects of Literary Sociology in late Victorian Scottish Kailyard* (Goteburg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1983), p. 13.

<sup>594</sup> Richard Cook, 'The Home-ly Kailyard Nation: Nineteenth-Century Narratives of the Highland and the Myth of Merrie Auld Scotland' in *ELH*, 66.4 (1999), 1053-1073 (p. 1054).

<sup>595</sup> Tom Nairn, 'Old and New Scottish Nationalism' in *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (London: Verso, 1975), pp. 126 – 195 (p. 162).

Campbell's reference to the Scotland 'closer to his memories' suggests that the rural Scotland present in kailyard novels exists neither as a modern space, nor as a historical site, but instead as an imagined and reconstructed place of memory.

The '*pars magna*, if not *pars maxima*, of the Great Kailyard Movement,' according to J.H. Millar in an article for *The New Review* in 1895, was Barrie and Barrie's treatment of rural death is indicative of a tragic, romanticised Scotland.<sup>596</sup> Hendry's death in Barrie's 'A Literary Club' is climactic. Sensing he is near death, Hendry removes himself from the family home without notifying anybody of where he is going. He is found some hours later in the workshop; his 'back was to the door, and he was leaning forward on the silent loom. He had been dead for some time, but his fellow-workers saw that he must have weaved for nearly an hour'.<sup>597</sup> Hendry's positioning, away from the door, perhaps reflects the separation between the frozen tableau of a kailyard community and the industrial transformation of cities. In actively turning his back on the door, Hendry turns his back on the present and focuses on his Thrums role as a weaver, but he is also turning away from the door to potential possibility in the future. Additionally, that Hendry had been 'dead for some time' further demonstrates the historical stasis in Thrums. Turnbull's analysis of kailyard literature as sentimental escapism therefore is a symptom of (and Turnbull argues also a contributing factor to) the fracturing of Scotland's literary identity. In the interest of promoting a Scottish identity that could be simultaneously reminiscent of a safe past (whether false or not), as well as an attractive image of Scotland to foreign readers, the Kailyard fails to provide a unified sense of nationhood. It is this lack of wholeness and the inaccuracy of perceived Scottish history which the Scottish Renaissance movement tackled.

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<sup>596</sup> J.H. Millar, 'The Literature of the Kailyard', in *The New Review*, 12.71 (1895), 384 – 394 (p. 384).

<sup>597</sup> Barrie, J.M., *A Window in Thrums* (London: Cassell Publishing Company, 2014), p. 186.



Moon's explicit rejection of comparisons to J.M. Barrie signify her rejection of Scottish literary traditions which romanticise the rural. Similarly, Moon's stance on Barrie is evidence of her dismissive attitude to the Kailyard school of literature. Barrie's fiction – particularly his collection of short stories, *Auld Licht Idylls* (1888), and his novel *A Window in Thrums* (1889) – is emblematic of Kailyard literature, particularly in his depictions of rural community. Tom Normand argues that Barrie 'presented the psychology of playful rural conspiracy', in language that unites mockery and pastiche with insidiousness.<sup>598</sup> In terms of Barrie's Kailyard community of Thrums, Andrew Nash argues that Barrie presents the reader with 'a sharp and ironic commentary on aspects of nineteenth-century Scottish life'.<sup>599</sup> The narrator providing this commentary in *Auld Licht Idylls* holds a liminal position, able both to understand and empathise with the townspeople of Thrums, but also with the ability to distance himself from them enough that there is a clear dichotomy between him and them.<sup>600</sup> Evidence of this is most noteworthy through Barrie's usage of, and treatment of, Scots. Barrie's Scots dialogue serves to highlight the difference between educated elites and rural workers. Moon, similarly, emphasises the dichotomy between the narrator and the characters. There are only infrequent uses of Scottish dialect or Scots words in *Doorways*, and these few examples are predominantly spoken in conversation by characters rather than in narration. Moon was delighted in private correspondence that the stories kept 'strictly to English' aside from 'six scotch expressions.'<sup>601</sup> Moon's commentary is similarly certainly sharp and ironic – even more so in other stories making up the collection such as 'Silk Both Sides' and 'The Tattie-Doolie' – but whilst she understands her characters, she does not empathise with them.

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<sup>598</sup> Normand, *The Modern Scot*.

<sup>599</sup> Andrew Nash, 'Introduction' in '*Auld Licht Idylls*' and '*A Window in Thrums*' (Edinburgh: Kennedy & Boyd, 2015), pp. vii-xix (xi).

<sup>600</sup> Nash, 'Introduction', p. xi.

<sup>601</sup> Lorna Moon, Letter to David Laurance Chambers, 1928, in *The Collected Works of Lorna Moon*, ed. by Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Black and White Publishing, 2002), p. 262.

Moon is – in both the *Doorways* collection and *Dark Star* – more critical of women than of men. Though Moon’s men are routinely mocked, their characters are less developed, and they often appear as little more than passive (yet willing) participants within an environment that stifles women. For example, it is Mistress MacBride’s inner turmoil that Moon focuses on in ‘The Corp’; Tammas MacBride’s voice is restricted to delayed letters and is read through Mistress MacBride’s experience. Samantha Walton notes that the woman in the home ‘enforces’ the values celebrated by the Kailyard: those of ‘allegiance to their homes [...] thrift, moderation, piety and conspicuous respectability.’<sup>602</sup> Walton’s reference to conspicuous respectability is precisely what Moon attacks in her depiction of excessive public grief in ‘The Corp’ and ‘The Funeral’ wherein highly visible grieving practices are observed and judged by those watching; a highly grieved individual signifies their importance, and the level of grief is aligned with a griever’s piety. As Walton notes, it is women who are expected to enforce the values scorned by Moon and Moon’s writing is therefore aligned with the ‘response of Scottish Modernists [which] shaped Kailyard’s subsequent reception as both a canker in the Scottish literary tradition and an undifferentiated “mass of sludge”.’<sup>603</sup> As Moon herself destabilises Kailyard literary tradition, Moon criticises the female characters in her texts who lack the courage or ability to disrupt the traditions of semi-rural Scottish life.

Moon’s keenness to disrupt public performances of grief is clearly evident in her mockery of the excessive upholding of rituals. When Moon refers to Kirsty’s downfall in ‘The Corp’, she notes that ‘another had stolen the chief jewel of her crown.’<sup>604</sup> Moon’s

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<sup>602</sup> Samantha Walton, ‘Scottish Modernism, Kailyard Fiction and the Woman at Home’ in *Transitions in Middlebrow Writing, 1880 – 1930*, eds Kate Macdonald and Christopher Singer (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 141 – 162 (p. 142).

<sup>603</sup> Walton, ‘Scottish Modernism, Kailyard Fiction and the Woman at Home’, p. 146.

<sup>604</sup> Moon, ‘The Corp’, p. 5.

metaphor, which clarifies that the act of exaggerated performance is Kirsty's most prized trait, exposes Moon's disparaging tone. Later, 'the string of [Kirsty's] black mutch hung down like a weary pendulum that had wagged its hour', and 'with every funeral her pride would die a little more.'<sup>605</sup> These references to death, finality, and personal heartbreak emphasise how the sadness of death itself has become obscured by this community's focus on performance and adherence to ritual. Similarly, the exaggerated religious tone of the narration in 'The Funeral' – which closes with Mistress MacBride hoping she could 'make Him turn His ear and break the isolation of her soul – rather than offering solace to the characters as the liminal narrator only serves to emphasise the absence of religion from the funeral itself.<sup>606</sup> Mistress MacBride's prayers only come when she prays for forgiveness or help in how her neighbours will view her and judge her. Whilst the 'need to pray harried her' when her son was close to death, she is unable to do so.<sup>607</sup> Again, therefore, the narration seems to welcome the downfall of those who care more about public displays of grief and adherence to the burden of watchfulness. Barrie's death tableaux – wherein Hendry's death at the loom mirrors his life – is, whilst tragic, peaceful. Indeed, as Hendry's corpse is 'discovered' by the narrator and the reader rather than by his fellow workers, Barrie provides the opportunity for the reader to express grief privately, prior to the intrusion of other characters. Moon, conversely, suggests that such experiences of death are inaccurate; for Moon, rural death can provide an opportunity for ugly spectacle.

### Glimpsing Real Grief: Loosening the Public Burden of Watchfulness

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<sup>605</sup> Moon, 'The Corp', p. 7.

<sup>606</sup> Moon, 'The Funeral', p. 65.

<sup>607</sup> Moon, 'The Funeral', p. 64.

Although the deaths that occur in ‘The Corp’ and ‘The Funeral’ are genuine bereavements, there are signs that Moon is open to extending what could be losses worthy of grief. Gifford refers to Moon’s ‘charity and balance, even when one senses her controlled hatred of the inhumanity of her small-minded townspeople’ and there is certainly a balanced approach in Moon’s understanding of individual mourning and loss.<sup>608</sup> However, this charity and balance is largely reserved for characters who do not succumb to the pressures of Drumorty. As such, it is questionable whether markedly reserved charity *can* be considered charitable. Moon’s mockery of those who adhere to the traditional expressions of mourning lacks the nuance of Muir’s writing, for instance, as there is less of a desire to portray the reasoning behind upheld traditions. For example, Moon is more empathetic when there are true expressions of sorrow which occur in private, or grieving for the loss of identity. Crucially, Moon is critiquing the burden of rural watchfulness – which is a central facet of rural modernity – and its impact on public performances of grief.

For Moon, only private experiences are represented as honest. The onus is on women to uphold rituals and performances; aside from the undertaker in ‘The Funeral’ whose approach is described as an attempt at sorrowful salesmanship, no men are shown to have any tangible relationship to mourning rituals. Certainly, Lucy Noakes suggests that women historically have carried ‘the labour of loss’; in Moon’s fiction this is literally the case, as grieving rituals become an important – and exhausting – role. Further, such an understanding of the gendered burden of grief mirrors Foucault’s references to ‘processes that effect a transformation of the individual as a whole – of his body and of his habits by the daily work that he is forced to perform.’<sup>609</sup> In this instance, the rituals of grief and public mourning is the ‘daily work’ that is performed by women, and the work itself requires a transformation *in* the

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<sup>608</sup> Gifford, ‘Scottish Fiction 1980 – 81’, p. 224.

<sup>609</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 125.

style of performance, according to the accepted grieving practices of the time. Moon's gendered critique of this burden suggests that public mourning rituals and a completed cycle of grief are incompatible – for women. Therefore, the burden which increases in public due to the impossibility of anonymity can only be loosened in private. Again, this disparaging attitude towards excessive grieving is in keeping with national changes in mourning at the time of writing.

To avoid negative judgement, persistent and consistent performances are crucial, and Moon indicates that emotional outbursts are incompatible with rural watchfulness. Indeed, Moon's depiction of controlled performative grief is in keeping with Foucault's assertion that 'control and transformation of behaviour [are] accompanied – both as a condition and as a consequence – by the development of a knowledge of the individuals.'<sup>610</sup> For example, in 'The Funeral', Mistress MacBride is overwhelmed by the arrival of the postman bearing money from Tammas. Yet, although 'wild laughter dashed about her like a mad thing, striving to vent itself [, s]he held it prisoner and turned to them with high held head.'<sup>611</sup> Mistress MacBride is exhibiting the necessary 'control and transformation of behaviour' that Foucault refers to, in order to disturb the local status quo. Similarly, when Kirsty Fraser resolves to 'shut the door on the rest o' 't' – referring to the remainder of the funeral that she has not been called to – she is resolving to shut the door on the performance of grief.<sup>612</sup> It is only when she is holding this resolution – and when she is reassured that Mistress MacKenty would be unaware that Kirsty was upset – that genuine emotional responses are glimpsed; 'she let the tears steal down her wrinkled cheeks. Her hands trembled together helplessly in her lap.'<sup>613</sup> Kirsty 'lets' herself feel and express these emotions (which are responses to her

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<sup>610</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 125.

<sup>611</sup> Moon, 'The Funeral', p. 64.

<sup>612</sup> Moon, 'The Corp', p. 7.

<sup>613</sup> Moon, 'The Corp', p. 7.

grieving the loss of her prized identity) only when she is away from the burden of judgement, and able to explore loss in the safety of privacy. This apparent safety found in privacy mirrors Foucault's reference to the 'knowledge' of individuals. To avoid contributing unwanted knowledge of her character – that she is expressing these emotions – she must be out of sight of those administering and judging the site-specific codes of behaviour. These stories therefore present a disparity between genuine emotion, and the publicly presented appearance of mourning. Moon indicates that watchfulness disrupts the grieving process, and the weight of surveillance encourages women to adopt performative behaviours in order to avoid rejection or judgement.

An Extension of Grievable Experiences: Disability and Intrapsychic Loss in 'Wantin' a Hand' and *Dark Star*

Moon's short story 'Wantin' a Hand' depicts the traumatic experience of the protagonist's limb loss and the subsequent consequences which lead to a loss of her sense of self. However, the protagonist's intrapsychic loss (a personalised grieving of the loss of a sense of self) is suggestive of two things. Firstly, Moon's focus on layers of loss suggests that there is the potential for other forms of loss and death to be considered worthy of grief. My analysis of 'Wantin' a Hand' will therefore initially focus on the comparability of private trauma to grief to demonstrate that intrapsychic loss and trauma can lead to mourning. Secondly, analysis of this story will determine that Moon favours the private handling of societally invisible traumas such as Jean Sclessor's. Whilst such privacy leads to isolation for the protagonist, it also allows for a deeper, more thorough, engagement with the grieving process (for the protagonist and for Moon herself) and a rejection of public performances of mourning. The protagonist's traumatic flashbacks will initially be discussed through the lens of contemporary posttraumatic-stress disorder (PTSD) research as physical trauma and the

repercussions of this trauma on Jean's social position are directly linked in this short story. I am choosing to foreground contemporary research on trauma here due to its inclusiveness and increased nuance into the causes, symptoms, and victims of various traumatic experiences. Earlier research on trauma had a narrower focus and focused largely on the experiences of male war combatants and what would have been diagnosed as shell-shock.

Jean's isolation and spinsterhood (which is a direct result of her loss of limb) demonstrates that women removed – intentionally or otherwise – from a certain standing within a community are no longer susceptible to the intense pressures of rural watchfulness. Therefore, this analysis of grief in 'Wantin' a Hand' demonstrates that public mourning – as a socially constructed practice – is inaccessible to those grieving other forms of loss besides death itself. Whilst this separation between an individual grief and ritualised mourning can cause isolation, Moon's sympathetic treatment of Jean Sclessor indicates that 'Wantin' a Hand' is suggestive of Moon's rejection of such public practices. Further, Jean's private grief is indicative of a trajectory in Moon's writing leading towards an adoption of modern attitudes towards mourning and death seen more explicitly in *Dark Star*.

Whilst Moon does not explicitly state that trauma warrants grieving, Jean Sclessor's experience is often handled more sensitively than Moon's stories of bereavement. Indeed, the title of this short story – 'Wantin' a Hand' – compared to 'The Corp' and 'The Funeral' itself indicates that this experience of loss is far more personal, and deviates from the widespread focus on the presentation of either a corpse or the production of a funeral. Further, 'Wantin' a Hand' is as much a story about death and grief as it is an exploration of the psychological and physical attributes of trauma. Jean's traumatic experience – the loss of her hand and forearm – is directly linked to rural domesticity and the centrality of rural watchfulness. Her accident occurred when both at work and courting, and after her accident Sandy Morrison – her would-be husband – tells her that he has 'nae use for a wife wantin' a

hand’; a sentence which consistently punctuates Jean’s daily thoughts.<sup>614</sup> The rejection of Jean by Sandy represents the rejection of her as a potential wife, and – further – the reduction of her status in society. Herbert Anderson argues that ‘intrapsychic loss is the experience of losing an emotionally important image of oneself, losing the possibilities of “what might have been” or the dying of a dream.’<sup>615</sup> This form of loss could also be referred to as a symbolic loss – the loss of, for example, a future or stability – as well as a cause of disenfranchised grief (grief that is not understood by others, or otherwise not supported by formal or recognised rituals). Whilst Jean does not die in ‘Wantin’ a Hand’, like Anderson’s analysis of intrapsychic loss she is still surrounded by loss and decay. For example, Moon depicts the erosion of Jean Sclessor’s life, as both her opportunities and surroundings appear to wither. Moon writes of Jean’s ‘yellowed teeth’, and the ‘fusty murk’ of her home for example.<sup>616</sup> Only ‘suggestions of beauty’ remain in Jean,<sup>617</sup> and she is compared to a ‘soiled and torn’ garment.<sup>618</sup> The lost Jean is frequently juxtaposed to the Jean who is left behind to mourn; immediately before Jean succumbs to her flashbacks, she briefly remembers ‘the lass that once was Jean Sclessor’, as again there is the indication of the death of that particular version of Jean and the possibilities of a different life.<sup>619</sup> Indeed, further in the story, Moon writes that ‘[Jean] lived again’ following a public shame of Sandy’s.<sup>620</sup> Therefore, although death itself has not occurred it is clear that Moon establishes ‘Wantin’ a Hand’ as a story of loss.

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<sup>614</sup> Lorna Moon, ‘Wantin’ a Hand’ in *The Collected Works of Lorna Moon* ed. by Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Black & White Publishing, 2002), pp. 23 – 27 (p. 24, p. 27).

<sup>615</sup> Anderson, ‘Common Grief, Complex Grieving’, p. 133.

<sup>616</sup> Moon, ‘Wantin’ a Hand’, p. 23.

<sup>617</sup> Moon, ‘Wantin’ a Hand’, p. 23.

<sup>618</sup> Moon, ‘Wantin’ a Hand’, p. 23.

<sup>619</sup> Moon, ‘Wantin’ a Hand’, pp. 23 – 24.

<sup>620</sup> Moon, ‘Wantin’ a Hand’, p. 26.



The “death” of Jean Sclessor is further emphasised by the sudden absence of meaningful social interactions with other residents of the town. As this is not a regular death or loss, all mourning is limited to Jean herself. Machin provides a broad, hierarchical scale of grief and losses. As previously noted, the three primary stages are visible griefs (such as bereavement), obscured grief (such as disability), and invisible grief (such as loss of identity).<sup>621</sup> Jean Sclessor fits into two of these stages – obscured grief, due to her disability, and invisible grief, due to her loss of identity – and both of these stages have comparatively fewer social constructions surrounding mourning. Therefore, it is likely that obscured and invisible griefs occur primarily in private. This, too, is a facet of intrapsychic loss: Anderson suggests that as ‘very often what [is lost] has been a secret, a hope or a dream seldom if ever shared with others [...] the grief will be secret and not easily shared.’<sup>622</sup> Intrapsychic loss naturally leads to solitary mourning, but Jean’s mourning is also characterised by the significant, noticeable absence of the public pressure and watchfulness that is present in other short stories of Moon’s. Although Jean’s job as a washerwoman means she is still loosely involved with others, she is no longer shown to have meaningful relationships with others. For example, in the references to her courting with Sandy Morrison prior to her accident, Moon places emphasis on their being a thing of the past: ‘*He* stood by the reaper [...] And *she* came laden with the scones [...] But never a move made she, and never a turn of her head [...] But every night he came and watched.’<sup>623</sup> The repetitions of ‘never’ and ‘every’ and Moon’s italicising of ‘he’ and ‘she’ in this passage emphasises that Jean’s and Sandy’s courtship was built upon a foundation of routine; this is language of certainty, and like other rituals and societal expectations within the community, routine and inconspicuousness are

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<sup>621</sup> Linda Machin, *Working with Loss and Grief: A Theoretical and Practical Approach* (London: Sage, 2014).

<sup>622</sup> Anderson, ‘Common Grief, Complex Grieving’, p. 133.

<sup>623</sup> Moon, ‘Wantin’ a Hand’, p. 24.

key to inclusion. Following the accident, in comparison, Jean is isolated and her life lacks the certainty of routine that she previously had. She returns home not to loved ones but ‘revenge and despair’, ‘forgetfulness’, and whisky ‘wrapped in a grey petticoat.’<sup>624</sup> The death of Jean Sclessor is thus highlighted through her separation from routine and certainty, and therefore her separation from meaningful connections with other residents of the town and a lack of rigid expectations regarding her behaviour.

Studies of modernism are increasingly expanding to consider the depiction of disabilities beyond those directly caused by the War, and – further – to examine the treatment of individuals with both physical and mental disabilities.<sup>625</sup> Jean is treated as invisible following her accident, and this invisibility extends to a lack of rural watchfulness; as she is not considered to be a worthy wife, she is simultaneously not considered worthy of surveillance. As established in earlier chapters, rural watchfulness is seen to serve a purpose; in Shepherd’s fiction it can be to ensure the safety of a community, for example. The removal of a person from a community – in this case, Jean’s self-isolation and her apparent invisibility – leads to a reduction in watchfulness. Moon’s depiction of physical disabilities suggests that bodies no longer able to serve a particular purpose are, at best, to be hidden.

Maren Tova Linett considers the link between the rise in Eugenics and depictions of those with disabilities in Modernist literature. Linett notes that Eugenics as a ‘mainstream science’ rather than a ‘fringe movement’ was ‘at its peak’ in the interwar years due to a belief

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<sup>624</sup> Moon, ‘Wantin’ a Hand’, p. 23.

<sup>625</sup> See: James Berger, *The Disarticulate: Language, Disability, and the Narratives of Modernity* (New York: New York University Press, 2014); Michael Davidson, *Invalid Modernism: disability and the missing body of the aesthetic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Bill Hughes, ‘The Constitution of Impairment: Modernity and the aesthetic of oppression’ in *Disability and Society*, 14.2 (1999), 155 – 172; Will Kanyusik, ‘Signifying Otherness in modernity: The subject of disability in *The Sun Also Rises* and *The Sound and the Fury*’ in *Disability, Avoidance and the Academy*, eds David Bolt and Claire Penketh (London: Routledge, 2015).

held by many that the War ‘had killed off or disabled the majority of “fit” young men.’<sup>626</sup> Linett also notes that Eugenics ‘formed a strong component of the birth control movement [which] sought to popularize birth control among “undesirable” populations.’<sup>627</sup> The combination of widespread physical injury and an increasing concern about securing or improving the future health of the nation, led to an intensified ‘atmosphere of eugenic surveillance [in which] women’s sexuality generally, and disabled women’s sexuality in particular, were matters of broad social significance.’<sup>628</sup> Jean’s accident, and her disability, results in her invisibility as a potential wife. Walton comments on the fate of Jean Sclessor as a symptom of ‘the Kailyard formula [wherein] marrying a weak wife is a courting disaster.’<sup>629</sup> Alexandra Jones (discussing coalfields literature) similarly comments on the suspicion of disabled women as being ‘sexless or sexually suspect because of their invalid status’.<sup>630</sup> Indeed, the reaction to Jean’s incident is such that Sandy ‘never looked toward her [...] nor raised his head’ and ‘moved about as if her jeering fell on ears that could not hear’.<sup>631</sup> Jean is simultaneously treated as a ghost and is both no longer worthy of courting and is un-mournable by Sandy. Arianna Introna also acknowledges the significance of Moon’s depiction of disabilities and how Moon speaks ‘to the “absorbing mutual interest” between eugenics and society that intensified at the start of the twenty-first century.’<sup>632</sup> Introna’s chapter on Moon acknowledges the ‘combination of strength and suffering caused

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<sup>626</sup> Maren Tova Linett, *Bodies of Modernism: Physical Disability in Transatlantic Modernist Literature* (United States of America: University of Michigan Press, 2017), p. 12.

<sup>627</sup> Tova Linett, *Bodies of Modernism*, p. 12.

<sup>628</sup> Tova Linett, *Bodies of Modernism*, p. 25.

<sup>629</sup> Walton, ‘Scottish Modernism, Kailyard Fiction and the Woman at Home’, p. 149.

<sup>630</sup> Alexandra Jones, ‘Her body [was] like a hard-worked machine’: Women’s work and disability in coalfields literature, 1880 – 1950’ in *Disability, Work and Representation: New Perspectives*, 37.4 (2017) <doi:10.18061/dsq.v37i4.6103>.

<sup>631</sup> Moon, ‘Wantin’ a Hand’, p. 26.

<sup>632</sup> Arianna Introna, *Autonomist Narratives of Disability in Modern Scottish Writing* (Scotland: Open University, 2022), p. 93.

by social exclusion based on disability.<sup>633</sup> Though Jean Sclessor may have ‘no thought of handicap in her actions’, she is rejected as a wife and is consumed by trauma.<sup>634</sup>

Her seeming invisibility is suggestive of a death caused by a highly *visible* disability (in this case, of course, the metaphorical death of the Jean Sclessor who was courted by Sandy Morrison). Sandy ‘did not cry back at her or lift his head’ nor ‘give a sign’ that he could see Jean at all.<sup>635</sup> However, Jean’s death in this sense cannot be fully realised, as she is unmourned by others. Likewise, following the accident Jean is viewed – particularly by Sandy – through the lens of what she is not, rather than what she is. Sandy’s ‘eyes were on it [Jean’s missing limb’, rather than on – for example – ‘her arm’.<sup>636</sup> Referring to ‘it’ dehumanizes Jean and increases the sense of her no longer being a person worthy of a place in society. Certainly, the story’s title itself – ‘Wantin’ a Hand’ – reiterates that Jean is characterised by what she lacks, and the title mirrors Woolf’s description of Captain Barfoot in *Jacob’s Room* as a man who was ‘lame and wanted two fingers on the left hand.’<sup>637</sup> In both instances, the characters are described by their losses and the double-meaning of their ‘wanting’ of limbs or appendages signifies a constant awareness of a physical point of difference.

There may be another double meaning to Moon’s story title. Ana Carden-Coyne considers rehabilitation programmes which were in place for returning amputee soldiers in the interwar years. With the aim of ensuring the return to rural work, Carden-Coyne refers to the invention of ‘limb attachments [which] were designed for workers: a “Horticulturist’s Hand” could hold just a branch with the action secateurs, while a “Postman’s Hand” could

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<sup>633</sup> Introna, *Autonomist Narratives of Disability in Modern Scottish Writing*, p. 107.

<sup>634</sup> Moon, ‘Wantin’ a Hand’, p. 26.

<sup>635</sup> Moon, ‘Wantin’ a Hand’, p. 26.

<sup>636</sup> Moon, ‘Wantin’ a Hand’, p. 26.

<sup>637</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Jacob’s Room* (New York: Harcourt, 1978), pp. 24 – 25.

hold just one letter.’<sup>638</sup> According to Carden-Coyne, ‘these prosthetic adaptations envisioned the disabled ex-serviceman returning to work with a new kind of masculine enterprise’.<sup>639</sup> As such, the prosthetics aimed to ensure an ability to work within a rural environment, the maintenance of masculinity, and limited unwarranted attention toward the amputation itself. Moon’s ‘Wantin’ a Hand’ therefore invites a comparison to the invention of such prosthetics. There is no way of knowing whether Moon was deliberately evoking similarities between Jean’s hand and the prosthetics of amputee soldiers. However, it is fair to reason that Jean *is* left wanting – if not a ‘Thrasher’s Hand’ – similar external support. Furthermore, Carden-Coyne emphasises the preservation of masculinity and propensity to work afforded as a result of prosthesis. Whilst Jean is evidently able to work successfully, her femininity is depicted to be irreversibly negatively impacted. Therefore, she is unable to access physical or emotional support and the representation of her as being incomplete and therefore unworthy of mourning is again emphasised by Moon.

In *Dark Star*, the language of loss and trauma surrounding Andrew Morrison is similarly indicative of Moon’s interest in visible disabilities and social exclusion. Andrew Morrison, Nancy’s co-worker and Pitouie’s librarian, whilst ‘seated behind the table he was a man [but when crossing the room] would be only the torso of a man, grotesquely walking on thigh-bones.’<sup>640</sup> Without his limbs, Andrew Morrison is left ‘grotesquely trailing two little wooden coffins in which lay his dead-born legs’ and ‘to stand up was tragedy!’<sup>641</sup> In this imagery of a young man without limbs but with traumatic reminders of what he does not have, he mirrors those returning from the War. Andrew repeatedly feels that he is ‘not a man’

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<sup>638</sup> Ana Carden-Coyne, *Reconstructing the Body: Classicism, Modernism, and the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 192.

<sup>639</sup> Carden-Coyne, *Reconstructing the Body*, p. 192.

<sup>640</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 147.

<sup>641</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 147.

as ‘one half of him was dead, one half of him already coffined’.<sup>642</sup> Given the volume of men returning from the First World War as amputees – Suzannah Biernoff, in her research on disfigurement rhetoric in First World War Britain, refers to the over 41,000 men who had one or more limbs amputated – it is reasonable to argue that the language surrounding Andrew Morrison deliberately echoes the experiences of these men.<sup>643</sup> Certainly, there are similarities between Andrew Morrison and Wilfred Owen’s amputee soldier in his poem ‘Disabled’ (1917) who mourns the loss of his limbs and notices how ‘the women’s eyes passed from him to the strong men that were whole.’<sup>644</sup> Like Biernoff’s suggestion that the severity of a man’s injury would determine his masculinity in public perception, Owen and Moon both also highlight this as a concern for their amputated characters. Additionally, alongside his ‘coffined’ legs, Andrew Morrison references how ‘most men bury their dead, while [he carries his] around with [him]’ in a sentence which demonstrates both an ironic reference to the reduction in traditional burials, but also a possible recognition of increased levels of PTSD (then diagnosed as shell shock), as he is forced always to hold the reminder of his loss. These experiences serve to mirror an interwar obsession with death by emphasising the volume of trauma, and the constancy of threatened death present in the interwar period. Ultimately, the result of these obsessions and the claustrophobia of constant trauma was the explicit suppression of grief.

However, Moon emphasises the visibility and aural presence of Andrew’s disability. As with Jean Sclessor, whose disability did not prevent her from being both a respected worker and physically capable, Andrew refuses to suppress – visually or aurally – his

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<sup>642</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 149,

<sup>643</sup> Suzannah Biernoff, ‘The Rhetoric of Disfigurement in First World War Britain’ in *Social History of Medicine*, 24.3 (2011), 666 – 685 (p. 666).

<sup>644</sup> Wilfred Owen, ‘Disabled’ (1917), <<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/57285/disabled>> [Accessed 10 January 2021].

disability. There are mentions throughout the novel of the ‘clattering’ of Andrew’s wooden boxes. In one moment, Moon notes that ‘never had his boxes made such a noise. Never had he walked so labouredly. With every clatter he seemed to be crying out: “See the cripple that would speak of love; hear his dead legs; hear the wooden crying of his dead legs.”’.<sup>645</sup> Elsewhere, when Andrew attends University having won a bursary, his ‘fantasy of belonging is brought to an end’ when a professor mistakes Andrew’s disability for insolence.<sup>646</sup> Introna notes that his ‘disability crucially becomes visible again as he exits both the classroom and the social sphere.’<sup>647</sup> It is at this moment that his ‘wooden boxes [clatter] loudly’.<sup>648</sup>

There is a clear contrast between Andrew’s ‘moment of entry into public life’ and the exact moment that he leaves it.<sup>649</sup> As he first enters the university town, he ‘walked along narrow bustling Broad Street to the University, [with] swinging legs that were long and lithe, legs that responded to the high singing of his heart, though they were but legs of his imagining.’<sup>650</sup> The juxtaposition between the ‘bustling street’ to the clattering of Andrew’s exit is indicative of two things: firstly, the implied possibility for Andrew to merge with the crowd when away from semi-rural areas; and, the repercussions of Andrew’s disability. Andrew’s moment of walking through a bustling street is brief yet, through the imagery of Andrew’s legs, in just one line Moon depicts Aberdeen as a space of heightened opportunity, but also as a place only of ‘Andrew’s imagining’. The legs that Andrew imagines in this passage are not real, and neither is the place where he can exist without being restricted by his disability. Andrew’s ‘clattering’ return to the semi-rural, wherein it is the noise and

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<sup>645</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 196.

<sup>646</sup> Introna, *Autonomist Narratives of Disability in Modern Scottish Writing*, p. 106.

<sup>647</sup> Introna, *Autonomist Narratives of Disability in Modern Scottish Writing*, p. 106.

<sup>648</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 150.

<sup>649</sup> Introna, *Autonomist Narratives of Disability in Modern Scottish Writing*, p. 106.

<sup>650</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 196.

presence of his disability that he is principally characterised by, is further evidence of Moon's broader depictions of grievable experiences. David Galef argues that Woolf's figures of the disabled are 'often dispensed with in the space between parentheses, [but] they nonetheless represent salient portraits of disfigured lives, part of Woolf's historical realism that points to the ravages of the Great War.'<sup>651</sup> Moon's call to 'hear [Andrew's] dead legs; hear the wooden crying of his dead legs' is similarly indicative of the widespread ravages of the war. Yet rather than 'dispensing with' Andrew, Moon explicitly encourages comparisons between death and disability, and allows for mournful weeping at this form of loss.<sup>652</sup>

Whilst Jean Sclessor is removed from the shared mourning practices seen in 'The Corp' and 'The Funeral', the private exploration of her grieving experience is far more detailed and indicates attempts to preserve certain rituals but in a private setting. Without the pressure to publicly perform certain aspects of the mourning process – as Jean's grief is not understood or accepted *as* something to be grieved – Jean is afforded the time to mourn herself. Jean's job as a washerwoman for Drumorty is also intriguing. It can of course signal her continued strength ('she could defy any woman with *two* hands to wring one drop more from it') and her refusal to be singularly defined by her loss of limb.<sup>653</sup> Yet, there are also links between the role of corpse-washing and mourning which I believe can help to situate Moon's position on interwar grief: namely, that pre-war rituals are not transferable to the interwar period. Julie-Marie Strange's research into working-class grief and mourning in the period 1880-1914 considers the importance of burial preparations and how communities would care for a corpse to enable 'the bereaved to accept the finality of death'.<sup>654</sup> The role of

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<sup>651</sup> David Galef, 'Disfigured Figures: Virginia Woolf's Disabled List' in *Studies in English, New Series*, 9.13 (1991).

<sup>652</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 196.

<sup>653</sup> Moon, 'Wantin' a Hand', p. 23.

<sup>654</sup> Strange, 'She cried a very little', p. 152.



the handywoman was a crucial ‘act of remembrance as well as a pragmatic function’ but, importantly, was a role designed to aid others to view the corpse with the most comfort.<sup>655</sup> If Jean can be read as self-mourning, her role of washerwoman sees her as her own handywoman. ‘Wantin’ a Hand’ is a story about grief, but also about the attempted reproduction of cleanliness and the illusion of perfection. Jean literally makes clothes appear as new, and ‘the clothes washed by Jean Sclessor were truly washed.’<sup>656</sup> Yet, ironically, Jean herself lives in a home marred by foul odours and is linked to ‘soiled and torn’ garments and ‘yellowed’ teeth.<sup>657</sup> Strange also references Dickens’ Sarah Gamp as the – critiqued – embodiment of a drunken, ‘filthy and incompetent’ handywoman tasked with preparing corpse for burial.<sup>658</sup> Whilst Jean is not incompetent – she is rather fiercely competent – Moon’s focus on her drunkenness and the filth that surrounds her does align Jean with the negative connotations attached to the handywoman character. Finally, as Jean’s loss is recognised by Jean herself, the completion of mourning rituals would also be her responsibility. Only she would be able to cleanse her body in recognition of the journey from life to death. Indeed, at the end of the story Jean contemplates preparing her body for what would essentially be a societal rebirth, where she would emerge clean, sober, and renewed, and she would be ‘looked up to and respected’ as a result.<sup>659</sup> Her inability to do this signals both the difficulty of transferring pre-war community rituals to private remembrances, as well as the limitations attached to losses not formally recognised as such. Certainly, it emphasises the disparity between collective acts of mourning, and the solitude of private grief.

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<sup>655</sup> Strange, ‘She cried a very little’, p. 153.

<sup>656</sup> Moon, ‘Wantin’ a Hand’, p. 23.

<sup>657</sup> Moon, ‘Wantin’ a Hand’, p. 23, 24.

<sup>658</sup> Strange, ‘She cried a very little’, p. 154.

<sup>659</sup> Moon, ‘Wantin’ a Hand’, p. 27.

## Trauma and Personal Remembrance

At the time of *Doorways in Drumorty*'s publication in 1926, much of the research on – and subsequent treatment of – trauma focused on its presentation as 'shell shock'. The term 'shell shock' was first introduced into medical literature in 1915 by Charles Myers to acknowledge the 'cataclysmic effect on British society [...] of participating in [the mass slaughter of war]'.<sup>660</sup> Indeed, Michael Murray states that 'as many as 7-10 per cent of officers and 3-4 per cent of soldiers [...] were being sent home from Europe suffering some form of mental or nervous breakdown.'<sup>661</sup> Likewise, Jones, Fear, and Wessely, in discussing the scale of the disorder, note that shell shock 'was responsible for one-seventh of all discharges from the British army', secondary only to physical wounds.<sup>662</sup> Trauma and its psychological impacts were therefore increasingly part of the everyday during the war, with rapidly increasing numbers of shell shock diagnoses. Treatment of shell shock was thus focused on combatants returning from war. Indeed, shell shock – which Mark S. Micale argues 'is the prototype of war-induced psychological trauma' – explicitly links battle with subsequent psychological impacts.<sup>663</sup>

Dr Arthur Brock, who treated Wilfred Owen and many other men at Craiglockhart Hospital, proposed a specific therapy which 'aimed at restoring in [patients] the healthy,

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<sup>660</sup> Michael Murray, 'The pre-history of health psychology in the United Kingdom: From natural science and psychoanalysis to social science, social cognition and beyond' in *Journal of Health Psychology*, 23.3 (2018), 472 – 491 (p. 476).

<sup>661</sup> Murray, 'The pre-history of health psychology in the United Kingdom: From natural science and psychoanalysis to social science, social cognition and beyond', p. 476.

<sup>662</sup> Edgar Jones, Nicola T. Fear, and Simon Wessely, 'Shell Shock and Mild Traumatic Brain Injury: A Historical Review' in *American Journal of Psychology*, 164 (2007), 1641 – 1645 (p. 1641).

<sup>663</sup> Mark S. Micale, 'Beyond the Western Front' in *Trauma, Experience and Narrative in Europe after World War II*, eds Ville Kivimaki and Peter Leese (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), pp. 27 – 52 (p. 30) <[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-84663-3\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-84663-3_2)> [Accessed 28 February 2023].

“normal” relationship with their environment which had been disrupted by war.’<sup>664</sup> For example, under Brock’s guidance Owen became involved in activities designed to restore physical and psychological vitality in order to begin the process of recovery from ‘the war giant or military machine’ which ‘well nigh crushed to death’ combatants.<sup>665</sup> Elaine Showalter suggests that such treatment was in contrast to the ‘passive rest cures favored in this period for hysterical or neurasthenic women’ as ‘military doctors felt that intense activity was essential for the restoration of male self-esteem’.<sup>666</sup> Indeed, Frederika Thelandersson notes that ‘women’s affective states have a long history of being pathologized under names like neurasthenia, hysteria, and schizophrenia’ and the ‘sad and mad woman’ would frequently be institutionalised or confined.<sup>667</sup> Treatment such as Brock’s, then, in encouraging physical and psychological activity, contrasts with the isolating and passive treatment of pathologized women.

Conversely, W. H. R. Rivers, who treated war poet Siegfried Sassoon amongst others at Craiglockhart, is credited as being a ‘founding father of modern social anthropology’ and was one of the leading psychologists treating sufferers of shell shock. Showalter considers that one aim of Rivers’ style of treatment was to ‘emphasize the contrast between [Sassoon’s] emotional, and thus feminine, attitude toward the war’ and Rivers’ own masculine approach.<sup>668</sup> However, Rivers – who based his approach on Freud’s talking therapies –

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<sup>664</sup> Paul Norgate, ‘Shell-shock and Poetry: Wilfred Owen at Craiglockhart Hospital’ in *Journal of the English Association*, 36.154 (1987), 1 – 35 (p. 6).

<sup>665</sup> Dominic Hibberd, ‘A Sociological Cure for Shellshock: Dr. Brock and Wilfred Owen’ in *The Sociological Review*, 25.2 (1977), 377 – 386.

<sup>666</sup> Elaine Showalter, ‘Rivers and Sassoon: The Inscription of Male Gender Anxieties’ in *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, eds Margaret Randolph Higonnet et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987) pp. 61 – 69 (p. 66).

<sup>667</sup> Frederika Thelandersson, *21<sup>st</sup> Century Media and Female Mental Health: Profitable Vulnerability and Sad Girl Culture* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), p. 9 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-16756-0>> [Accessed 28 February 2023].

<sup>668</sup> Showalter, ‘Rivers and Sassoon: The Inscription of Male Gender Anxieties’, p. 66.

examined the dangers of repression and, as such, his approach serves as a valuable parallel to this chapter's analysis of trauma and repression in Moon's fiction. Indeed, Rivers wrote in 1918 of the mental and physical manifestations of shell shock, noting that 'new symptoms often arise [...] which are not the immediate and necessary consequence of the war experience, but are due to repression of painful memories and thoughts, or of unpleasant affective states arising out of reflection.'<sup>669</sup> In his *Conflict and Dream* (published posthumously in 1923) Rivers noted that some shell shock symptoms would include waking from sleep in 'an acute sense of terror [...] with all the physical accompaniments of extreme fear, such as profuse sweating, shaking, and violent beating of the heart'.<sup>670</sup> Although Rivers' approach, which focused on 'the efficacy of a form of talking cure', was not necessarily typical, it acknowledges that the war itself may not be the direct cause of shell shock.<sup>671</sup> Rather, Rivers suggests it is the attempt to suppress memories and feelings associated with the experience of war that can cause the extreme psychological distress related with shell shock.

Much research on shell shock rather than the broader term of trauma necessarily narrows the frame of reference to (predominantly male) experiences of war. As Freedman acknowledges, 'writers like H.D., Woolf and Mansfield, suggest that direct experience is not the only traumatic experience and that the circle of the war's effects extends much further than its immediate circumference.'<sup>672</sup> Applying theories of shell-shock – designed to treat those who had 'direct' experience of the war – would therefore not be the best approach. As such, Moon's vivid representation of Jean's personal acts of remembrance and her response

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<sup>669</sup> W. H. R. Rivers, 'An address on the repression of war experience' in *Lancet* (1918) <<http://net.lib.byu.edu/rdh7/wwi/comment/rivers.htm>> [Accessed 15 January 2021].

<sup>670</sup> W. H. R. Rivers, *Conflict and Dream* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 66.

<sup>671</sup> Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), p. 15.

<sup>672</sup> Freedman, *Death, Men, and Modernism*, p. 20.

to trauma will be discussed using more contemporary scientific research on PTSD. Laura Brown argues, for instance, that historically the requirement for an event to qualify as legally and medically traumatic is for it to have occurred ‘outside the range of human experience.’<sup>673</sup> However, she claims that in practice this qualification would still give more credence to events that occur outside ‘the range of normal male experience’ – such as men’s war experiences – and often relegates women’s experiences.<sup>674</sup> Similarly, Judith Lewis Herman argues that ‘when the victim is already devalued (a woman, a child), she may find that the most traumatic events of her life take place outside the realm of socially validated reality.’<sup>675</sup> As such, more inclusive trauma research allows for a broader consideration of what trauma is, and what a traumatic experience might look like.

Cathy Caruth, for example, posits that trauma – ‘originating from the Greek *trauma* (or “wound”)’ – can ‘describe an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response [...] occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena.’<sup>676</sup> Caruth’s distinction that trauma is *an* overwhelming experience indicates that the causes of trauma are broad; what could count as an overwhelming experience to one person may not necessarily traumatise another. As such, the event itself is not as remarkable as the individual response to that event. According to Caruth ‘the traumatized carry an impossible history within them’, and this history is unique to that individual.<sup>677</sup> Bessel Van Der Kolk’s extensive research on PTSD in his acclaimed book *The Body Keeps the Score: Mind, Brain and Body in the Transformation of Trauma* similarly

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<sup>673</sup> Laura Brown, ‘Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma’ in *Psychoanalysis, Culture and Trauma*, 48.1 (1991), 119 – 133 (p. 119).

<sup>674</sup> Brown, ‘Not Outside the Range’, p. 119.

<sup>675</sup> Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, p. 5.

<sup>676</sup> Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 3, 11.

<sup>677</sup> Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 5.

refers to trauma as an ‘unbearable knowledge’, and much of his work centres on ascertaining how ‘lives are shattered by overwhelming experiences, and in figuring out how to enable them to feel fully alive again’.<sup>678</sup> Van der Kolk’s phrasing here indicates that trauma can itself be a personal death and thus a grievable loss of a prior life. Van der Kolk examines various contemporary PTSD treatments, predominantly alongside an overview of war-based PTSD, but his text also extends what could be classified as a traumatic experience in terms of receiving such treatments. He acknowledges the importance of including, for instance, rape, domestic abuse and grief into the discussion and treatment of trauma. Van der Kolk notes that:

Trauma is not just an event that took place sometime in the past; it is also the imprint left by that experience on mind, brain, and body [...] Trauma results in a fundamental reorganization of the way mind and brain manage perceptions. [...] The act of telling the story doesn’t necessarily alter the automatic physical and hormonal responses of bodies that remain hypervigilant, prepared to be assaulted or violated at any time.<sup>679</sup>

Van der Kolk’s focus on how trauma causes a total reorganization of the brain, and the permanent anticipatory state that traumatised people are reduced to, is similar to other research on the interwar period. For example, as previously noted the interwar period left many people simultaneously experiencing grief as they processed the mass-deaths of the First World War, whilst also anticipating and fearing future deaths and future assaults on livelihoods. Jean is suspended in an anticipatory state, mourning her old life yet fearing the

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<sup>678</sup> Bessel Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Mind, Brain and Body in the Transformation of Trauma* (London: Penguin, 2015).

<sup>679</sup> Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*.

next onslaught of remembering and the constancy of rejection. Broadening this out further, Jean's private experience is representative of the impact of mass-traumatization on rural communities and Moon's response to this. The interwar period saw a movement away from public rituals for individual bereavements and thus a 'total reorganization' of national and local responses to traumatic events. Carl Krockel, analysing war trauma and English Modernism, argues that T. S. Eliot and D. H. Lawrence – alongside other Modernist writers – may not have been 'threatened by shellfire, but [they were threatened] by a society fixated upon war.'<sup>680</sup> Krockel suggests that whilst creating an accurate depiction of the war was impossible for those who had not experienced it, their own experiences were still directly impacted by the war. Similarly, he argues that 'alongside the enduring of conflict, there is the legacy from the battlefield to the psyche of veterans and civilians, replicating violence in everyday life'.<sup>681</sup> This legacy necessitated a change in the depiction of trauma and traumatic experiences in literature, to contribute to a wider testimony of the impact of war. The clear frustration Moon directs at rural communities upholding pre-war rituals in other stories, compared to the solitary mourning and exploration of private grief in 'Wantin' a Hand' shows how communities were themselves in a period of reorganization and were too battling how to re-tell stories of loss.

Jean's solitary re-experiencing of her loss occurs through a vivid flashback to the moment of loss. Van der Kolk gives indications as to how trauma presents itself in the brain, noting that the 'imprints of traumatic experiences are organized not as coherent logical narratives but in fragmented sensory and emotional traces: images, sounds, and physical sensations.'<sup>682</sup> 'Wantin' a Hand' is an insight into the intrusiveness of Jean's traumatic

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<sup>680</sup> Carl Krockel, *War Trauma and English Modernism: T.S. Eliot and D. H. Lawrence* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 9.

<sup>681</sup> Krockel, *War Trauma and English Modernism*, p. 211.

<sup>682</sup> Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*.

thoughts, and the way they interrupt her work, her rest, and her capacity to move her life forward; Jean's life is indeed shattered and reorganized as a result of her accident and her isolation after the event. Moon provides the reader not only with Jean's coping mechanisms (largely, her alcoholism and self-mourning), but also a flashback to the traumatic event itself. Moon writes of Jean 'melting with the vision', and then.<sup>683</sup>

She settled back upon the piled potatoes in the fusty murk, her heavy throat racked with bitter sobbing. The thrashing machine sounded in her ears again. She stood in its sucking wind, feeding the yellow sheaves to its hungry mouth. Sandy swung by calling her above the roar, love glimmering in his face. She stopped to wave at him – to watch his glinting head go by – the crunching mouth reached for her fingers – drew them onwards with the wheat – seized them, pulled them in – the hand, the arm, up, up, the arm – Oh, God, stop it! – stop –

She jerked from side to side with the pain of sharp remembering, thumping the potatoes with the splashing bottle. And then she licked the whiskey from her hand, and drank, whimpering as the glow stole round her heart.<sup>684</sup>

The presence of images, sounds, and physical sensations noted by Van der Kolk are all present here: the thrashing sound of the machine, the feel of the sucking wind, and of course, the physical pain and horror of the accident itself. This flashback passage is also one of Moon's more experimental and Modern extracts (particularly in the *Doorways in Drumorty* collection), as she manipulates time and consciousness. It seems fitting, then, that this passage occurs in a story which most explicitly rejects pre-war community rituals of

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<sup>683</sup> Moon, 'Wantin' a Hand', p. 24.

<sup>684</sup> Moon, 'Wantin' a Hand', pp. 24 – 25.



mourning and embraces the individual experience of grief. The flashback for Jean is a physical sensation: it is ‘a pain of sharp remembering’, she feels the vivid sensations again as if they were happening at that moment, and she is painfully reliving her moment of trauma.<sup>685</sup> The ‘whimpering’ and lone ‘wailing’ that follow this flashback, although a sign of Jean’s devastation and isolation, are evidence of the freer experience of mourning available in private. When considering re-joining Drumorty society, Jean is not seeking companionship or sympathy in her grief. Rather, she determines that ‘she’d stop her rocking and her crying. She’d stop her drinking and her wailing’.<sup>686</sup> Her visions of being back in close societal circles revolve around what she would wear (‘a dolman trimmed with bugle beads’) and how she would be ‘looked up to and respected’.<sup>687</sup> Jean’s experience of grief and Drumorty are incompatible. Moon presents a dichotomy between grieving and privacy, or community support but an inability to grieve this form of loss; ‘Wantin’ a Hand’, in this way, forms a bridge between the mockery of shared grief in earlier short stories to the explicit suppression of grief befitting the interwar period in *Dark Star*.

### *Dark Star* and the Interwar Suppression of Grief

Through exposing the tension in Moon’s novel between the immense loss and reminders of trauma saturating everyday life, and the inability to grieve individual losses, *Dark Star* can be read as a text which provides insight into the gendered transformation of rural mourning in the interwar period. The narrative is framed between two distinct experiences of death (Nancy Pringle’s grandmother, and Nancy Pringle herself), offering a traceable thread from ill-fitting pre-War ideals of gendered mourning, and an attempt at a constructed idealised

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<sup>685</sup> Moon, ‘Wantin’ a Hand’, p. 25.

<sup>686</sup> Moon, ‘Wantin’ a Hand’, p. 27.

<sup>687</sup> Moon, ‘Wantin’ a Hand’, p. 27.

interwar death which rejects gendered burdens. Whereas *Doorways in Drumorty* depicts the absurdity of some Victorian rituals and there is evidence of an extension of grievable experiences, in *Dark Star* traditional rituals are almost entirely absent, and there is no evidence of positive public mourning or grief in her novel. There are moments in the novel which mirror ‘The Corp’ and ‘The Funeral’ – hints at mourning dress and the felt necessity to partake in an expected communal ritual – but these are quickly halted. In part, the suppression of public grief is due to the immensity of loss that became normal during the First World War.

*Dark Star* does not actively engage with the First World War and characters do not seem to be directly impacted by the War. There is only one direct reference to war; when writing of long-lasting disagreements between ‘the land folk [and] the fishing folk’, Moon considers their bickering ‘a gentle warfare which broke no bones’.<sup>688</sup> Moon’s novel does however demonstrate an obsession with losses, death, and trauma that mirrors the obsession felt by many in the interwar period. Moon’s response to pre-war mourning rituals in *Doorways in Drumorty* is to present them as frivolous, and she indicates that private rebellions and individual griefs are a way of rejecting rural pressures. In *Dark Star*, such rebellions are no longer necessary as pressure to adhere to elaborate public rituals is suppressed. The deaths are presented as inevitabilities unworthy of meaningful grief, and moments of meaningful reflection and opportunities to grieve in a community are absent (and, indeed, not shown to be missed). The novel instead further highlights the unsuitability of old practices, provides examples of suppressed and failed grief and, finally, sees Moon provide an example of an idealised war-death. The novel is therefore indicative of Moon’s willingness to adopt interwar attitudes towards death and mourning, and her rejection of gendered rituals. In the stories of *Doorways in Drumorty*, individual losses and their rituals

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<sup>688</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 84.

were centralised: public mourning in ‘The Corp’, demonstrative grief in ‘The Funeral’, and the move towards individualised grief and trauma in ‘Wantin’ a Hand’. In *Dark Star*, the level of community engagement with mourning which is seen in ‘The Corp’ and ‘The Funeral’ is shown to be unsustainable.

*Dark Star*’s first line – ‘Nancy was glad when her grandmother died’ – and its last line – ‘And as the sharp black teeth of the sea came up to meet her, she smiled’ – enclose the novel’s transformative approach to grief as Moon moves from the allusion to tradition to an attempt at an idealised death.<sup>689</sup> The gladness in the first line immediately foregrounds Nancy Pringle’s honest reaction to this particular death – happiness – and contradicts an expectation of moroseness. Therefore, there is an immediate distancing from pre-war evident sorrow and Moon instantly moves towards a suppression of public grief and ritual. Such a change in the representation to – and reaction to – death is indicative of the changing boundaries of mourning. Foote and Frank reason that ‘disciplined grief’ is a product of the boundaries established by a society; the opening passages of *Dark Star* depict these boundaries in a moment of flux.<sup>690</sup>

The death of Nancy’s grandmother is followed by some attempts to engage with the residue of traditional rituals, alongside attempts by neighbours to obscure the language of death and obscure its finality. Both parties initially show an awareness of expectation. After pulling ‘her hair loosely over her ears as other girls did who had no grandmother to nag them [... Nancy] went and told the neighbours.’<sup>691</sup> When the neighbours arrive, Nancy initially ‘cried a little because [they] seemed to expect it.’<sup>692</sup> The ‘it’ here can be read as a reference to stereotypical gendered responses to grief, and feminised emotional responses such as those

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<sup>689</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 79, p. 248.

<sup>690</sup> Foote and Frank, ‘Foucault and Therapy: The Disciplining of Grief’, pp. 167 – 169.

<sup>691</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 81.

<sup>692</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 81.

seen in 'The Corp'. In response, Nancy's neighbours soften the reality of death, and her grandmother is described as having 'slipped away'.<sup>693</sup> As in *Doorways in Drumorty*, alerting the neighbours remains important. However, whereas in the short stories the arrival of neighbours *begins* the process of public rituals, in *Dark Star* the assistance of the neighbours leads to confusion and demonstrates the unsuitability of traditional practices. For example, after her death Nancy's Granny is taken to 'what Pitouie proudly called the "undertaking chambers" [...which were] really part of a dairy farm made over [and] Granny was lain on one of the shelves where pans of white milk had once stood waiting to be skimmed.'<sup>694</sup> The makeshift undertaking chambers signify Moon's mockery of rural attempts to beautify or make elaborate the mourning process, but also hints at the inconsequentiality of a single loss of life which can simply be 'skimmed' away. Later, Nancy reflects on how 'Granny lay dead and strangely clean upon the stone shelves of the dairy farm'.<sup>695</sup> The application of Julie-Marie Strange's research into pre-war working-class grief and the preparation of a corpse for burial to Moon's 'Wantin' a Hand' demonstrated Moon's rejection of traditional death rituals. Likewise, Nancy's judgement of her Granny as 'strangely clean' highlights the transformation of mourning in the interwar period; rather than feeling comforted by the preparation of her grandmother's body for burial, Nancy instead expresses discomfort and confusion.<sup>696</sup>

Following her grandmother's death, Nancy finds solace in the beginning of her new role as a 'widow-woman with flower pots in [her] window'.<sup>697</sup> As with the embracing of roles

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<sup>693</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 79.

<sup>694</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 79.

<sup>695</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 93.

<sup>696</sup> Julie-Marie Strange, 'She cried a very little': Death, grief and mourning in working-class culture, c. 1880-1914', in *Social History*, 27.2 (2002), 143 – 161 (p. 152).

<sup>697</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 94.

in 'The Corp', Nancy initially overlooks the death that has occurred and instead focuses on the potential for performance. Indeed, she considers how the death will allow her to be 'some definite person instead of just Granny's grandchild,' just as Kirsty Fraser's fits at funerals become a role with a wider purpose for society with opportunities for private rebellion against rituals.<sup>698</sup> However, Nancy is allowed to rebel only 'inwardly', as the 'unfortunate circumstances of [her] birth' – as she has no known living parents or guardians – mean that she has no choice but to abandon her role as 'widow-woman' in order to live at the parsonage.<sup>699</sup> Nancy's grandmother's death is thus shown to be inconsequential, and attempts at adopting a role related to mourning are unsuitable.

Other aspects of mourning also contribute to discomfort. In an acknowledgement of the necessity of pre-war mourning dress, Moon writes that 'a mourning dress [was made] for Nancy out of Granny's black alpaca skirt. It smelled strongly of peat smoke and [...] had a greenish cast. The seams rasped her armpits [and] she was miserable' wearing it.<sup>700</sup> Later, old Mrs. Anderson tells Nancy that she looks 'like a tragedy queen in that black thing'.<sup>701</sup> The thriftily crafted clothes, rather than illustrating Nancy's mourning and sorrow, instead cause physical discomfort, are unpleasant to look at, spur mockery and – with their smell and murky colour – further highlight what Moon sees as distasteful mourning in the interwar period. The reduction of performance and ritual also highlight that the prior centrality of watchfulness held precedence over genuine responses to death; when these expectations are loosened (or redirected), the prevailing emotion is bemusement. Particularly for Moon's female characters, there is a rootlessness that results from the reduction in shared mourning.

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<sup>698</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 94.

<sup>699</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 96.

<sup>700</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 99.

<sup>701</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 115.

Both Kelly and Booth agree that the modernist war sees images and the language of death permeating everything, even if the war itself remains implicit. Alongside the novel's actual deaths (Nancy's grandmother, Bella Pringle, and Nancy herself) there are threats of death, the relentlessness of illness, and various individual traumas. Moon's many references to death and illness similarly contribute to the overwhelming pervasiveness of loss or imagery of impending death, which mirrors an interwar obsession with death in the face of mass-loss. For example, prior to Nancy's grandmother's death Moon writes of Grandma Pringle's previous heart attacks which render her bedbound and which 'had brought her to the point of death fifty times in the preceding two years'.<sup>702</sup> Nancy's grandmother's 'shrivelled flesh' and Nancy's frequent horror at the 'needle [crunching] home' into her grandmother's arm are indicative of erosion and the fading of the body, even before death has occurred. Other characters also mirror deathly imagery. Miss Clark, a 'genteel spinster who kept a boarding-house for "selected gentlemen"' suffers from asthma which means she must always wear 'a respirator covered with black velvet over her mouth'; she is 'brittle and thin [with a] sunken breast.'<sup>703</sup> Her black garment, though not signifying grief, mirrors the past necessity for permanent visual reminders of the act of mourning. The Reverend William Anderson, with his 'weak digestion,' 'cold bluish face', 'pinched cold look, and his clothes [hanging] about him listlessly' is close to corpse-like.<sup>704</sup> Similarly, Old Mrs. Anderson is 'not so well', often bedbound, and persistently on the verge of more severe illness.<sup>705</sup> As such, the permeation of death into everyday life disrupts the perceived comfort of the rural. Fussell notes that 'recourse to the pastoral is a [mode of] gauging the calamities of the Great War and imaginatively protecting oneself against them. [The pastoral] is a comfort in itself, like rum, a

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<sup>702</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 79.

<sup>703</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 106, 107.

<sup>704</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 95, 107, 95.

<sup>705</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 95.

deep dugout, or a woolly vest.’<sup>706</sup> Moon’s emphasis on the sickliness and injuries within the semi-rural space thereby rejects both the notion of a safe and healing space, and the idea of the pastoral serving as protection from the realities of modernity.

Due to the pervasiveness of loss, Nancy is often the target of mockery for her romantic idealisations of life and death. Moon’s treatment of Nancy’s romantic approach to everyday life and mourning invites a comparison to Shields’ work on Scottish women’s writing in the long nineteenth century. Shields explores the relationship between Scottish women’s writing and the domestication of romance wherein the beauty of the mundane is revealed.<sup>707</sup> Moon’s writing – and her female characters – occupies a space between literary traditions, and a space between pre-war and interwar ideals. For Nancy, attempts to romanticise the everyday are met with hostility. Nancy’s ‘tragedy queen’ mourning dress, for example, and Harvey Brune’s later assessment that Nancy is like ‘the highlander [who] must always hunt for the kernel of grief that sits at the heart of happiness,’ both highlight certain outdated ideals of elongating or romanticising the mourning process.<sup>708</sup> It is Harvey Brune who most explicitly thwarts Nancy’s attempts at grief. Harvey’s forceful rejection of Nancy’s evident sorrow is the first of three crucial representations of grief suppression and inaccessibility: first, Nancy’s grief at seeing her mother and grieving who her mother has become; secondly, Nancy’s grief at the loss of her friendship with Divot Meg; and, finally, Nancy’s attempts to suppress her own grief on learning of her mother’s death. These events all occur in quick succession, with the first event colouring Nancy’s response to the following two.

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<sup>706</sup> Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, p. 225.

<sup>707</sup> Shields, *Scottish Women’s Writing in the Long Nineteenth Century: The Romance of Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

<sup>708</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 190.

The first of these events occurs at a feeing market, filled with stalls and shows. Nancy, seeing ‘a negro medicine-man [...and] a white woman, holding the bottles of medicine for the crowd to see’ is immediately filled with ‘a downward rushing fear’ that the woman on stage is her mother who – when Nancy was a child – ‘had left her to mount just such a platform.’<sup>709</sup> Nancy inwardly convinces herself that the woman on stage could not be her mother, as ‘her mother’s eyes were blue and always flecked with laughter [...] Her mother’s hair had been something to wonder at and reach for in the sunlight’ and the woman on stage is instead flat and muted.<sup>710</sup> However, Nancy explaining to Harvey her despair that the woman is a mirror to ‘the other side of [Nancy...] the side that isn’t Fassefern’ leads to Harvey’s attempts to restrict Nancy’s grief.<sup>711</sup> Harvey implores Nancy to ‘forget it’, urges an end to the discussion as it ‘isn’t a pleasant subject’, asks Nancy not to ‘dwell on all the horrible possibilities’, and finally ‘quickened his step’ from the conversation.<sup>712</sup> In Tony Walter’s summaries of modern and postmodern grief, he suggests that ‘in modernist grief psychology, the pain has to be worked through’ and – whilst Walter acknowledges that there is more nuance to the psychology – suggests that the overriding message to modern mourners was ‘to let go [...and] move on’.<sup>713</sup> Moon’s depiction of Harvey Brune shows Harvey adhering to these modern grieving practices, urging Nancy to rapidly work through her pain. Alternatively, if she is unable to do this, she must not include him in her grief; after their discussion Nancy acknowledges that ‘he could not, and would not, sorrow with her. She must do that alone.’<sup>714</sup> As such, Harvey’s rejection of Nancy’s fear and sense of grief at

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<sup>709</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 220.

<sup>710</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, pp. 220 – 221.

<sup>711</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, pp. 220 – 221.

<sup>712</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, pp. 221 – 222.

<sup>713</sup> Tony Walter, ‘Modern Grief, Postmodern Grief’ in *International Review of Sociology*, 17.1 (2007), 123 – 134 (p. 126).

<sup>714</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 222.



confronting such a reminder of her uncertain lineage forces her to accept that grief can no longer be a shared experience.

The second incident occurs when Nancy decides to speak to Divot Meg who ‘would be able to tell her if the woman [at the feeling market] were her mother’.<sup>715</sup> Moon first cements the tension between Harvey’s and Nancy’s approaches to grief: Harvey ‘would walk away from this unpleasant thing [...] even destroying its existence by forgetting it’, but something made Nancy ‘claim [painful things] and carry them.’<sup>716</sup> Again, Moon presents grief as a private experience which must either be forgotten or carried alone; neither Harvey’s nor Nancy’s approach offers the opportunity for wider support. When Nancy is rejected by Divot Meg, who pretends to no longer recognise her, Moon writes that ‘something that was dear to her had died. Maybe it had never lived.’<sup>717</sup> This simple statement acknowledges Nancy’s experience as a loss and, like the *Doorways* collection, continues to extend grieveable experiences, but also presents Nancy’s increasing self-censorship by questioning the experience’s existence. Indeed, Nancy ‘would laugh at herself later for feeling so bereft. But now it hurt.’<sup>718</sup> Moon’s separation of these two emotions so clearly – self-mockery, and genuine pain – shows the tension in Nancy, as she teeters between two approaches to her grief. This event therefore acts as a bridge between Harvey’s suppression of Nancy’s grief, and Nancy’s self-suppression of grief in the final of these three pivotal events wherein Nancy learns both that the woman on stage was indeed her mother, and that her mother is now dead. The scene begins with Nancy ‘[pushing] against the wind step by step, overcoming it’ in a

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<sup>715</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 235.

<sup>716</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 235.

<sup>717</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 239.

<sup>718</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 239.

fight that ‘her body liked [and] needed’.<sup>719</sup> Moon’s depiction of Nancy’s fight against the wind here can also be read as an analogy for Nancy’s efforts to embrace the modernist approach of working through grief that Walter considers a necessity in order for the mourner to ‘be once again constituted as a free individual.’<sup>720</sup> Moon’s repetition of the words ‘Just forget it! She’s dead and gone! Just forget it!’ as Nancy battles with the knowledge of her mother’s death likewise prove an attempt to let go of the pain, and complete – in a Freudian sense – her mourning process quickly. Despite the overwhelming pathetic fallacy of the scene – ‘the tossing fir-trees slapped her with handfuls of the rain [...and] it was an evening to be sorrowful’ – Nancy is no longer able to ‘rouse her tacit heart or make it feel grief.’<sup>721</sup> These three events and their quick succession reflect Moon’s final rejection of too-evident sorrow, and the inaccessibility of meaningful shared mourning in the interwar period.

#### Dark Star and Corpselessness: Failed Deathbed Scenes and the Production of an Idealised Interwar Death

As Nancy reaches an acceptance that shared grief is impossible, and commemorative mourning rituals are continually reduced, the culmination of the novel (Nancy’s suicide) is an attempt by Moon to manufacture an idealised inter-war death; one which is corpseless, yet still grieveable. The novel’s narrative has a cyclical structure, beginning and ending with death. This structure also serves to prove the transformative literary and social approach to mourning. The novel’s first death (Nancy’s grandmother) can be read as a failed deathbed scene; it feels disjointed and attempts at ritual feel misplaced. When combined with the

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<sup>719</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 244.

<sup>720</sup> Walter, ‘Modern Grief, Postmodern Grief’, p. 126.

<sup>721</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 245.

novel's penultimate death – Bella Pringle – which will also be read as a failed deathbed scene, Moon firmly and with finality rejects traditional mourning rituals which rely on the work of women to uphold them. Then, in her attempts to replicate a grieveable corpseless death, the novel's final death (Nancy herself) cements Nancy's Fassefern lineage by aligning her with her male ancestors who too had taken their own lives. Finally, though Nancy is a non-combatant, a woman, and a rural resident geographically distant from warfare and the major transformative industrialisation of urban residents, her death – which she considers her destiny, and a worthy conclusion to the life of a Fassefern – invites comparison to the deaths and corpselessness of First World War combatants. Therefore, Nancy's death symbolises Nancy's – and Moon's – final rejection of the gendered burdens attached to mourning and grief and, in so doing, she is rewarded with a heroic War death. However, Nancy's heroic death relies on the continuation of a self-conscious solitary watchful gaze; in her abandonment of the watchful community, Nancy's gaze falls upon herself. Moon therefore presents a cyclical narrative of watchfulness and grief, which evidences the transition from pre-War mourning to the glorified death of the heroic individual.

As discussed, the death of Nancy's grandmother – who Moon never provides with a name, heightening the overall inconsequentiality of her death – is initially provided with some aspects of traditional mourning rituals still present. Grandma Pringle dies in her sleep, in her bed, and receives a funeral with some evidence of shared – though insincere – mourning. However, despite her death occurring in a bed, Moon does not present it as a satisfactory deathbed passing. Deborah Lutz's work on Victorian death culture and the materiality of death suggests that nostalgia and the deathbed are closely linked as the tendency was to 'hold onto' reminders of the moment of death and of the deceased.<sup>722</sup> The

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<sup>722</sup> Deborah Lutz, 'The Dead still Among Us: Victorian Secular Relics, Hair Jewelry, and Death Culture' in *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 39.1 (2011), 127 – 142 (p. 127).

moment of death was elongated and imbued with layers of meaning, and after death the ‘minutiae of slipping away [was recorded] in memorials, diaries, and letters.’<sup>723</sup> However, by the end of the nineteenth-century death became less of a ‘shared experience among a community, [and] last things such as final words and remains were increasingly to be pushed to the back of consciousness.’<sup>724</sup> Elisabeth Bronfen likewise considers how the ‘ritualisation of the deathbed scene’ and its rhetoric ‘seems to promise its spectators a fleeting glance of what might lie beyond death.’<sup>725</sup> According to Lutz and Bronfen, then, two key differences between Victorian idealised deathbeds and twentieth-century deaths were: the length of the moment of death; and the assumed significance of meaningful final moments in their relation to life after death. Grandma Pringle’s death does not contain these indicators of a satisfactory deathbed death. Firstly, the moment of death is not seen. Moon does not provide Grandma Pringle with meaningful last words, or the opportunity for Nancy to witness the ‘minutiae of slipping away’, as Lutz puts it. Instead, Nancy is met with her grandmother’s already ‘cold, icy cold’ corpse, obscuring the opportunity for a meaningful, mournful interaction with the deceased.<sup>726</sup> Furthermore, Nancy is evidently disappointed by the material objects left as reminders of her grandmother’s life. Hoping to find objects which would provide her with a tangible connection to her ancestry – Nancy is obsessed throughout the novel with discovering whether her father was a Weams or a Fassefern – she instead finds that the ‘pitiful contents’ include marriage and birth certificates of her grandmother and mother, ‘a pink shell with forget-me-nots painted upon it, a piece of very flaxen hair, and a gold

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<sup>723</sup> Lutz, ‘The Dead still Among Us’, p. 127.

<sup>724</sup> Lutz, ‘The Dead still Among Us’, p. 127.

<sup>725</sup> Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 77; 91.

<sup>726</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 80.

brooch.<sup>727</sup> Despite being surrounded by relics of her grandmother's life, Nancy does not feel comforted. Moon's reference to the piece of flaxen hair most explicitly demonstrates a rejection of Victorian deathbed materiality. Lutz considers how locks of hair were relics of death most popular in Victorian novels due to the narrative quality of hair working as a trace 'of a life and body completed and disappeared.'<sup>728</sup> Nancy discarding this relic, alongside the others, therefore signifies a discarding of aspects of the ritualised deathbed.

The murder of Bella Pringle (Nancy's mother) by Divot Meg similarly rejects aspects of the deathbed. Meg runs a bath for Bella, urging her to cleanse herself before offering Bella her 'best nightgown to wear'.<sup>729</sup> Finally, Meg puts a fresh 'pillow-slip upon the pillow' and lays Bella out in bed. Moon mimics the cleansing and beautifying of a dead body for display and in preparation for burial, and immediately following Bella's murder (Meg drugs and intoxicates her, ties her to the bed, and suffocates her with a pillow) she is said to be 'almost beautiful in the new rigour that had come to her loose face.'<sup>730</sup> However, although Moon constructs a beautiful corpse, she again does not present this scene as a successful or satisfactory deathbed scene. The moment of death is again obscured, and any last words are muffled by Meg's 'passionate need to quiet the struggling thing under the pillow'.<sup>731</sup> Indeed, even before Bella has died, she has already become a 'thing' rather than a person, indicating that there are no attempts to imbue the moment of death with added significance or to elongate the moment of death. Finally, although Moon beautifies the corpse, Meg muddies the narrative of death by claiming Bella died of an overdose. In both scenes, only women are present for the initial moment of reflection with the corpse. Nancy views the body of her

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<sup>727</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 93.

<sup>728</sup> Lutz, 'The Dead still Among Us', p. 128.

<sup>729</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 229.

<sup>730</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 232.

<sup>731</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 232.

grandmother alone, before preparing herself to share the news with her neighbours and to prepare for the funeral preparations. Meg prepares Bella's body for death, and relays a (false) narrative of Bella's death to others. As such, Moon rejects the significance of the deathbed scene and its rituals. In doing so, she also rejects a narrative of dying that relies on the work and emotional labour of women to uphold them.

In part, the failure of these two deathbed scenes is due to Moon's doubt that the deaths of Grandma Pringle and Bella Pringle could be grieveable. Early in the novel, Nancy invents a grieveable death. Nancy – adorned in mourning dress following her grandmother's death – recounts her enactment of mourning a diseased sweetheart 'who had died in her arms'.<sup>732</sup> The real death's replacement by an imaginary death demonstrates Moon's preoccupation with the hierarchy of lives and mournable deaths. Nancy attempts to find a death suitable for her imaginary sweetheart, but though 'she kept trying various deaths for him [...] most of them demanded a bed.'<sup>733</sup> The pursuit of an ideal death is a conscious move from the Victorian bed-death to something more spectacular; in other words, a death worthy of evident grief. Furthermore, Nancy imagines numerous deaths, but is temporarily limited to those requiring a bed. That these are deemed to be the incorrect choice for her sweetheart suggests Moon's interest in worthy deaths and her distancing from deaths which could be considered as mundane. Nancy mourns him 'for several weeks' before eventually deciding on a death of 'galloping consumption.'<sup>734</sup> In mourning privately prior to receiving confirmation of the death, Nancy's imaginary loss mirrors that of war widows, awaiting news of the death of their husband and being forced to live in a state of anticipatory grief. Additionally, Nancy must also search for her sweetheart's grave, in a moment which is reminiscent of the mass

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<sup>732</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, pp. 99 – 100.

<sup>733</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 100.

<sup>734</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 100.

corpselessness of the First World War. Moon writes that ‘his grave’ was any grave at first [...] Searching, searching, tears filled her eyes as she murmured in the words of Mary Magdalene: “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have lain him.”<sup>735</sup> As Kelly considers in *Commemorative Modernisms*, many bodies were never returned to families, and anonymous mass graves or commemorative burial sites replaced graves for individuals.<sup>736</sup> Similarly, Nancy’s sweetheart – who simultaneously belongs to many graves and no grave at all – evokes a comparison to tombs of Unknown Soldiers which became common during the First World War. Nancy’s presence at his grave sees her mirror one of the ‘100 women included in Guests of Honour at the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in 1920.’<sup>737</sup> The scene highlights both an obsession with narratives of death, but also an attempt by Nancy to manufacture a grievable death. In this case, the death of an elderly woman who has a heart attack is determined to be of lesser worth than that of an anonymous young man whose grave and cause of death are elusive. Furthermore, in this scenario Nancy is adhering to gendered burdens of mourning. She is left to mourn the death of her sweetheart, clad in black and weeping at his grave. It is Nancy’s responsibility to weave a narrative worthy of sorrow for the deceased. Indeed, in comparing Nancy to Mary Magdalene, Moon implies that their roles are similar: to bear witness to death, and to share the story of the deceased. As such, although this scenario reinforces Moon’s interest in constructed narratives of deaths and who may be worthy of mourning, at this early stage in the novel Nancy still clings to certain gendered stereotypes.

There is a pivotal moment in the novel wherein Nancy seems to most explicitly reject the expectations of gendered mourning, before she rejects the actions themselves. Following a

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<sup>735</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 100.

<sup>736</sup> Kelly, *Commemorative Modernisms*, p. 85.

<sup>737</sup> Kelly, *Commemorative Modernisms*, p. 3.

debate with Andrew Morrison about love, lust, and desire, Nancy is faced with the weight of Andrew's expectations of Nancy to care for and pity him indefinitely. Nancy runs from Andrew, in order to prevent saying something that she may regret, but as she runs, she thinks to herself: 'I'm caring only for myself; I'm running away from his pain.'<sup>738</sup> With this simple statement, Nancy begins to absolve herself of guilt and responsibility for Andrew's suffering. As she runs, 'it seemed to her that she had shaken off for ever the grief and guilt for his deformity. A grief which she had carried for years and a guilt which somehow he had compelled her to carry.'<sup>739</sup> Nancy deliberately distances herself from grief, and the burden of carrying grieving responsibilities on behalf of others. Moon's mention of Andrew 'compelling' Nancy to grieve gives insight to the expectations and pressures attached to grief and makes clear that if Nancy previously adhered to these expectations, it was not a choice she consciously made. In his research on modern grief, Tony Walter ascribes increasingly private grief to women's emancipation from the late nineteenth-century onwards stating that 'the idea gained ground that expressions of grief should reflect personal feeling, rather than social prescription.'<sup>740</sup> Nancy's private decision to care only for herself and to run away from Andrew's pain reflects Moon's refusal to adhere to social prescriptions of grief, but also provides Nancy with agency and a vocal choice in how she responds to grief. Indeed, Walter argues that 'if the modern woman is to grieve not as dictated by society but as she personally feels fit, then she needs not to be under external surveillance'.<sup>741</sup> Walter thus suggests that a woman's individualised approach to grief – based on her feelings alone – is incompatible with shared mourning practices and with watchfulness. Harvey Brune's suppression of Nancy's grief thus combines with the implication that the modern woman's grief 'needs to be

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<sup>738</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 150.

<sup>739</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 150.

<sup>740</sup> Walter, 'Modern Grief, Postmodern Grief', p. 125.

<sup>741</sup> Walter, 'Modern Grief, Postmodern Grief', p. 125.



private' as public grief is still interconnected with gendered social prescription.<sup>742</sup> As such, Nancy's conscious choice to no longer carry the grief of others is a crucial step in the transformation of mourning.

Nancy's death acts as the culmination to the novel and the final removal of these gendered burdens. Whereas the constructed death of the imagined sweetheart sees Nancy in the role of the glorified mourner, her death sees her as the glorified dead. Throughout the novel Moon emphasises Nancy's fascination with, and glorification of, the suicides of the Fassefern family; for Nancy, to be a Fassefern would 'show in her and command respect'.<sup>743</sup> I argue that Moon's depiction of the Fassefern suicides acts as an analogy for the deaths of soldiers in the First World War and that, by Nancy adopting the same method of death, Nancy's death is written as more grieveable, and she is distanced from the work of women's mourning. As Freedman explains, 'for the early twentieth-century tragedy wears a male face. The face of the disaster is the face of a young dead man: with a cap and a uniform, he is a soldier.'<sup>744</sup> Freedman is commenting on the massive loss of young – male – life in the direct experiences of war. Moon, whilst not directly commenting on the war, mimics such national narratives, transferring the 'face of the disaster' to semi-rural community legend. For instance, Nancy's witnessing of one Fassefern suicide at the cliffs of Rossorty 'blazed a permanent mark upon her'.<sup>745</sup> The death itself is romanticised; the 'blaze of beauty' of a man riding a horse towards the edge of a cliff 'toward the rainbow mist' and then disappearing 'to the top, and out of sight' makes Nancy consider the 'beauty of this mad thing'.<sup>746</sup> The death is witnessed by many people, with 'cries and wailing everywhere' as 'another Fassefern [has]

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<sup>742</sup> Walter, 'Modern Grief, Postmodern Grief', p. 125.

<sup>743</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 138.

<sup>744</sup> Freedman, *Death, Men, and Modernism*, p. 3.

<sup>745</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 83.

<sup>746</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 85.

gone to his death. Suicide Fasseferns!’<sup>747</sup> The mystical and dramatic death of this Fassefern begins Nancy’s obsession with grand deaths, and deaths which encourage passionate displays of grief. Shortly after, Nancy reflects on the tale of the ‘young Fassefern bride who was found on her wedding-morning dead in her bridal robes, lying upon the altar of the chapel.’<sup>748</sup> This tale, though similarly dramatic and romanticised, demonstrates the divergence between Fassefern men and Fassefern women deaths. The grieveable Fassefern man dies upon a horse, heroically leaping over a cliff, with instant widespread ‘despairing’.<sup>749</sup> The grieveable Fassefern woman dies alone, in a wedding dress, and is therefore distanced from the recognisable ‘face of tragedy’. Later, Nancy considers it ‘an excess of [courage]’ that would make a Fassefern kill themselves and wonders whether their deaths were as ‘they could not bear life without beauty’.<sup>750</sup> These statements further laud the idea of a romanticised brave death akin to combatant war deaths, and particularly those which have an element of mystery to them. Moon therefore constructs a tradition of grieveable deaths through the Fassefern stories. The deaths with ‘grandeur’ are those which hold a place in an oral history,<sup>751</sup> and akin to mourners during the war who ‘began to articulate their sorrow in collective or national terms rather than in first-person narratives’, the Fassefern deaths are publicly mourned as ‘ill luck to Rossorty and our men at sea.’<sup>752</sup>

To become part of this tradition, Nancy mimics the death which originally ‘blazed a permanent mark upon her;’ like her grandfather whose death she witnessed, she dies by jumping into the sea at Rossorty.<sup>753</sup> The death, when it arrives, is both a sudden compulsion

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<sup>747</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 85.

<sup>748</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 86.

<sup>749</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 85.

<sup>750</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 169.

<sup>751</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 190.

<sup>752</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 85.

<sup>753</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 83.

and an inevitability. Nancy's death continues to adopt the narrative trends of modernist literature; in the same way that the death of Septimus Smith in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* or the anonymous man in Katherine Mansfield's "The Garden Party" are 'doomed from the very beginning [and the deaths are] both shock and culmination', Nancy's death punctuates the novel and is both unsurprising yet certain.<sup>754</sup> Moon rapidly escalates the narration, combining sentimentality and experimentalism as it becomes increasingly disjointed:

She must be calm. She *must* be calm. A horse was galloping in her brain, a white horse with blood upon its sides ... [...] O God! / O God, with your big deaf face, hear me! ... Must I be this? Must I be this? ... / She pulled upon the door. It swung in upon the gale, helping her ... / The wind took her feet upon its swift palms and bore them to the cliff-top ... and past the cliff-top. / But as they left the firm rock, flying wingless on the blue, it came to her piercingly to think: 'Would Willie Weams's bastard die for this? It is a Fassefern who dies!' / And as the sharp black teeth of the sea came up to meet her, she smiled.<sup>755</sup>

Nancy's death scene is a culmination of her obsessions: a beautiful death which requires courage; personal grief; and her assurance that she must truly be a Fassefern. Nancy is given a heroic death which bears resemblance not only to the deaths of her Fassefern ancestors, but also to literary depictions of the deaths of war combatants who are – like Nancy – dying 'for' something; in this way, Nancy is able to become akin to 'the quintessentially modern figure of the dead young man.'<sup>756</sup>

Sandra M. Gilbert analyses the reversal of the pastoral in modernist literature of the First World War, particularly in the work of war poet Wilfred Owen. She suggests that rural

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<sup>754</sup> Freedman, *Death, Men, and Modernism*, p. 3.

<sup>755</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, pp. 247 – 248.

<sup>756</sup> Freedman, *Death, Men, and Modernism*, p. 3.

landscapes – such as the sites of European battlefields and trenches – were transformed from spaces that nurtured and created life, to mass ‘grave[s] for the living and a home for the dead.’<sup>757</sup> Moon’s landscape in *Dark Star* similarly demonstrates the disjointedness of romanticised depictions of rural Scotland, and instead infuses the landscape with pervasive loss. Moon also depicts a cave on the edge of the Rossorty sea as a transformative grave as it contains the remains of dead Fassefern men. Harvey Brune recoils at the smell of the cave as it ‘smells like a tomb.’<sup>758</sup> Nancy asserts that not only is the cave a tomb, but it also ‘keeps [the bones of the Fassefern men] close to home’ and it ‘only takes Fasseferns.’<sup>759</sup> The noble Fassefern deaths – read as an analogy for grieveable soldiers – indicate the transformation of Rossorty into a tomb and, in Gilbert’s words, a home for the dead. Nancy’s assertion that she ‘wants to be here [in the tomb] when I’m dead’ continues the distancing between her and the burden of gendered griefs, by producing a grieveable, masculine death for herself.<sup>760</sup> As a reward for deaths which Nancy deems to be noble and for a greater purpose, their deaths become inseparable from the landscape itself.

Although they are writing from different moments of the war and from different points of view, Moon’s portrayal of a noble death bears notable resemblance to those of the war poets. For example, Siegfried Sassoon’s ‘The Death Bed’ (1917) unites war-death with the elements, with the protagonist ‘lipped by the inward, moonless waves of death,’ and the rain ‘gently and slowly washing life away’, whereas the war itself is ‘far away’.<sup>761</sup> Nancy is likewise carried towards death by the elements, with the wind taking ‘her feet upon its swift

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<sup>757</sup> Sandra M. Gilbert, ‘“Rats’ alley”: The Great War, modernism, and the (anti)pastoral elegy’ in *New Literary History*, 30.1 (1999), 179 – 201 (p. 183).

<sup>758</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 209.

<sup>759</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 209.

<sup>760</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 209.

<sup>761</sup> Siegfried Sassoon, ‘The Death Bed’ in *The Old Huntsman and Other Poems*, (1917) <<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/57214/the-death-bed>> [accessed 12 January 2021].

palms.’<sup>762</sup> Wilfred Owen’s ‘The Last Laugh’ portrays the final moments of combatants, meeting and accepting death. One was ‘slowly lowered, [and] his whole face kissed the mud’.<sup>763</sup> Another ‘smiled at nothing, childlike, being dead.’<sup>764</sup> Nancy’s moment of death is similarly written with a jarring gentleness as the sea, like an expected friendly companion, ‘came up to meet her’ and she too – like Owen’s soldier – ‘smiled’ upon meeting it. Alan Seeger’s ‘I Have a Rendezvous with Death’ (1917) adopts similarly gentle, sentimentalised language (‘[death] shall take my hand’ / ‘I have a rendezvous with Death/when Spring brings back blue days and fair’).<sup>765</sup> Seeger also presents the death of a combatant as fate, and as an individual purpose that the narrator ‘shall not fail.’<sup>766</sup> Moon likewise presents the death as Nancy’s fate as the natural elements ‘help’ her. Nancy’s moment of dying is abstracted and softened, leaving only Nancy’s happiness that she has fulfilled her destiny. Rupert Brooke’s ‘The Dead’ celebrates the sacrifice made by soldiers, commanding bugles to ‘blow out’ and commemorate the dead who will receive ‘rarer gifts than gold’.<sup>767</sup> Brooke’s poetry presents combatant deaths in a positive light, and aims to honour the ‘nobleness’ of their passing.<sup>768</sup> Kelly argues in glorifying the deaths of the war dead, and commemorating losses, the reader is consoled ‘through a suggestion of immortal glory.’<sup>769</sup> Nancy likewise achieves immortal

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<sup>762</sup> Moon, *Dark Star*, p. 247.

<sup>763</sup> Wilfred Owen, ‘The Last Laugh’ in *The Poems of Wilfred Owen*, ed. by Jon Stallworthy (1986) <<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/51784/the-last-laugh-56d22fc2c2366>> [accessed 12 January 2021].

<sup>764</sup> Owen, ‘The Last Laugh’.

<sup>765</sup> Alan Seeger, ‘I Have a Rendezvous with Death’ in *A Treasury of War Poetry* (1917) <<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45077/i-have-a-rendezvous-with-death>> [Accessed 12 January 2021].

<sup>766</sup> Seeger, ‘I Have a Rendezvous with Death’.

<sup>767</sup> Rupert Brooke, ‘The Dead’ (1914) <<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/13075/the-dead>> [Accessed 12 January 2021].

<sup>768</sup> Brooke, ‘The Dead’.

<sup>769</sup> Kelly, *Commemorative Modernisms*, p. 65.

glory, in becoming part of a multi-generational tradition of courageous, romanticised deaths. Finally, Moon provides Nancy with the death of a male Fassefern, and the corpselessness of an Unknown Soldier, rather than dying alone at an altar in a wedding dress.

Yet, for all that Nancy achieves her glorified death, there is still an element of Nancy solitarily watching herself. Nancy's death, though unobserved by anyone else, is a self-conscious performance wherein she is observing and remarking upon her actions to compare her death to the deaths of the Fassefern suicides. As with the discussion of O'Grady's self-imposed watchfulness in Chapter 1 – wherein O'Grady's gendered analysis of Foucault demonstrates that women must consciously regulate their behaviour to adhere to ideals – Nancy is striving to achieve one form of perfection. As such, even in this cumulative moment, she is burdened by the pressures of a self-enforced watchfulness.

### Conclusion

Lorna Moon's fiction demonstrates the impact of mass-loss on rural communities in the interwar period, and her work is an important addition to a Scottish literary Modernism which includes the female, rural experience. This chapter on the fiction of Moon has traced the presentation of grief, trauma and mourning from pre-War shared rituals to interwar suppression and a heightened focus on grieveable deaths. Focusing on the expectations and experiences of women, Moon critiques the gendered burden of the work of grief. In the *Doorways in Drumorty* collection, Moon explores how rural watchfulness and ritualised mourning are interlinked and rely on the conscious performances and efforts of women to be maintained. The short stories demonstrate that genuine experiences of grief are incompatible with rural community life, and that only private, individual grief can offer relief. Moon focuses on the dangers of rural watchfulness, and by satirising pre-War traditions which rely on shared emotions she promotes a private approach to grief. In *Dark Star*, the suppression of

shared, public grief is fully realised and echoes the transformation of grief during the First World War and in the interwar period. *Dark Star* demonstrates the inconsequentiality of individuals in a time of mass-loss and – although the text is not an explicit war novel – suggests that the most grieveable deaths are of those who died nobly. Moon presents a complete transition from the labour of ritualised mourning in *Doorways in Drumorty* to Nancy’s idealised death in *Dark Star*. Female characters in ‘The Corp’, ‘The Funeral’, and ‘Wantin’ a Hand’ all experience the pressure of surveillance which is entangled in the expected appearance of mourning and trauma response. Nancy, on the other hand, adapts to the consistent suppression of her attempts to engage in ritualised behaviours by consciously rejecting gendered burdens. Nancy eventually not only grieves alone, but she dies alone. Her death becomes part of an ancestral tradition which favours predominantly masculinised courageous deaths. Moon therefore presents Nancy’s death as a final rejection of gendered burdens, and as an adoption of an idealised interwar approach to death and grief. Although there is growing interest in Moon’s work, she is still underdiscussed even in contemporary scholarship as a modernist writer.<sup>770</sup> As such, this analysis of Moon’s work provides necessary in-depth analysis of just one of the themes of her fiction. Moon’s voice in these discussions is a necessary one and is one which provides crucial insights into women’s lived realities of rural mourning. Through utilising theories of grief and trauma to expose how women in rural communities were impacted by national attitude changes towards private and

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<sup>770</sup> See, for example: Alan Freeman, *Imagined Worlds: Fiction by Scottish Women 1900 – 1935* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2005); Douglas Gifford, ed., *History of Scottish Women’s Writing* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020); Arianna Introna, *Autonomist Narratives of Disability in Modern Scottish Writing* (Scotland: Open University, 2022); Glenda Norquay, “‘Transitory thresholds’: geographic imaginings of adolescence in women’s fiction from North-East Scotland” in *Scottish Literary Review* 3.2 (2011); Samantha Walton, ‘Scottish Modernism, Kailyard Fiction and the Woman at Home’ in *Transitions in Middlebrow Writing, 1880 – 1930*, ed. by Kate MacDonald and Christopher Singer (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 141 – 162.

public responses to tragedy, this chapter also contributes to discussions of modernity and warfare, mourning, and the gendered burden of emotional labour.



## Chapter 4: Watchfulness and the Rural Community in the Writing of Nan Shepherd

### Introduction

Having explored the claustrophobia of every-day patriarchal Presbyterianism and its relationship to watchfulness in the work of Muir, and the difficulties of appropriate mourning and idealised grief in Moon's fiction, this chapter examines Shepherd's approach to rural communities. Shepherd's fiction seems to suggest that communities are able to – for better or for worse – unite in watchfulness. The watchfulness is shown to have different purposes, but primarily it is used as a tool in order to protect the moral health of the community.

Shepherd's relationship between rural modernity, watchfulness and community demonstrates that, in rural areas, a watchful community's points of interest simultaneously mirror those of the urban metropolis, whilst seeking to preserve the natural. Shepherd's writing highlights the ways in which rural spaces were explicitly and implicitly impacted by modernisation. However, Shepherd – more so than Muir and Moon – implies that the protection of rural spaces, rather than departure from them, is worthwhile and necessary. Bluemel and McCluskey suggest that 'rural areas could be the sites and sources of innovation and experimentation', and this is then supported by multidisciplinary studies of particular locations and texts.<sup>771</sup> However, Bluemel and McCluskey aim to broadly explore representations of the real, lived experiences of rural people and how it was often necessary for rural people and places to 'adapt to changes in order to survive'.<sup>772</sup> Although Muir and Moon indicate that adaptation is often necessary for survival in Calderwick and Drumorty, I argue that Shepherd provides a more nuanced relationship between the rural and the urban. Personal and collective adaptations to changes are, in Shepherd's work, usually presented as choices rather than survival routes. Indeed, whereas my analysis of Muir's and Moon's

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<sup>771</sup> Bluemel and McCluskey, *Rural Modernity in Britain*, p. 8.

<sup>772</sup> Bluemel and McCluskey, *Rural Modernity in Britain*, p. 3.

writing of rural landscapes proved that these landscapes are ideal sites for rural panopticism, this analysis of Shepherd foregrounds an appeal to reclaim these spaces.

Walton comments on Shepherd's production of a 'new kind of Caledonian antiszygy where extremes meet, greet and find themselves implicated in one another.'<sup>773</sup> G. Gregory Smith's 'Caledonian antiszygy' refers to a 'zigzag of contradictions' in Scottish literature, wherein there is 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[.]'<sup>774</sup> Walton is commenting on Shepherd as a feminist, ecological writer of the Renaissance, yet this meeting of extremes – or a zigzag of contradictions, as with Smith's antiszygy – and the mutual implication between them can also be found in Shepherd's depiction of rural and urban spaces. Further, by consciously bridging the space between rural and urban rather than simply indicating that there is a relationship between the two, Shepherd produces neutral ground that is at once a space for the continuing of tradition *or* a receptive space for urbanisation. The sustained choice to bridge these spaces manifests itself as a means of reclaiming space or female agency.

This chapter begins by contextualising the disparate spaces which Shepherd bridges (the urban, and the rural) and considers her writing alongside the kailyard as well as Henri Lefebvre's theory of urbanization. The chapter will determine that she seeks a space *between* the urban and the rural, one which focuses on interconnectedness. Having established Shepherd's space in-between, the chapter examines Shepherd's approach to rurality and watchfulness in *The Weatherhouse*. Watchfulness is first used as a collective tool with the aim of assessing morality and sourcing a common enemy, and it is then mirrored with

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<sup>773</sup> Samantha Walton, *The Living World: Nan Shepherd and Environmental Thought* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), p. 26.

<sup>774</sup> George Gregory Smith, *Scottish Literature: Character & Influence* (London: Macmillan, 1919), p. 4.

modern warfare. As in Foucault's assessment of the synonymous aims of the panopticon to punish and protect, watchfulness in Shepherd's fiction is a corrective tool, but also an attempt at community bonding and protection. Indeed, its protective qualities can be understood as both a symptom of and a balm for the war's impact on rural communities. Shepherd's novel signifies the presence of external threats felt by those living in rural areas (of warfare, of change, of instability); the use of watchfulness as a *weapon* against such threats; and active watchful residents as soldiers against an agreed-upon common enemy. As such, watchfulness *as* warfare is positioned as a means to protect rural communities as well as the earth itself.

### The Urban, The Rural, and the Space(s) Between

Shepherd's fiction amends some of the literary and spatial distance between urban and rural Scotland and there is ample evidence in her writing that unity between these disparate spaces provides a balance which aids environmental and community stability. E. Patricia Dennison's 2017 book *The Evolution of Scotland's Towns and Cities* provides a clear narrative to track the major changes in Scotland as a result of urbanisation, industrialisation, and war.

Considering the widespread changes of the twentieth-century, Dennison recaps a number of the key factors ('the Trade Union Congress in the 1890s [...], the rise of the Labour Party [...], the more extreme wing of the women's movement [and the engrossment of Britain] in an arms race with Germany') which led to a refreshed focus on town planning, in order to produce a liveable, urbanised Scotland.<sup>775</sup> Dennison notes that, by 1920, over three quarters of Scotland's population were living in overcrowded conditions and that 'the more urban the settlement, the lower was [life] longevity'.<sup>776</sup> Dennison argues that, by the interwar period,

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<sup>775</sup> E. Patricia Dennison, *The Evolution of Scotland's Towns and Cities* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), p. 148.

<sup>776</sup> Dennison, *Scotland's Towns and Cities*, pp. 251 – 257.

the divergence between rural and urban Scotland was becoming ever more distinct. Likewise, Ewen A. Cameron notes that the distinct policy differences between the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland (in place since the Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act of 1886) were even more diverse by the interwar period. Cameron considers how the policy splits between the Highlands and Lowlands in turn deepened some of Scotland's existing internal narrative crises, and furthered a multifaceted sense of Scottishness, due to the difficulty of aligning oneself to a unified idea of Scotland.<sup>777</sup>

With this in mind, Sarah Britton's analysis of the 1938 Glasgow Empire Exhibition at Glasgow's Bellahouston Park provides a unique look at Scotland's nationalist discourse. Britton utilises the Glasgow Empire Exhibition to emphasise some of the key differences between the interwar national identity narratives of rural and urban areas of Scotland. The focus of the exhibition was to 'showcase the Scottish nation' and to praise the way in which 'modernity and tradition [were] stood side by side'.<sup>778</sup> However, whilst the exhibition placed 'progress and modernity [...] high on the agenda', the exhibition instead inadvertently continued an outlook of urban Scotland as the future, and rural Scotland as the past.<sup>779</sup> Within the exhibition was a Hall of History, for example, which depicted traditional Highland scenes ('the Jacobite army on the morning of the Battle of Prestonpans [...] the claymore, [...] a collection of early Highland costumes, [...] some portraits of Bonnie Prince Charlie, [...] the Highland Clachan')<sup>780</sup> which had the overall effect of 'suspending historical time'.<sup>781</sup> Cairns Craig also examines the divisions in Scottishness. He argues that 'Scotland's sudden

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<sup>777</sup> Ewen A. Cameron, 'The Highlands since 1850' in *Modern Scottish History: Volume 2: The Modernisation of Scotland, 1850 to the Present*, eds Anthony Cooke, Ian Donnochie and Anne MacSween (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2007).

<sup>778</sup> Sarah Britton, 'Urban Futures/Rural Pasts', 'Urban Futures/Rural Pasts' in *Cultural and Social History*, 8.2 (2011), 213 – 232 (p. 213).

<sup>779</sup> Britton, 'Urban Futures/Rural Pasts', p. 215.

<sup>780</sup> Britton, 'Urban Futures/Rural Pasts', p. 216.

<sup>781</sup> Britton, 'Urban Futures/Rural Pasts', p. 220.

emergence into this modern, commercial world [after the 1707 Union of Parliaments] incorporates Scotland into a history whose shape no longer derives from the particularities of its own experience', and that Scotland's past is therefore bound to 'local narrative', and is detached from its future.<sup>782</sup> Likewise, Hayden Lorimer suggests that the Scotland at the time of the exhibition was 'stranded somewhere between a nostalgic yearning for a traditional rural past and the urge to achieve an appropriate condition of modernity'.<sup>783</sup> Furthermore, Britton argues that, for the exhibition whose original aims – according to the Scottish Development Council which hosted the event – were to 're-inspire Scotsmen with a belief in their own country',<sup>784</sup> there was 'no discernible teleological connection between the pastiche [of the] Hall of History and the displays of industrial, imperial and urban modernity conveyed elsewhere in the exhibition'.<sup>785</sup> The reflections by Craig, Lorimer, and Britton all highlight the idea of Scotland as a divided nation with an ongoing battle for a clear identity-narrative. Tom Nairn's *The Break-Up of Britain* posits that Scotland was bound by what he called a 'cultural sub-nationalism'<sup>786</sup> with a fragmented identity and therefore, Britton argues, 'was fundamentally divided between heart (past, romance, civil society) and head (present, future, and British state).<sup>787</sup> Thomas Docherty reflects further on how Scotland's divided national identity had – and continues to have – a direct impact on creative output. He writes that:

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<sup>782</sup> Cairns Craig, *Out of History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and English Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), pp. 38 – 39.

<sup>783</sup> Hayden Lorimer, 'Ways of Seeing the Scottish Highlands: Marginality, Authenticity and the Curious Case of the Hebridean Blackhouse', in *Journal of Historical Geography*, 25.4 (1999), 517 – 533 (p. 518).

<sup>784</sup> 'The Scottish National Development Council: What It Is, What It Does, and Why It Should Have Your Financial Support', *Empire Exhibition Administrative Committee Minutes, Papers and Correspondence*, Papers of the Earl of Elgin, GUA, UGC2270/22/7.

<sup>785</sup> Britton, 'Urban Futures/Rural Pasts', p. 219.

<sup>786</sup> Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* (London: NLB, 1977), p. 119.

<sup>787</sup> Britton, 'Urban Futures/Rural Pasts', p. 221.

Scotland is both the site of a local history that takes its place amidst a crowd of other, no less viable, histories (that of 'England', that of 'France', that of 'India' [...]) and also the site that *contains* a multiplicity of internal dissonant and dissident histories (that of the 'Highlands', say, against that of the 'Lowlands'; that of 'metropolitan' Glasgow or Edinburgh against that of the rural Grampians; and so on in a series of ostensibly internal conflicts and crises that shape the class of sometimes frankly sectarian or tribal structures of the modern nation.<sup>788</sup>

Docherty pinpoints not only Scotland's difficult position within Britain, within Europe, and within the Empire, but also Scotland's own difficult position within itself. Docherty appears to suggest that Scotland holds an inability to be unified, due largely to the jarring multifaceted layers that Scotland is comprised of. Whilst, for example, urban Edinburgh and the rural Grampians can co-exist as Scottish, they are both representative of wholly different portraits of Scotland. Docherty's assertion that the internal crises of modern Scotland are formed of tribal structures indicates the importance of local identity as opposed to national identity.

However, Shepherd's writing, while obviously not amending centuries' worth of fragmented narratives of Scotland, considers the positive potentials of bridging the literary and social distance between urban and rural Scotland. In *The Weatherhouse*, on Garry's return to Fetter-Rothnie from the War, he observes the 'familiar' landscape, before stating that:

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<sup>788</sup> Thomas Docherty, 'The Existence of Scotland' in *Scottish Fiction and the British Empire*, ed. by Douglas. S. Mack (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 231- 248 (p. 232).

The whole valley and its surrounding hills could have been set down and forgotten in the slum of the war territory from which he had crossed. All the generations of its history would not make up the tale of the fighting men.<sup>789</sup>

Garry then meditates on the history of rural Scottish spaces, from ‘Picts and Celtic clansmen, raiders and Jacobites’ to ‘adventures of piracy and merchandise and statesmanship.’<sup>790</sup> Here, Shepherd directly pits the rich history of Scotland against the ‘tale of the fighting men’ at the heart of a World War in a way that elucidates the frustrations regarding imbalanced historical narratives of English and British history against Scottish history. In this scene, Garry has a seemingly abrupt change in perspective with regards to seeing the rural valley as a ‘strange stagnant world,’ to then appreciating its ‘grandeur’ and ‘quality’.<sup>791</sup> It is only through walking ‘the four cross-country miles’, and allowing the ‘primordial dark’ to consume him that Garry appreciates the available history of the rural landscape.<sup>792</sup> Shepherd thus disrupts the idea of a stagnant rural past by interweaving ideas of the traditional rural space with the bustling life of urban modernity and demonstrating ways in which each they can co-exist and lend meaning to each other.

Though set in and focusing on the landscapes and people of Aberdeenshire, Shepherd also distances herself from both kailyard and anti-kailyard writing, refusing to sentimentalise or demonise the rural space. As discussed, many critics have assessed kailyard literature as being emblematic of a ‘fake, show, “highlandist” identity’ which has had a lasting and negative influence on Scottish literature and national identity.<sup>793</sup> Edwin Muir in his *Scottish*

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<sup>789</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 56.

<sup>790</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, pp. 56 – 57.

<sup>791</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, pp. 56 – 57.

<sup>792</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, pp. 55 – 57.

<sup>793</sup> Ronald Turnbull, ‘Nairn’s Nationalism’ in *Scottish Fiction and the British Empire*, ed. by Douglas S. Mack (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 35 – 49 (p. 37).

*Journey* also considers ‘the flight to the Kailyard [as] a flight to Scotland’s past, to a country which had existed before Industrialism’ which existed only ‘as a refuge from the hard facts of Scottish town life’, which suggests that the literature was far from the lived reality of modern Scotland.<sup>794</sup> Kailyard literature in commonly presenting rural Scotland in relation to ‘sentimental and nostalgic treatment of parochial Scottish scenes’ was also criticised by novelist and essayist Jane Helen Findlater in her 1904 collection of essays *Stones from a Glass House*.<sup>795</sup> Findlater’s central critique is of the stereotypical representations of rural life in kailyard-esque writing, wherein – she notes – there is always ‘a saintly mother’ and ‘the cottages are all trim and clean, the women wear potless mutches, the husbands sit in the ingle-neuk reading their bibles’.<sup>796</sup> That being said, Findlater is also unfavourable towards George Douglas Brown’s staunchly anti-kailyard novel *The House with the Green Shutters* (1901), reasoning that ‘if one author gives too great prominence to the national failings [i.e. Brown], the other may be justly accused of ignoring too entirely the dark side of Scottish village life [i.e. Barrie]’, and that ‘they cannot both be true’.<sup>797</sup> In this sense, it seems clear that Findlater is appealing for balance, and a nuanced literary representation of rural Scottish life. Further, in Raymond Williams’ *Keywords* of 1976 Williams observes that the development of the word country, which traditionally carried the meaning of ‘native land’,<sup>798</sup> was quickly seen as oppositional to urbanisation and growth and so rural areas were soon ‘tainted with negative connotations’.<sup>799</sup> In this sense, Williams’ observation that the rural and the country are linguistically and culturally associated with tradition, and opposed to the new,

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<sup>794</sup> Edwin Muir, *Scottish Journey* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing Company, 1979), p. 67.

<sup>795</sup> Thomas D. Knowles, *Ideology, Art and Commerce: Aspects of Literary Sociology in late Victorian Scottish Kailyard* (Goteburg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1983) p. 13.

<sup>796</sup> Jane Helen Findlater, *Stones from a Glass House* (London: Ballantyne Press, 1904), p. 104.

<sup>797</sup> Findlater, *Stones from a Glass House*, p. 104.

<sup>798</sup> Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fourth Estate, 1976), p. 82.

<sup>799</sup> Bluemel and McCluskey, *Rural Modernity in Britain*, p. 4.



reflects the critiques of kailyard-esque writing as portraying a stagnant and static Scotland. Indeed, Findlater's essay concludes by calling for 'a new Scotch novelist who will write of Scotsmen as they are and not as they are supposed to be' as 'the time is ripe'.<sup>800</sup> Shepherd, as a writer who is able to eschew both kailyard and anti-kailyard attitudes is, therefore, one such novelist able to answer both Findlater's call and one of the aims of this thesis, which is to resituate Scottish women writers as having a central position in the Scottish literary modernism movement.

Rather than regurgitating sentimental depictions of rural Scotland Shepherd's writing is multi-stranded. It can be considered that literature that *is* providing a more distinct balance between sentimentality and giving 'prominence to national failings' is a facet of rural modernist literature. Rather than representing areas of solace and simplicity, untouched by – and removed from – modernisation, within rural modernist literature there are instead depictions of the rural as a new space for alternate, concurrent, versions of modernisation. Raymond Williams suggests that whilst 'it is easy to separate the country and the city and then their modes of literature' as in rural/urban literature, 'there are always some writers who insist on the connections',<sup>801</sup> which Louisa Gairn says highlights the way in which 'narratives which recognise the long heritage of rural Britain combined within the context of modern urban life are of crucial importance'.<sup>802</sup> Although Williams is discussing English literature, rather than British or Scottish literature, Louisa Gairn later argues that Scottish writers have been making the connection between the urban and the rural for far longer. Shepherd is one such writer who insists on the links not only between self and nature but also between the rural and the urban, and in doing so reflects the impact of urban modernity on rural spaces.

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<sup>800</sup> Findlater, *Stones from a Glass House*, p. 108.

<sup>801</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973) p. 264.

<sup>802</sup> Gairn, *Ecology and Modern Scottish Literature*, p. 135.

Similarly, Ysanne Holt ascertains that the conscious disruption of these divides is crucial in rural modernity studies, writing:

We need, for example, to cast aside still-recurrent, generalising distinctions between rural and urban spaces, between centres and peripheries, between north and south, as well as singular perceptions of modernism and modernity. We need to reject notions of space as somehow fixed and with stable characteristics, in favour of more processual or relational understandings in which space is always under construction, always the product of reactions and interrelations.<sup>803</sup>

Holt's appeal toward the shedding of spatial generalisations – both broadly and narrowly – mirrors ideas found within Shepherd's writing that, in order to better understand place and selfhood it is crucial to also understand the relationship between reactions and interrelations. In this sense, Holt's frustration at rigid distinctions between rural and urban reflects many of the critiques of the Scotland-in-stasis found within traditional kailyard writing. Whereas kailyard writing seems to present a frozen tableau of rural Scotland, one which is historically suspended and largely unimpacted by the urban, Shepherd's writing represents rural Scotland in flux. The society-in-flux depicted by Shepherd echoes Henri Lefebvre's axis definition of the process of 'complete urbanization'.<sup>804</sup> As the urbanized city became more prominent, Lefebvre argues that it 'would no longer appear as an urban island in a rural ocean [...] It entered people's awareness and understanding as one of the terms in the opposition between town and country.'<sup>805</sup> Lefebvre suggests that despite the oppositional differences between such spaces 'the state encompasses them both, joins them in its hegemony by making use of

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<sup>803</sup> Ysanne Holt, 'Borderlands: Visual and Material Culture in the Interwar Anglo-Scottish Borders' in *Rural Modernity in Britain: A Critical Intervention*, ed. by Kristin Bluemel and Michael McCluskey (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), pp. 167 – 186 (p. 167).

<sup>804</sup> Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, p. 1.

<sup>805</sup> Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, p. 11.

their rivalry.’<sup>806</sup> That is to say, there is an innate connection between the supposedly disparate societies as they are bound together by something more powerful.

As noted in the Introduction to this thesis, Williams critiques the ways in which urban and rural spaces can be negatively characterised. Such characteristics mirror the assumptions that urban modernism is central to advancements in education and communication, whereas rural modernism is a passive recipient purely effected by changes rather than effecting change. As Williams notes, the country can be unfairly regarded as ‘a place of backwardness, ignorance, limitation’ and the city ‘a place of noise, worldliness and ambition.’<sup>807</sup> Again, the implication is that the city is a place of opportunity, bustle, and personal drive whereas the country is limited in personal and collective scope. Indeed, Williams acknowledges that there is far more to the country and the rural than these restrictive boundaries even though ‘all sources of perception seemed to begin and end in the city, and if there was anything beyond it, it was also beyond life’.<sup>808</sup> In opposing such assumptions, Williams’ acknowledgement resonates with Shepherd’s own calls for infinity and the universal; in encouraging unity and balance, there *is* something beyond rigid definitions and beyond life. However, in order to reach this ideal state Shepherd first considers the damaging aspects of rural modernity, and considers the ways in which watchfulness can either aid or prevent the betterment of rural communities.

#### Watchfulness in *The Weatherhouse*: Assessing Morality and Reliability in the Community

There are links between watchful communities and the subsequent impact of this watchfulness on supposedly independent choices; the weight of societal opinion can directly

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<sup>806</sup> Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, p. 12.

<sup>807</sup> Williams, *The Country and the City*, p. 1.

<sup>808</sup> Williams, *The Country and the City*, p. 235.

affect personal behaviours. In *The Weatherhouse*, such shared opinions can manifest themselves as punishments, protective warnings, or even invitations to hold a certain place within the community. Residents of *The Weatherhouse*'s Fetter-Rothnie are seen to deliberate on the moral virtue of individuals, with the result determining whether they will be punished or protected. These spaces are also often gendered by Shepherd, between feminised sites of gossip and masculinised sites of action. In each case, watchfulness has the power to unite and strengthen communities, but also to – at any point – cast aside an individual. As with Bentham's indication that rural spaces represent the ideal areas for the original Panopticon design due to the increased likelihood of accidental observation, the community of Fetter-Rothnie likewise develops their own understandings of individual routines. As Philo et al argue, this means that the lives of individuals within a rural panopticon become enmeshed. That *The Weatherhouse*'s Fetter-Rothnie 'had hardly a dozen names amongst its folk' highlights the ease with which these lives can become entangled.<sup>809</sup> Watson makes a similar point, noting that 'the text involves [all of the figures] in a Chekhovian web of inter-relationships which allows everyone in the book to have their own history, their own dignity, their own little tragedy.'<sup>810</sup> Indeed, Shepherd's introduction to her characters prior to the novel's prologue is laid out as in a play, and is separated into three groups of individuals: the young protagonists, the ladies at the Weatherhouse, and those 'from the neighbourhood'.<sup>811</sup> Characters also often have nicknames; Aunt Craigmyle is Lang Leeb, and Miss Annie Dyce Craigmyle is Paradise. Each female character – with the exception of Theresa Craigmyle – is also introduced by Shepherd through her connection to the men of the community (daughter

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<sup>809</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 24.

<sup>810</sup> Roderick Watson, "'To know Being": Substance and Spirit in the Work of Nan Shepherd' in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, eds Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), pp. 416 – 427 (p. 426).

<sup>811</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. xiii.

of / sister of / engaged to / cousin to / widowed / married to / maiden aunt to / mother of). This reinforces the way in which reputation and identification are central to each person's place within society, increasing the likelihood of entanglement and performative behaviours within a watchful community. Shepherd's decision to introduce characters in this way can be linked back to the relationship held between watchfulness and individual performance and theatricality, but also of the distinction between individual player and wider community. Further, this enmeshment creates a layered reproduction of an individual's behaviours, motives, and morality. Indeed, the potential inconsistencies of collated knowledge and the flimsy nature of gossip lead to the attractive alternative for the observed to 'self-discipline [and] perform sanity', which is seen clearly in the behaviours of Louise (Louie) Morgan, Captain Garry Forbes, and Ellen Falconer.<sup>812</sup> As such, the community's watchfulness itself becomes layered.

The opening line of *The Weatherhouse* centralises gossip and watchfulness. Shepherd writes that 'the name of Garry Forbes has passed into proverb in Fetter-Rothnie', instantly establishing the relationship between individual action and community reaction.<sup>813</sup> Further, the line hints at the duality of the individual, in that there is the person and then their reputation. It is not Garry Forbes the war captain who is now infamous, but instead the *name* of Garry Forbes. Many of the novel's opening chapter lines continue to reinforce the idea that gossip and community knowledge are at the heart of daily proceedings. Chapter three begins with Shepherd noting that 'meanwhile in the Weatherhouse parlour Mrs Hunter was discussing Miss Barbara',<sup>814</sup> the opening line of chapter four references how 'Lindsay's escapade on the night of the Christmas tree provided much matter for talk and allusion',<sup>815</sup>

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<sup>812</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, 'The Rural Panopticon', p. 238.

<sup>813</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 1.

<sup>814</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 31.

<sup>815</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 39.

and chapter eight sees Garry's appeal to the Fetter-Rothnie Session wherein he wants 'the business of [his] own' to be made their business also.<sup>816</sup> Such sharing of gossip and the reaching or debating of individual judgements is a core facet of rural panopticism. As stated, Shepherd's *The Weatherhouse* demonstrates ways in which panopticism and watchfulness can be utilised both as tools as punishment or tools of protection. However, to determine which of these tools ought to be utilised, the Fetter-Rothnie community is first seen to use watchfulness as a tool to assess an individual's morality and reliability.

Louise Morgan's (Louie's) societal reputation and her morality are disputed throughout the novel. Many of the text's central conflicts directly relate to Louie's claims that she and the recently deceased David Grey were engaged to be married, and characters are left to assess – based on provided evidence and Louie's reputation – whether they believe her. Cairns Craig describes *The Weatherhouse* as a 'tissue of imaginations, from which the truth has to be redeemed precisely by negating the kind of fictionalising which the characters [...] are only too prone to commit themselves to.'<sup>817</sup> As such, in reading *The Weatherhouse*, as consisting of a web of narrative connective tissue, the reader is encouraged to seek the truth and identify falsities. For example, Louie's character description in Shepherd's list of main characters reads that 'Louie claims to be engaged to David Grey, Garry Forbes's engineer friend, who died of T.B.'<sup>818</sup> Shepherd prefaces two certain truths (that Grey is Forbes's engineer friend, and that Grey died of T.B.) with the debateable claim of Louie's engagement to him. The reader is thus instantly encouraged to doubt Louie's reliability, and the reader and characters alike are primed to assess her truthfulness. There are also different angles taken by characters in the novel with regards to their assessment of Louie's morality:

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<sup>816</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 92.

<sup>817</sup> Cairns Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 226.

<sup>818</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. xiii.

judgement of her past actions, judgement of her lineage, or judgement of her social performance. Louise's sighting of Louie's public performances of prayer, for example, confirm for Louise that Louie is pious, morally sound, and reliable. Such an approach to performed piety corresponds with the analysis of Muir's writing in Chapter 2, wherein an apparent union with God emphasises one's morality and, therefore, preserves their connection to community. Indeed, Louie's aims for these performances – 'she wanted to hear strangers think, "What beautiful piety!"' – are directly in line with Louise's assessment of Louie as being 'pi, you know.'<sup>819</sup> Mrs Hunter – one of the Weatherhouse women – also claims that 'queer you must allow [Louie] is, but bad she couldna be.'<sup>820</sup> Mrs. Hunter's assessment that Louie 'wouldna tell a lee' is based both on Louie's provision of proof of her engagement (she is in possession of an heirloom ring that 'she showed [Mrs Hunter]) and due to her being 'her father's daughter [who is] a good man'.<sup>821</sup> Mrs. Hunter's assumption of Louie's moral virtue and lack of badness is thus directly linked to her apparent provision of physical evidence, but also her genes. There is therefore a powerful combination of Louie's ability to be assumed moral by association and the power of visual evidence. Though to a lesser degree, David Grey's father, John Grey, is also the subject of watchfulness-based morality judgement. Shepherd demonstrates through John Grey the in-depth knowledge of individual behavioural patterns which Philo et al. note is present within rural panopticons. His daily routine is rigid: every day 'he rose with daylight, laboured in the earth till the breakfast hour, made a rapid but thorough toilet, went to town.'<sup>822</sup> In the same paragraph, the narrator states that 'children loved him. His voice was soft and persuasive. His men revered

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<sup>819</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, pp. 61, 60.

<sup>820</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 34.

<sup>821</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, pp. 34 - 35.

<sup>822</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 44.

him and trusted his judgement. He spoke evil of no man.<sup>823</sup> In this sense, watchfulness can be used as a framework to assess Shepherd's mirroring of the societal knowledge of an individual's unthreatening and reliable routine, with their unthreatening and reliable personality,

However, moral assessments can also be damning. Garry Forbes's initial judgement of Louie Morgan is based on a combination of his own understanding of David Grey's character and his previous association with Louie. On hearing of Louie's apparent betrothal to the deceased Grey, Garry instantly dehumanises Louie. His opinion of Louie jumps from a woman to 'that creature there.'<sup>824</sup> In Garry's opinion, David's association with Louie would be akin to 'moral disease, as though the physical were not enough,'<sup>825</sup> and Louie is ascribed animalistic qualities as Garry states that she has 'clawed [Grey] up from the dead and devoured him.'<sup>826</sup> Furthermore, immediately after referring to Louie as 'that thing there',<sup>827</sup> Garry points out a sunlit tree to Lindsay which resembles 'phosphorescence on decaying fish [with an] evil look.'<sup>828</sup> Shepherd's narrator simultaneously states that Garry 'felt a poison in the air.'<sup>829</sup> Shepherd therefore weaves together moral and natural decay, with Garry's assessment of Louie's immorality being mirrored by his experiences of the natural. Indeed, in the earlier passage discussed which highlights John Grey's routine and his place in society Shepherd utilises the same technique. He is not only trusted and reliable amongst other individuals, but is seen as 'older than human – some antique embodiment of earth [...]' Absorbed. Like a part of what he worked in, and yet beyond it. The immanent presence [...]

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<sup>823</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 44.

<sup>824</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 60.

<sup>825</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 63.

<sup>826</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 63.

<sup>827</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 63.

<sup>828</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 63.

<sup>829</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 63.



like a great silent animal...<sup>830</sup> Shepherd therefore mirrors moral virtue with a positive experience of the natural environment, but moral decay with the disease of nature. This is a technique which is repeatedly used by Shepherd to emphasise individual accountability both for the environment but also for the positive continuation of a community. Once a judgement is reached, as with Garry's moral judgement of Louie Morgan, the next step is to take action.

'It was not often one could deliver so clear a blow against falsehood'.<sup>831</sup> Panopticism and Punishment

The public denouncement of Louie Morgan occurs in three separate stages: the meeting between Louie, Louise, and Garry followed by a rippling of gossip; the Fetter-Rothnie Session; and the community concert. Each stage intensifies in severity and visibility in regards to the 'oppression of watching eyes,' and throughout the relationship between performance and visibility, and to panopticism and punishment, is layered and gendered.<sup>832</sup>

Foucault traces the transition in punishment from public capital punishment in the two opening chapters of *Discipline and Punish*, to the surveillance-based punishments of the panopticon, which relies on the amendment of behaviour and compliance to rules and subscribed codes.<sup>833</sup> Principally, Foucault notes that the aim of the panoptic institution is 'to strengthen the social forces – to increase production, to develop the economy, spread education, raise the level of public morality; to increase and multiply.'<sup>834</sup> Punishment within the panopticon is marked by 'the infinitely minute web of panoptic techniques', of which a central technique is the 'formation and accumulation' of knowledge.<sup>835</sup> In *The Weatherhouse*,

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<sup>830</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, pp. 45 – 46.

<sup>831</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 66.

<sup>832</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 92.

<sup>833</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

<sup>834</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 208.

<sup>835</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 224.

the desire to question and preserve public morality certainly relies on the interweaving of knowledge, and Watson also argues that Ellen has been ‘recruited to “truth”’ which posits knowledge attainment as a valued occupation.<sup>836</sup> Knowledge is gained and shared in the novel through gossip, and public opportunities to observe and judge the morality of individuals are crucial in establishing local moral-outliers.

The first occasion wherein Louie is publicly punished as a result of her morality is the meeting of Louie, Louise, and Garry wherein he refers to Louie as ‘that creature there.’<sup>837</sup> This meeting sees the beginning of a collision between Louie’s private life and her place in the community, as it heralds Garry’s personal rejection of her claims as well as his intention to punish her for her actions. Nicholas Martin considers that a gossip ‘often claims to be acting as both the guardian and the censor of public morals,’ and such an approach can be utilised in this analysis of the vilification of Louie.<sup>838</sup> Watchfulness is manipulated in order to perform an adherence to community morals and the ironic attempt to censor damaging claims. The small meeting also instigates the spread of gossip and the search for further clues regarding Louie’s claims. Both Louise and Garry seek secondary approval of their own assumptions, which in turn produces a ripple effect of gossip and the interweaving of individual stories and shared understandings of Louie’s behaviour.

Crucially, at this stage the spreading – and seeking – of gossip is amongst the women of Fetter-Rothnie only, implying that gossip is reserved for women and within private, domestic spaces. Such an assessment is supported by scholarship on gender and gossip. Lindsay Starck, for instance, posits that ‘the general consensus on gossip [is that it is] trivial language, or women’s talk, unsuited to serious topics or intellectual pursuits’ and that it

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<sup>836</sup> Watson, “‘To know Being’”: Substance and Spirit in the Work of Nan Shepherd’, 425.

<sup>837</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 60.

<sup>838</sup> Nicholas Martin, ‘Literature and Gossip – An Introduction’ in *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 50.2 (2014), 135 – 141 (p. 138).

‘became customary to belittle and condemn gossip as idle women’s talk.’<sup>839</sup> Eyal Eckhaus and Batia Ben-Hador agree that ‘in the twentieth century gossip was perceived as essentially any interaction between women.’<sup>840</sup> Given that the later Session wherein Louie’s morality is debated (without her present) by men only, and the public denunciation of Louie occurs in public, gossip, watchfulness, and public punishment are clearly gendered. Indeed, at this first stage Garry appeals directly to other members of the community, and states to Kate Falconer that to believe Louie would be to ‘dishonour David [by thinking] him capable of such meanness.’<sup>841</sup> Norquay similarly considers the importance of gossip to Grassie Gibbon’s *Sunset Song*, wherein gossip is ‘a communal artistic rite, a kind of mutual therapy’.<sup>842</sup> The narrative voice in *Sunset Song*, Norquay argues, draws the listener ‘into a shared viewpoint, creating a unity both with the implied reader and the implied Kinraddie audience.’<sup>843</sup> Although Shepherd’s gossip in this instance has more sinister undertones than the ‘mutual therapy’ that Norquay ascribes to *Sunset Song*, the implied unity and the attempts at camaraderie have similarities. Shepherd here highlights the way in which watchfulness can be explicitly manipulated as a way to gain trust and subvert public opinion. Likewise, on hearing of Garry’s rejection of Louie, another character – Theresa Craigmyle – rejoices in the validation that she too had doubted Louie and ‘was right, you see. [She is] not often wrong.’<sup>844</sup>

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<sup>839</sup> Lindsay Starck, ‘Djuna Barnes’s *Ladies Almanack* and the Politicization of Gossip’ in *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 65.2 (2019), 239 – 263 (pp. 240 – 241).

<sup>840</sup> Eyal Eckhaus and Batia Ben-Hador, ‘Gossip and Gender Differences: A Content Analysis Approach’ in *Journal of Gender Studies*, 28.1 (2019), 97 – 108 (p. 98).

<sup>841</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 68.

<sup>842</sup> Glenda Norquay, ‘Voices in Time: A Scots Quair’ in *Scottish Literary Journal*, 11.1 (1984), 57 – 68 (pp. 58 – 59).

<sup>843</sup> Norquay, ‘Voices in Time’, p. 59.

<sup>844</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 72.

The second stage of Louie's judgement escalates and sees Garry's appeal to the Session. In the Session, Garry seeks the assistance of 'forms of men' so that Louie may 'answer for her guilt, her moral delinquency' in the form of a 'public accusation and punishment.'<sup>845</sup> In this stage, Garry no longer refers to Louie as a creature, an animal, or a signifier of natural decay. Instead, he emphasises Louie's womanhood, and what he considers to be the damaged reputation of his deceased friend. Speaking to the Session, he declares that he finds 'the image left of [David] in [their] memories defaced. By a woman.'<sup>846</sup> Shepherd's splitting of this statement exaggerates the horror of the reputation of a man being defaced by a woman. That Garry addresses the Session with 'Gentlemen' and states that the regulation of Louie's morals is 'business' further demonstrates Shepherd's gendering of watchful spaces.<sup>847</sup> For Garry, validation is sought via women's gossip whereas action is sought via the gentlemen of Fetter-Rothnie. Further, he sees the correct route for the punishment of a morally unsound woman to be via other men. Ironically, however, Garry's path is blocked as he too is the recipient of watchfulness-based judgement. The men of the Session are reluctant to join Garry in condemning Louie as, Shepherd writes:

Another man answered, 'Now here's a funny thing. Just yesterday my lassie had a letter from a friend, a boy in Captain Forbes's Company. Went queer, they said. Left out in a shell-hole and brought back clean off – raving mad. A corpse bumping at his heels that he insisted was himself. Wouldn't leave go of it. Touched, I'm afraid.'<sup>848</sup>

Shepherd here highlights how the passing of gossip – elevating from the private letter, to the private conversation, to the public discussion – can affect all individuals of a community and

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<sup>845</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 89.

<sup>846</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 94.

<sup>847</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 89.

<sup>848</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 96.

can have the power to invalidate Garry's attempts to punish another. Garry's failure at the Session leads to the final stage of Louie's condemnation.

The concert, held in the hall of Fetter-Rothnie's school is the setting for the first public, vocal accusation against Louie where she is also present. Schools are, importantly, one form of institution acknowledged by Foucault as panoptic sites of surveillance, discipline and punishment. Schools are a 'type of location of bodies in space, of distribution of individuals in relation to one another, of hierarchical organization [...of] channels of power.'<sup>849</sup> Additionally, a school allows surveillance 'not only by the appointed inspectors, but also by the public' and is a 'transparent building in which the exercise of power may be supervised by society as a whole.'<sup>850</sup> Ellen's deliberate gathering of the local community is therefore an attempt to ensure the supervision of public denouncement and punishment. For Ellen, the motivation for publicly accusing Louie of lying and of theft is due to her belief that Louie's claims and her performance is 'false, false, false,' which again implies that a core function of watchfulness in a community is to maintain moral purity and truthfulness.<sup>851</sup> Similarly, Ellen directly appeals to the gathered community when stating:

Friends, there has been a wrong done here amongst you. That woman yonder is a thief. Round her neck you will find a ribbon, and on it she carries a ring. Will you ask her where she got that ring?<sup>852</sup>

By referring to friends, there is the implication that Ellen is seeking communal complicity in the questioning and condemnation of Louie, and it indicates the presence of an enforced barrier between the innocent and the presumed-guilty (or the observers, and the observed). Referring to Louie only as 'that woman yonder' likewise distances Ellen and the gathered

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<sup>849</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 5.

<sup>850</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 7.

<sup>851</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 156.

<sup>852</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 156.

crowd and the accused thief. Similarly, by requesting that others in the audience take the questioning of Louie into their own hands ('will *you* ask her') Ellen attempts to unify the community in the punishment of an individual. This passage is reflective of the ways in which gossip can evolve beyond unimportant conversations between women to become more active and more purposeful. Starck notes that (although gossip was often dismissed as unimportant) it could also be brandished as a tool to effect social change. Likewise, Eckhaus and Ben-Hador argue that gossip can be used tactically as 'tools of aggression.'<sup>853</sup> Further, Starck acknowledges that 'gossip provided a creative outlet for women who were excluded from the public and political sphere.'<sup>854</sup> Eckhaus and Ben-Hador similarly note that gossip 'functions as a "social glue" and produces intimate social bonds'.<sup>855</sup> Although gossip is associated with idle women's talk, it also provides an opportunity for women's voices to impact the functioning of a society. Indeed, Robin Dunbar states that 'without gossip, there would be no society.'<sup>856</sup> That it is Ellen's voice which triggers the public rejection of Louie is significant; it reflects the infiltration of gendered gossip into the masculinised site of action and demonstrates the impact of a woman's voice in swaying public opinion. Therefore, Shepherd's depiction of watchfulness, and the exercising of punishment in the rural panopticon, acknowledges women's influence within the maintenance of Fetter-Rothnie's moral codes.

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<sup>853</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 100.

<sup>854</sup> Starck, 'Djuna Barnes's *Ladies Almanack* and the Politicization of Gossip', p. 241.

<sup>855</sup> Eckhaus and Ben-Hador, 'Gossip and Gender Differences', p. 100.

<sup>856</sup> Robin Dunbar, 'Gossip in Evolutionary Perspective' in *Review of General Psychology*, 8.2 (2004), 100 – 110 (p. 100).

## Watchfulness as Warfare

The adherence to community moral codes and the opportunity for union against a real or perceived enemy is also in evidence in Shepherd's mirroring of watchfulness and warfare throughout *The Weatherhouse*. Again, the society of Fetter-Rothnie is reliant on the identification and removal of a common enemy. Further, Shepherd exemplifies the presence of external threats felt by those living in rural areas (of warfare, of change, of instability); the use of watchfulness as a *weapon* against such threats; and the role of active watchful residents as soldiers. Of course, much has been written of modernism and its relationship to the First World War, particularly in more recent scholarship.<sup>857</sup> However, as with many other fields of interest within Modernist Studies, the focus is often on the urban experience. Shepherd's writing, on the other hand, considers the lasting impact of warfare on rural spaces. She presents Garry Forbes's experiences with shell-shock and how his condition is viewed by others,<sup>858</sup> for example, as well as providing a critique of the assumption that rural spaces and people were protected from the realities of war.<sup>859</sup> Indeed, Shepherd's writing of rural warfare can be read against Paul K. Saint-Amour's assertion that the interwar period was experienced 'in real time, *as interwar*.'<sup>860</sup> In *Tense Future: Modernism, Total War, Encyclopaedic Form*, Saint-Amour is particularly focused on the way in which people were

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<sup>857</sup> See: Allyson Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches: Negotiating the Space between Modernism & the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Andrew Frayn, *Writing Disenchantment: British First World War Prose, 1914-30* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014); *British Popular Culture and the First World War*, ed. by Jessica Meyer (Leiden: Brill, 2008); *The Literature of the Great War: Beyond Modern Memory*, eds Patrick J. Quinn and Steven Trout (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001); Angela K. Smith, *The Second Battlefield: Women, Modernism and the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Vincent Sherry, *The Great War and the Language of Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Trudi Tate, *Modernism, History and the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

<sup>858</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 94; p. 96.

<sup>859</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 11; p. 58; p. 168.

<sup>860</sup> Paul K. Saint-Amour, 'Introduction: Traumatic Earliness' in *Tense Future: Modernism, Total War, Encyclopaedic Form* (New York: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2015) <<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.napier.ac.uk/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190200947.003.0001>>.

simultaneously traumatised by the past and, ‘amounting to a proleptic mass traumatization, a *pre-traumatic* stress syndromes whose symptoms arose in response to a potentially oncoming rather than an already realized catastrophe.’<sup>861</sup> With such an analysis in mind, then, watchfulness in *The Weatherhouse* can be read as a depiction of pre and post traumatized people aiming to prevent what is regarded as another attack.<sup>862</sup> In particular, Garry considers Louie’s deceit not only as an attack on the memory of his friend, which has its own repercussions for the wider community, but also as a metaphorical attack on the health of the rural landscape.

Throughout Garry’s attempts to publicly vilify Louie, he is adamant that his relationship with her goes beyond ‘a simple matter of gossip.’<sup>863</sup> Instead, Louie’s claim represents Garry’s part in ‘the war against evil’ in which his role is to ‘deliver so clear a blow against falsehood.’<sup>864</sup> Shepherd’s explicit reference to war here positions Garry as a soldier, and moral decline as the enemy. Garry’s individual purpose is therefore to rally other troops, and to encourage unity against the common enemy, simultaneously protecting Fetter-Rothnie and elevating his individual social standing. Garry’s aims mirror what Paul Fussell considers to be the sociological effects of the war in identifying an enemy or the Other. Fussell writes: ‘we are visible; he is invisible. We are normal; he is grotesque; [...] He is not as good as we are [...] Nevertheless, he threatens us and must be destroyed, or, if not destroyed, contained and disarmed.’<sup>865</sup> In Garry’s appeals to the Session, he reminds the gathered men that it ‘was the

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<sup>861</sup> Saint-Amour, ‘Introduction: Traumatic Earliness’.

<sup>862</sup> Carl Krockel also highlights the centrality of traumatic anticipation – rather than the actual impact of event – to experiences of warfare. (*War Trauma and English Modernism: T.S. Eliot and D.H. Lawrence* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).)

<sup>863</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 66.

<sup>864</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 66.

<sup>865</sup> Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* [1975] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 82.



duty of the Session to regulate the morals of the community’ and that as such they must condemn Louie.<sup>866</sup> As such, Garry has identified a moral imbalance in the community who is, in Fussell’s words, ‘not as good as we are’, and intends to verbally disarm the enemy. Watchfulness can therefore be understood as being at its most powerful when individuals unite against an individual enemy, wherein the morality of that individual has been assessed and judgement reached and safety can be preserved.

Andrew Frayn notes that ‘in wartime, survival is the ongoing aim [...and] all tend to experience the present as a point in the drive towards completion of the war.’<sup>867</sup> This is certainly true for both Garry and Ellen in *The Weatherhouse*. For both characters, the war in Fetter-Rothnie provides an opportunity for rebirth. Ellen, on hearing of the new war, questions how she could ‘have lived among trivial matters for so long’ as ‘this is real, and good. I feel alive.’<sup>868</sup> Later, it is revealed that ‘it was life she wanted, strong current and fresh wind, no ignoble desire.’<sup>869</sup> In both cases, watchful warfare represents life (and, further, noble ways of living). For Garry, his association with the corpse in the trench whom he identifies as himself, and thus his own metaphorical death, (‘come out, you there. Myself. That’s me. That’s me. I thrust him in - I am rescuing myself’) is followed by his sureness that Fetter-Rothnie ‘is dead’.<sup>870</sup> Indeed, the evident fragmentation of Garry’s identity and the interweaving of present and past – or real and imagined – experiences supports Lumsden’s view of *The Weatherhouse* as demonstrating the ways in which ‘ruptures have become

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<sup>866</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 94.

<sup>867</sup> Andrew Frayn, ‘Modernism and the First World War’ in *Modernist Cultures*, 12.1 (2017), 1 – 15 (p. 3).

<sup>868</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 78.

<sup>869</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 127.

<sup>870</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 54; p. 56.

visible' as a direct result of the War.<sup>871</sup> It is immediately after his discovery of Louie's apparent deceit that Garry is reborn and that his 'heart, on the first evening of the engagement, rose pleasurably to the fray.'<sup>872</sup> Carl Krockel notes that 'the shame of failing to fulfil one's duty as a soldier and man, and the corresponding isolation from others' is often present in English Modernist literature of the war.<sup>873</sup> Garry's rebirth, then, can be understood as imperative in his rehabilitation into Fetter-Rothnie society and a second attempt at fulfilling his duty, and watchfulness is weaponised to allow him to succeed. Of course, this reconstruction of warfare through the watchful community is not actually war. As such, in producing a war of one's own – as it were – Shepherd is aligned with other women writers of the interwar years who Maria Geiger considers were writing 'not only as part of the "work of mourning", but also to take advantage of the opportunity to gain personal identities.'<sup>874</sup> Emily Pickard summarises that women writers who engaged with language, debates, and 'the conventions of a literary tradition from which they were excluded', were able to take significant steps forward in remedying gendered imbalances.<sup>875</sup> Therefore, through mirroring the language of war in the rural space, Shepherd is able to 'take advantage' of the opportunity to foreground women's voices and the rural experience.

Just as the co-opting of the language of war is an opportunity represents a revival of women's voices and the rural experience of warfare, the Fetter-Rothnie war presents a second opportunity for survival. Residents are utilising techniques gained through new knowledge

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<sup>871</sup> Lumsden, 'To Get Leave to Live: Negotiating Regional Identity in the Literature of North-East Scotland', p. 102.

<sup>872</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 65.

<sup>873</sup> Carl Krockel, *War Trauma and English Modernism: T.S. Eliot and D.H. Lawrence* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 19.

<sup>874</sup> Maria Geiger, 'No Trench Required: Validating the Voices of Female Poets of WW1', in *War, Literature and the Arts*, 27 (2013), 1 – 13 (p. 3).

<sup>875</sup> Emily Lynn Pickard, *The Other Muir: Willa Muir, Motherhood and Writing* (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis: University of Glasgow, 2021), p. 217.

and experiences of the First World War, to apply them to experiences affecting rural spaces. They are battling the war itself and considering which changes must be made in order to stay safe, but also creating, strategizing, and fighting in a war of their own creation. As seen, this can be understood in terms of individual survival and rebirth. At the same time, watchfulness in Fetter-Rothnie directly relates to the protection of the land itself. As Walton posits, Shepherd belonged to a literary tradition which was concerned with the relationship between humanity and the environment. Walton's article on nature trauma directly engages with the representation of war and trauma in interwar rural Scottish writing, and she argues that 'those who formerly lived in profound syncopation with the land experience an irredeemable rupture with their home environment at the coming of war.'<sup>876</sup> Further, she considers the relationship between nature and 'the development of industrial modernity, of which the war was a product and a symptom', as inextricably linked.<sup>877</sup> Similarly, in *Nan Shepherd and Environmental Thought*, Walton notes that 'Scottish Literary Renaissance writers often emphasise the interdependence of humanity and nature and point out what happens when these relations are disturbed', and she offers Gunn's *The Silver Darlings* (1941) and Grassie Gibbon's *Sunset Song* as notable examples.<sup>878</sup> Although Walton is focusing on *The Living Mountain* in this instance, Shepherd emphasises the entanglement of human life and the natural environment in her fiction and, further, considers community attempts for survival.

Shepherd consistently connects the residents of Fetter-Rothnie to the environment. John Grey 'seemed older than human – some antique embodiment of earth'; Miss Barbara is 'elemental, a mass of the very earth, earthy smelling, with her goat's beard, her rough hairy tweed like the pelt of an animal'; and Garry 'perceived a boulder, earthy and enormous, a

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<sup>876</sup> Walton, 'Nature Trauma', p. 222.

<sup>877</sup> Walton, 'Nature Trauma', p. 222.

<sup>878</sup> Walton, *Nan Shepherd and Environmental Thought*, p. 92.

giant block of the unbridled crag, and behold! As he looked the boulder was his aunt.<sup>879</sup>

Garry thinks of the residents of Fetter-Rothnie as ‘the people whom the land had made – they too, had been shaped from a stuff as hard and intractable as their rock, through weathers as rude as stormed upon their heights.’<sup>880</sup> When compared to the way in which Louie is compared to ‘phosphorescence on decaying fish,’ it seems that a primary concern of Garry’s is to prevent forms of evil which threaten the health of the earth.<sup>881</sup> Watchfulness as warfare, then, represents a way to prevent earthly decay before it can infect. The protection of the earth and the ‘people who the land made’ is a metaphor for broader attempts of protecting Fetter-Rothnie from outside influences and irreversible changes to traditional ways of life: or, in other words, the death of the land through impacts of modernity. Watchfulness as warfare and as protection are therefore intrinsically linked to the way in which the landscape is altered as a result of modernity.

### Conclusion

The fluidity between landscapes is central to Shepherd’s writing, as is the interconnectedness of all living beings (which is explored in more depth in the following chapter). Shepherd does not ascribe to a sentimentalised kailyard-esque vision of the rural community, nor does her writing align with the anti-urban approaches examined earlier in the thesis. Rather, Shepherd’s fiction produces a landscape which is receptive to neutral ground that can be a space for the continuation and celebration of tradition, particularly in regard to the protection of rural landscapes, but is simultaneously a receptive space for urbanisation. Moreover, watchfulness is often used as a bridge between these spaces.

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<sup>879</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 45, 71, 119.

<sup>880</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 113.

<sup>881</sup> Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse*, p. 63.

Whereas Chapter 5 will explore the more beneficial aspects of this interconnectedness, this chapter has examined the dangers of a united community. In *The Weatherhouse*, warfare and watchfulness are mirrored in such a way that watchful warfare – wherein watchfulness has been weaponised and residents mobilised – is positioned as a means to protect communities and the earth itself. Shepherd also genders these watchful spaces, writing in a way which often pits feminised spaces of gossip against masculinised spaces of action; this in itself mirrors the feminised rural space (passive, revered, traditional) against the masculine urban space (active, powerful, ever-changing).

The psychological presence of warfare within the rural community manifests itself in many ways. For example, the depiction of rebirth wherein a new war – a *community* war – allows Garry Forbes to feel alive following a metaphorical death in the trenches places the rural space as both recipient and participant of and in warfare. The school setting as a site for military strategizing and the identification of an enemy unites a Foucauldian reading of institutionalised punishment, with a total rejection of the rural as safe. However, finally, the overwhelming presence of watchfulness displays one of Shepherd's key aims which reveals itself most fully in *The Living Mountain*: the protection of the landscape, and an appeal for unity.

## Chapter 5: Nan Shepherd and the Nature of Rural Modernity

### Introduction

Nan Shepherd, more so than Muir and Moon, presents rural modernity as being rooted in the bridging of apparently disparate worlds and her writing suggests that aspects of modernity and the landscape each lend meaning to each other. Rather than rural spaces being only passive and receptive to impacts of urbanisation and modernity, Shepherd's work displays a more subtle equality in their symbiotic relationship. Other critics have explored the relationship between Scottish landscapes and the writers who write of and from them. Gillian Carter's research on the 'politics of Scottish landscape' in the writing of Nan Shepherd, with particular emphasis on *The Living Mountain* interweaves Shepherd's position as a modernist writer with analysis of the landscape she discusses.<sup>882</sup> However, more specifically Shepherd's personal connection to landscape and nature, and the effects of modernity on this connection, prove that central to Shepherd's writing is the emphasis on balance. For example, in her non-fiction text *The Living Mountain*, Shepherd critiques the environmental impact of modern tourism on the Cairngorms in that it damages individual connections with the landscape. Shepherd muses on the changes of the landscape as 'Aviemore erupts and goes on erupting, bulldozers *birze* their way into the hill, road are made, and re-made, where there were never roads before....'.<sup>883</sup> Yet, this critique is balanced with acknowledgement of the joy the new ease of accessibility has brought to many, noting that there are 'too many boots, too much commotion, but then how much uplift for how many hearts'.<sup>884</sup>

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<sup>882</sup> Gillian Carter, 'Domestic Geography' and the Politics of Scottish Landscape in Nan Shepherd's 'The Living Mountain' in *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 8:1 (2001), 25 – 36.

<sup>883</sup> Nan Shepherd, *The Living Mountain* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996), p. iii.

<sup>884</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. iii.

The chapter will consider a presentation of Shepherd as an ecofeminist, who aims to highlight the interconnectedness of women with nature, but also of the interconnectedness of all living forms. As such, Shepherd indicates the impact of modernity on the landscape itself in terms of the representation of new technological advancements, an increase in footfall, and movement away from rurality and toward urban life. Where Moon's writing of rural landscapes has been shown to directly depict these landscapes as ideal sites for rural panopticism, this analysis of Shepherd foregrounds an appeal to reclaim these spaces. Within these and other texts, whilst modernism can be understood as a movement towards that which is new, rural modernism can be seen as the bridging between disparities.

Shepherd's writing suggests that rural spaces are able to – and should – forge stronger bridges to the urban, but equally that individuals and communities are responsible for the maintenance of rural nature and, further, that these motivations co-exist. Finally Shepherd's meditative writing of the landscapes will be considered in regard to the *flâneur* theory, but in a distinctly Scottish context that considers Shepherd and her female characters as possessing or seeking deeper knowledge and power through the act of *stravaiging*. Although Shepherd's *The Living Mountain* as an invaluable text in the history of women's walking has been the welcome subject to recent scholarship – particularly in the work of Kerri Andrews and Samantha Walton – this chapter contributes an additional and as yet unacknowledged view. In assessing Shepherd and her characters as rural *flâneurs*, the concept of the *flâneur* is re-imagined and provided with further necessary gendered and geographical nuance, and scholarship of Shepherd's contribution to Scottish literary modernism is provided with a new approach. Whilst rurally panopticonic existence can have the ability to immobilise residents, the act of walking can be utilised as a powerful tool to reclaim agency, (re)conquer space, and allow walkers to access deeper self-understanding. The result of this in Shepherd's writing is

the presentation of ‘resistance in the face of environmental and cultural degradation’,<sup>885</sup> wherein the process of ‘journeying out [...by] “journeying in”’ bridges tradition with modernity.<sup>886</sup> The stravaiger – a term has never been critically discussed as a potential counterpart to the *flâneur* – is able to further unite these spaces. As such, in considering the similar motivations between the urban *flâneur* and the stravaiger, and foregrounding Shepherd’s experience as a radical, knowledgeable surveyor of the landscape, this chapter provides a significant contribution to existing scholarship on the rural walker and women’s walking.

#### Shepherd, Ecology, and Ecofeminism: Vital Earth

Shepherd can be read as an ecofeminist writer, and her work negotiates the tensions between dualisms; those of gender, space, and power. Walton counters Robert Macfarlane’s stance that *The Living Mountain* is ‘an environmental text but not an *environmentalist* one’ by stating that Shepherd’s writing ‘explores ways of thinking and feeling about environmental change which are at the core of the environmental movement.’<sup>887</sup> Indeed, environmentalist concerns are present in Shepherd’s fiction as well as *The Living Mountain*. Many of Shepherd’s characters display similar political and ecological leanings wherein the concern with the protection of the natural world is mirrored with one’s own position within it. There are multiple definitions of ecofeminism and, as a term that only became the focus of critical study amidst second wave feminisms, applying it to Shepherd as a Modernist writer is difficult. Indeed, ecofeminist studies is – according to Lara Stevens, Peta Tait, and Denise Varney – ‘rarely discussed in public debate and is overlooked in much recent academic

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<sup>885</sup> Louisa Gairn, *Ecology and Modern Scottish Literature*, p. 110.

<sup>886</sup> Eleanor Bell, ‘Into the Centre of Things’, p. 127.

<sup>887</sup> Walton, *Nan Shepherd and Environmental Thought*, p. 84.



discourse' despite its increasing relevance due to ongoing and worsening environmental dangers and climate change.<sup>888</sup> Yet, and as Scott Lyall acknowledges, *The Living Mountain* holds increasing relevance 'in an age of environmental crisis.'<sup>889</sup> As such, providing deeper analysis of Shepherd's ecofeminism and how this is wielded as a tool to combat gendered imbalances and watchful communities is valuable.

In his *Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment*, Timothy Clark introduces 'ecofeminism' as a comparatively newer environmental term when compared to, for example, 'ecology', 'ecocriticism', or studies of 'nature writing', which offers a sharper ecological focus.<sup>890</sup> Justyna Kostkowska's *Ecocriticism and Women Writers* provides an overview as to how *ecocriticism* can act as an individual and collective framework by which all readers can attempt to relate to the non-human world.<sup>891</sup> On the other hand, *ecofeminism* – according to Stevens, Tait and Varney – intentionally bridges together two core twentieth-century political movements: 'one concerned with the fight for women's rights and the other with ecological sustainability and the environment.'<sup>892</sup> Stevens, Tait, and Varney argue that, like feminism, ecofeminism is 'concerned with challenging and changing the oppressive structures that imbue the lives of women and men'.<sup>893</sup> Ecofeminism, therefore, is a tool

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<sup>888</sup> Lara Stevens, Peta Tait and Denise Varney, ed. *Feminist Ecologies: Changing Environments in the Anthropocene* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 3.

<sup>889</sup> Scott Lyall, 'The Living Mountain: In an age of ecology crisis, Nan Shepherd's nature writing is more relevant than ever' in *The Conversation* 29 August 2019 <<http://theconversation.com/the-living-mountain-in-an-age-of-ecological-crisis-nan-shepherds-nature-writing-is-more-relevant-than-ever-119794>> [accessed 20 November 2019].

<sup>890</sup> Timothy Clark, *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 110.

<sup>891</sup> Justyna Kostkowska, *Ecocriticism and Women Writers: Environmental Poetics of Virginia Woolf, Jeanette Winterson and Ali Smith* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

<sup>892</sup> *Feminist Ecologies: Changing Environments in the Anthropocene*, eds Stevens, Tait and Varney (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 1.

<sup>893</sup> Stevens et al., *Feminist Ecologies*, p. 1.

through which powerful and damaging gendered influences as well as threats to the environment are treated with equal seriousness.

There are debates within studies of ecocriticism and ecofeminism with each questioning the usefulness of the other. For instance, Stevens et al. refer to Ariel Salleh's 'Deeper than Deep Ecology: The Eco-Feminist Connection' of 1984, which they then republish in their *Feminist Ecologies*. Salleh's article 'sparked heated academic debate', largely due to her suggestions that ecofeminism offers a deeper, more critical position than the comparatively shallow deep ecology.<sup>894</sup> Elsewhere, Lucy Sargisson's wryly titled 'What's Wrong with Ecofeminism' takes a different approach, arguing that in order for the aims of ecofeminists to be achieved, its utopian outlooks must be appropriately balanced with clearer social and political goals. Sargisson suggests that whilst the potential for ecofeminism as a tool to unite discussions of the domination of woman and nature is positive, ecofeminism should not be lauded for its 'blueprints'.<sup>895</sup> In other words, the surrounding ideas and hopes of ecofeminists may be inspiring, but the foundations of ecofeminism as a tool to critique and reshape societal understandings of nature are deeply flawed. It can often be, according to Sargisson, 'essentialist, biologist, [...] inconsistent, intellectually regressive and [lacking in] rigour. [It is] the fluffy face of feminism.'<sup>896</sup> Sargisson's reference to the regression inherent in some ecofeminist discussions receives more thorough attention in the work of Susan A. Mann. In one article entitled 'Pioneers of U.S. Ecofeminism and Environmental Justice', Mann centralises the underrepresented early U.S. ecofeminists, and argues that ecofeminism is often equated to the efforts of white middle-class women. She refers to Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (1980) in that she wishes to excavate 'naïve knowledges' to produce

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<sup>894</sup> Stevens et al., *Feminist Ecologies*, p. 13.

<sup>895</sup> Lucy Sargisson, 'What's Wrong with Ecofeminism' in *Environmental Politics*, 10.1 (2001), 52 – 64 (p. 52).

<sup>896</sup> Sargisson, 'What's Wrong with Ecofeminism', p. 52.

a broader and more inclusive overall knowledge of the environment, of rural spaces, of land, and so on.<sup>897</sup> Knowledge and appreciation of – for example – birds and plants ‘was coveted for its prestige, since it added to this class’s cultural sophistication’ and therefore these and other displays of cultural capital ‘characterized the endeavours of well-to-do white women in conservation and preservation’ that has become synonymous with ecofeminism.<sup>898</sup>

Mann’s identification of an ecofeminist hierarchy in which cultural capital and repressed voices and knowledges are rife can be linked to Shepherd’s position as a middle-class writer. Certainly, Richard Smyth refers to Shepherd’s ‘crotchety choosiness about who is and isn’t welcome in “her” wild.’<sup>899</sup> Walton counters such a view, noting that Shepherd is ‘sympathetic to tourists, being one herself’.<sup>900</sup> However, Shepherd largely overlooks her privileged position, and although she does indicate the presence of a Cairngorm-based hierarchy – she refers to the naivety of new walkers, for example, and prefers to walk alone so as not to impede her experience with unwanted conversation – her feeling on her own position in the hierarchy is unclear. Indeed, in regard to Mann’s critique of the erasure of non-white ecofeminists, Sargisson argues that many ecofeminists make ‘claims [which] are unproblematically made for a universal Woman, thereby replacing deep ecological sexism with ecofeminist deep essentialism.’<sup>901</sup> Sargisson is therefore suggesting that ecofeminists are susceptible to similar flaws which they themselves critique in other forms. Kate Rigby similarly notes that ecofeminists seek to reaffirm ‘that link between women and nature which

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<sup>897</sup> Susan A. Mann, ‘Pioneers of U.S. Ecofeminism and Environmental Justice’ in *Feminist Formations*, 23.2 (2011), 1 – 25 (pp. 2 – 3).

<sup>898</sup> Mann, ‘Pioneers of U.S. Ecofeminism and Environmental Justice’, p. 14.

<sup>899</sup> Richard Smyth, ‘Nature Writing’s Fascist Roots: When the Christchurch shooter described himself as an “eco-fascist”, he invoked the age-old and complicated relationship between nature writing and the far right’ in *New Statesman* 2019 <https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/2019/04/nature-writings-fascist-roots> [accessed 21 December 2019].

<sup>900</sup> Walton, *Nan Shepherd and Environmental Thought*, p. 89.

<sup>901</sup> Sargisson, ‘What’s Wrong with Ecofeminism’, p. 63.

liberal and socialist feminists from Simone de Beauvoir onwards have been at pains to sever.<sup>902</sup> De Beauvoir's critique in *The Second Sex* (1968), that 'the association of Women and Nature was a key element in patriarchal ideology', is thus directly pitted against beliefs by some ecofeminists that 'the conceptual and the embodied experience of the woman-nature connection are equally indivisible.'<sup>903</sup> However, the supposed link between a patriarchal domination of women and a domination of nature is often suggested as the reason for the deliberate reunion of women to nature.

Clark cites ecofeminism as a widely-used term since the late 1980s, and introduces several key ecofeminist theorists such as Ynestra King (who claimed ecofeminism as 'the third wave of the women's movement'), and Donna Haraway (whose research into Western dualisms is cited by Clark, and also by Val Plumwood), as central voices in their critiques of domination and masculine power.<sup>904</sup> Likewise, Bonnie Kime Scott also cites Haraway's work on Western dualisms, and argues that key to ecofeminism is the attempt to 'un-domesticate traditional tropes of woman's relation to nature [...and] queering the patriarchal nature-as-home paradigm of the *oikos*.'<sup>905</sup> Kime Scott thus indicates the crucial role of Western binaries in understandings of woman's relationship to the environment; and suggests that separating nature from home is crucial in order to move away from the patriarchal domination of woman and nature. Salleh, Clark suggests, argues that 'it's not that women are actually closer to nature than men [...] but throughout history, men have chosen to set

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<sup>902</sup> Kate Rigby, 'Women and Nature Revisited: Ecofeminist Reconfigurations of an Old Association' in *Feminist Ecologies: Changing Environments in the Anthropocene*, eds Lara Stevens, Peta Tait and Denise Varney (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 57 – 82 (p. 58).

<sup>903</sup> Stevens, Tait, and Varney, *Feminist Ecologies*, p. 12.

<sup>904</sup> Clark, *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment*, pp. 110 – 113; Val Plumwood, 'Ecofeminism: An overview and discussion of positions and arguments' in *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 64 (1986), 120 – 138 (p. 121).

<sup>905</sup> Kime Scott, *The Gender of Modernism*, p. 9.

themselves over and above nature and women.<sup>906</sup> Salleh considers this domination of women and nature as being ‘the expression of an impulse to compete and dominate the Other’, and such a focus on the simultaneous patriarchal domination of nature and of women is, according to Rigby, one of the defining aspects of ecofeminism when compared to deep ecology or broader feminist approaches to ecology.<sup>907</sup> Plumwood clarifies that both women and nature are traditionally conceived of as holding subservient positions, as their values are often viewed only in their relation to their usefulness to others. Therefore, when they no longer serve a purpose, they are deemed irrelevant. To frame her discussion, Plumwood argues that one category of ecofeminist criticism is that which argues that women and nature hold their places as a result of classical dualisms. Such an argument relies on a hierarchical structure based on classical philosophy.<sup>908</sup> The dualisms often assume the superiority of one against the other, and Plumwood argues that ‘it is not just the fact that there is a dichotomy, that distinctions are *made* [...] it is rather the *way* the distinctions have been treated.’<sup>909</sup> Plumwood continues to demonstrate the triple-assumptions relating to these dualisms: the assumption that the spheres relate to one another ‘as a higher to lower order’; that these orders are then linked with ‘an instrumental role [...] with that of the lower] serving the higher’; and the traits ‘taken to be virtuous and defining for one side’ exaggerate their distance from the other side.<sup>910</sup> For example, the masculine is assumed as the higher order, and the feminine is dominated by the superior masculine. Likewise, nature is assumed as the lower order in a position of subservience to intellect and rationality.

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<sup>906</sup> Clark, *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment*, p. 239.

<sup>907</sup> Ariel Salleh, ‘Deeper than Deep Ecology: The Eco-Feminist Connection’ in *Environmental Ethics*, 6 (1984), 339 – 345 (p. 344).

<sup>908</sup> Val Plumwood, ‘Ecofeminism: An overview and discussion of positions and arguments’ in *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 64 (1986), 120 – 138 (p. 130).

<sup>909</sup> Plumwood, ‘Ecofeminism’, p. 131.

<sup>910</sup> Plumwood, ‘Ecofeminism’, pp. 131 – 132.

Plumwood's analysis therefore indicates both the reasoning behind typical identifications of women as being aligned with nature, but also the value ascribed to apparent higher orders. Shepherd's *The Living Mountain* can be seen to serve a dual purpose: firstly to challenge traditional dualisms, and secondly to redefine woman's relationship to natural spaces. Plumwood considers that the continued attempts to 'tame' nature will lead to 'the annihilation of the natural world', the deepened oppression of women, and the weakening of the 'foundations of life itself.'<sup>911</sup> Therefore, Shepherd can be considered as an ecofeminist walker who is as concerned with the protection of the natural world as she is with her own position within it.

Plumwood offers a parallel between the 'angel in the house' trope and 'the angel in the ecosystem'.<sup>912</sup> The stereotypical angel in the house – a woman of passivity, piousness, purity, and dedication to her home, husband, and family – is compared to a (Western) woman who is stereotypically aligned with nature, as per the previously discussed dualisms. Her priority is the ecosystem, and she too is passive, pure, and pious in her dedication to nature. Plumwood's judgement is that both angels are myths, and are both 'of dubious value for women'.<sup>913</sup> As both mythical women present apparent ideals, there is one idealised conceptualisation of womanhood presented. This demonstrates the way in which the angel in the ecosystem 'is a simplistic version of the affirmation of feminine qualities, both individual and cultural' which contribute to the domination of women.<sup>914</sup> The environment, similarly, is considered a blank space upon which 'the "foreground" achievements of reason or culture (provided typically by the white, western, male expert or entrepreneur) take place' as the environment is seen as *terra nullius*: 'a resource empty of its own purposes or meanings, and

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<sup>911</sup> Plumwood, 'Ecofeminism', p. 129.

<sup>912</sup> Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 9.

<sup>913</sup> Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p. 9.

<sup>914</sup> Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p. 10.

hence available' to be used for the purposes of those aligned with reason and culture.<sup>915</sup>

Kathleen Jamie's 'A Lone Enraptured Male' also articulates this issue. She writes that 'when a bright, healthy and highly educated young man jumps on the sleeper train [towards Scotland] with the declared intention of "seeking wild places", my first reaction is to groan. [...] What's that coming over the hill? A white, middle-class Englishman! A Lone Enraptured Male! From Cambridge!'<sup>916</sup> Jamie's essay explicitly critiques Robert MacFarlane's language in his nature writing which, she claims, 'begins to feel like an appropriation, as if the land has been taken from us and offered back, in a different language and tone' as there is an 'avoidance of voices other than the author's.'<sup>917</sup> Shepherd writes against this depiction of the environment, providing instead a rich portrait of the Cairngorms as alive and with purposes that extend beyond the potential for *human* benefit.

There are obvious lingering tensions in considering rural spaces as equally central to modernity as urban spaces. Jeffrey Mathes McCarthy suggests that to do so would be 'to cut against the grain of a century of scholarship.'<sup>918</sup> This thesis has challenged these tensions throughout, and contributes to the growing interest in centralising the importance of rural and semi-rural spaces in 'modernist novels that imagine an alternative national identity.'<sup>919</sup> Critics such as Monika Szuba and Julian Wolfreys have also demonstrated that Scottish modernist writers' depictions of space and nature represents an integration of modernity rather than a rejection of it.<sup>920</sup> Laura Severin considers Scottish writers' 'connection between nature and

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<sup>915</sup> Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p. 4.

<sup>916</sup> Kathleen Jamie, 'A Lone Enraptured Male' in *The London Review of Books*, 30.5 (2008), 25 – 27.

<sup>917</sup> Jamie, 'A Lone Enraptured Male'.

<sup>918</sup> Jeffrey Mathes McCarthy, *Green Modernism: Nature and the English Novel, 1900 – 1930* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 2.

<sup>919</sup> McCarthy, *Green Modernism*, p. 7.

<sup>920</sup> *Poetics of Space and Place in Scottish Literature*, eds Monika Szuba and Julian Wolfreys, *The* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

humanity' by means of creating 'place-sensitive art'.<sup>921</sup> The effect of this is the breaking down of pre-established gendered cultural boundaries. Place-sensitive art allows eco-poets to redefine spaces and redefine how they are viewed *within* this space. Indeed, Severin considers that the central priority of eco-poetry is to allow individuals to map spaces in a way which aligns with their own experiences. Similarly to Shepherd's walks which allow her to meditatively engage with the Cairngorms and to ponder the effect of nature on self and vice versa, literary mapping brings readers 'to the site so that [they] can view the river and take [their] place beside it [as it] is there that the poem really lives and fulfils its function of calling into question the boundaries between the natural and the human.'<sup>922</sup> Severin does not discuss the role played by earlier Scottish writers such as Nan Shepherd in producing place-sensitive, meditative and ecologically-engaged art, and as such this thesis contributes further to such important research. Shepherd's unique style of mapping her landscape is based on individual navigation and an independent experience with the surrounding nature, as opposed to relying on a regulatory framework of expected routes, experiences, or landmarks. Indeed, Carter notes Shepherd's 'particularity of place' which is conveyed through Shepherd's 'use of history'.<sup>923</sup> Carter acknowledges that Shepherd's use of history varies between 'conventional local, national and international history, anecdote ("an old man has told me"), archive [and] geological science.'<sup>924</sup> However, there is more to be said about Shepherd's use of personal history, which I would differentiate from the anecdotal history Carter mentions. Shepherd is layering her own experiences atop other histories and it is this which aligns her with the place-sensitive art of Severin's definition. Shepherd's discarding of Neil Gunn's

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<sup>921</sup> Laura Severin, 'A Scottish Eco-poetics: Feminism and Environmentalism in the Works of Kathleen Jamie and Valerie Gillies' in *Feminist Formation*, 23.2 (2011), 98 – 110 (p. 98).

<sup>922</sup> Severin, 'A Scottish Eco-poetics', p. 107.

<sup>923</sup> Carter, 'Domestic Geography', p. 33.

<sup>924</sup> Carter, 'Domestic Geography', p. 33.



suggestion that finding a publisher for *The Living Mountain* may prove difficult without the inclusion of photographs and maps within the text emphasises her determination to produce place-sensitive art that does not cater to a patriarchal expectation of ‘nature’ writing.

Edward Howell argues that British modernism and ecology articulate shared concerns ‘with the vitality of the earth, the shaping force of climate, and the need for new ways of understanding the natural world.’<sup>925</sup> By focusing on authors such as H.D. Wells and Woolf amongst others, Howell argues for a greater inclusion of literary modernism in ecological studies and discussions. Howell also introduces his own term, by way of attempting to bridge too broad a gap between critical analyses of ecology and literary modernism: the Modernist Anthropocene. The term represents the way in which ecological modernism is ‘caught between making sense of rapid change in its recent past and foreseeing its near future.’<sup>926</sup> Shepherd’s writing fits well with this definition; both her fiction and *The Living Mountain* demonstrate the result of living in this period of liminality, and much of her work grapples with whether to embrace these changes or reject further damage to surrounding environmental spaces.

There are likewise strong connections between modernism and ecofeminist thought. Bonnie Kime Scott analyses Woolf’s works through the lens of ecofeminism, for instance. To establish the relationship between the contemporary ecofeminism with early twentieth-century Modernity, Kime Scott notes that the term “ecology” by 1866 ‘in the work of German biologist Ernst Haeckel [...] is roughly contemporary with the largely compatible evolutionary work of Charles Darwin, and was an evolving science in the modernist era.’<sup>927</sup>

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<sup>925</sup> Edward H. Howell, ‘Modernism, Ecology and the Anthropocene’ (Unpublished Doctoral thesis: Temple University, 2017), p. iii.

<sup>926</sup> Howell, ‘Modernism, Ecology and the Anthropocene’, p. 256.

<sup>927</sup> Bonnie Kime Scott, ‘Virginia Woolf and Critical Uses of Ecofeminism’ in *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, 81 (2012), 8 – 10 (p. 8).

By centralising ecological science in modernist thought, it becomes easier to establish ecology's branches into literature and ways in which urban and rural writers may each depict their contemporary ecological debates. Paul Saunders' doctoral likewise thesis argues that studies of modernist literature and ecological studies should be more firmly united as – with exception to central figures such as Lawrence and Woolf – ecocritics largely undervalue the contributions of modernists to the discussion of nature and the environment. Saunders posits that, at its heart, modernist ecological culture 'demanded an all-encompassing Reimagination of the relationship between humanity and nature', moving away from 'objective' nature to 'nature-being'.<sup>928</sup>

Shepherd consistently illuminates the relationship between the self and the natural world, prioritising a symbiotic relationship which benefits both and reduces harm. Her approach aligns with Maria Mies' and Vandana Shiva's stance that an ecofeminist perspective recognises that 'life in nature (which includes human beings) is maintained by means of co-operation.'<sup>929</sup> To consider Shepherd as an ecofeminist – rather than, or as well as, a nature writer – I use Janis Birkeland's value system with nine basic precepts 'to which most ecofeminists would subscribe.'<sup>930</sup> The precepts are as follows: a 'fundamental social transformation'; an acknowledgement that 'everything in nature has intrinsic value'; the rejection of anthropocentric views for a biocentric view that comprehends the 'interconnectedness of all life processes'; a belief that humans should work 'with the land'; a belief that humans should move toward 'an ethic based on mutual respect'; the integration of 'false dualisms' into a perception of reality; a necessary stance that 'process is as important

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<sup>928</sup> Paul Richard Saunders, 'Modernist Ecology: Literary Modernism and the Reimagination of Nature' (Unpublished Doctoral thesis: Queen's University, 2011), p. iii.

<sup>929</sup> Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminism* (London: Zed Books Lts, 2014), p. 6.

<sup>930</sup> Janis Birkeland, 'Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practice' in *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature* ed. by Greta Gaard (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), pp. 13 – 59 (p. 19).

as goals'; the rebalance of the masculine and feminine; and the withdrawal of power and energy from the patriarchy.<sup>931</sup> Shepherd's writing, specifically *The Living Mountain*, subscribes to each of these precepts. Shepherd acknowledges the social transformations of modernity, whilst encouraging a re-formation of the relationship between society and nature. She considers the impact of humans on the earth, but indicates that humans are only one part of the interconnectedness of all life forms; in *The Living Mountain*, 'Man' is a chapter alongside others such as 'The Plateau', 'Water', and 'Mist', and the final chapter – 'Being' – cements the symbiosis between all of them. As Walton identifies – and as has been a central argument of these two chapters on Shepherd's writing – Shepherd 'explores ethical positions, chains of harm and mutual responsibility.'<sup>932</sup> She critiques the intrusion of structures or machines that detract from the necessary lifecycles of the land, but she suggests that human and nonhuman nature can coexist.<sup>933</sup> Shepherd's values reflect a process of bridging disparate worlds, rather than a goal of eradicating the dangerous aspects of modernity. Finally, Shepherd's writing withdraws power from patriarchal traditions in nature and in literature by emphasising women's experiences of the rural and semi-rural space and accentuating the power of the female gaze within nature.

'Twould be the end of us, my lass':<sup>934</sup> Influences of Modernity in the Writing of Nan Shepherd

Rural modernist literature depicts the immediate and lasting effects of the aftershocks of modernity. Whilst urban areas (predominantly major cities such as London and Paris) can be understood to be the epicentre of the modernity, impactful shockwaves undeniably reach and alter the rural. Likewise, rural spaces have their own epicentres. As such, rural modernism –

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<sup>931</sup> Birkeland, 'Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practice', pp. 19 – 20.

<sup>932</sup> Walton, *Nan Shepherd and Environmental Thought*, p. 84.

<sup>933</sup> Nan Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1933), p. 26.

<sup>934</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 23.

and rural modernist literature – exists as both a part of and apart *from* modernism. Although they do not use the terms ‘rural modernism’ or ‘rural modernist literature’, Bluemel and McCluskey’s collection similarly rejects the stereotypical assumption of rural places and people being passive recipients of modernity, and instead positions the rural as engaging with consequences of modernity as well as having an ‘active role in the formation and development of British experiences and representations of modernity.’<sup>935</sup> Indeed, I argue that rural modernism should be understood as place-sensitive rather than passive. By explicitly engaging with site-specific consequences of modernity and local knowledge – be that geographical, historical, or interpersonal – rural modernist literature redefines what is understood of these areas, and of the relationship between author and place. In considering rural modernity, Bluemel and McCluskey cite a number of formative influences of modernity on rural areas, primarily: the presence and growth of economic depression, the expansion of transportation and communication networks, the roll out of electricity, the loss of land, and the erosion of both national and local identities.<sup>936</sup> These – and indeed other – influences of modernity can be seen to impact both the central writers of this thesis as well as the characters they are writing of.

Martha Ironside in *The Quarry Wood* and Dorabel Cassidy and Jenny Kilgour in *A Pass in the Grampians* can each be read as representatives of their communities, given (or taking) the opportunity to gain success as a direct result of their natural aptitudes. The central conflict within *The Quarry Wood* concerns Martha’s constant moral dilemma over whether to leave her home of Crannochie to escape into a ‘magic world where people knew things’,<sup>937</sup> or

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<sup>935</sup> Bluemel and McCluskey, *Rural Modernity in Britain*.

<sup>936</sup> Bluemel and McCluskey, *Rural Modernity in Britain*.

<sup>937</sup> Nan Shepherd, *The Quarry Wood*, in *The Grampian Quartet* (Edinburgh: Canongate Classics, 1996), p. 4.

to remain where she had been raised as ‘man does not learn from books alone.’<sup>938</sup> However, this markedly nuanced view of education takes Martha longer to reach, with knowledge and opportunity initially a stark contrast from the stale life in the family cottage. Christianson suggests that Martha’s educational voyage, which she embarks on despite the hesitations, is evidence of the ‘pragmatic capacity of women to get on with the exploration of the reality of “discovering what life held.”’ While I agree that Martha’s capacity to explore is evident there is also, contradictorily, desperation alongside the pragmatism in Martha’s approach.<sup>939</sup> When Martha first leaves home for King’s College in Aberdeen, ‘she snatched because she lived in fever. Greedy, convulsive, in a jealous agony, she raced for knowledge, panting. Supposing, in the three years of her course at King’s, she [could not] gather all the knowledge that there was.’<sup>940</sup> For Martha at this stage, it is only possible to gather knowledge of any worth in university or away from rurality. The rushed action of snatching knowledge also implies the threat of its sudden disappearance, and that perhaps the knowledge is not Martha’s to take. Certainly, the action of taking knowledge is directly contrasted to the gentle action of the cottage ‘[receiving] her back’ every evening after her studies, as though in wait for her inevitable return.<sup>941</sup>

Watson queries whether Martha’s return home is ‘a return to woman’s traditional place’ and is therefore a ‘defeat’, but he insists that ‘Martha had certainly had the opportunity to do otherwise, and [her] choice has been made freely and consciously.’<sup>942</sup> As such, this is

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<sup>938</sup> Shepherd, *The Quarry Wood*, p. 1.

<sup>939</sup> Aileen Christianson, ‘Gender and nation: debatable lands and passable boundaries’, in *Across the Margins: Cultural Identity and Change in the Atlantic Archipelago*, eds Glenda Norquay and Gerry Smyth (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 67 – 82 (p. 76).

<sup>940</sup> Shepherd, *The Quarry Wood*, p. 50.

<sup>941</sup> Shepherd, *The Quarry Wood*, p. 56.

<sup>942</sup> Roderick Watson, “‘To know Being’”: Substance and Spirit in the Work of Nan Shepherd’ in *A History of Scottish Women’s Writing*, ed. by Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), pp. 416 – 427 (p. 420).

one thing that separates Martha from a traditional lad o' pairts narrative; Martha's conscious choice to remain home is not due to a life-altering and sudden tragedy or an inability to continue snatching at knowledge elsewhere, but due to her excitement to transfer her love of learning to the rural. Shepherd highlights shared human experiences, and rejects the idea that knowledge and the broadening of one's individual universe should – or can – only occur away from the rural setting; Martha experiences sudden joy at the realisation that she could 'follow a plough',<sup>943</sup> she acknowledges that she will learn to 'thraw [the] neck' of chickens,<sup>944</sup> adapts to life as a parental figure, and finds that this makes her happier than sailing 'beyond the Pillars of Hercules' at Aberdeen University.<sup>945</sup>

For Shepherd, this bridging of the rural and the urban by influences of modernity is a consistent feature of her writing. Jenny Pyke argues that *The Quarry Wood* 'appears to be a study of opposition – spirit and body, order and chaos, intellectualism and wisdom, thinking and feeling, stones and stars, gossip and Annunciation – [... but] refuses to reconcile or even synthesize these oppositions.'<sup>946</sup> Pyke reasons that it is the 'spaces between the oppositions' that *The Quarry Wood* values.<sup>947</sup> The 'spaces between', in Pyke's words, mirror this chapter's emphasis on Shepherd's bridging between the disparities. Similarly, in *The Living Mountain* Shepherd writes that 'there is no end to the lovely things that frost and the running of water can create between them.'<sup>948</sup> With the stereotypical reading of Scottish rural space as static and frozen, Shepherd's 'frost' versus the 'running of water' can be read as a metaphorical

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<sup>943</sup> Shepherd, *The Quarry Wood*, p. 208.

<sup>944</sup> Shepherd, *The Quarry Wood*, p. 208.

<sup>945</sup> Shepherd, *The Quarry Wood*, p. 210.

<sup>946</sup> Jenny Pyke, 'To the South England, to the West Eternity: Mapping Boundlessness in Modern Scottish Fiction' in *Literary Cartographies: Spatiality, Representation, and Narrative*, ed. by Robert T. Tally Jr (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 127 – 144 (p. 131).

<sup>947</sup> Pyke, 'To the South England, to the West Eternity', p. 131.

<sup>948</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 32.

depiction of tradition versus modernity, with her push to unity and to bridge these forces. Likewise, the constant foundation of tradition – often farming tradition – and the recognisable structures of close family and community life is consistently juxtaposed against the rapid changes of urbanisation and Shepherd calls for unity between these spaces. Similarly, Bluemel and McCluskey consider a range of ‘[q]uiet and inconspicuous activities [...] in the context of dramatic changes in material and social conditions throughout Britain in order to examine the histories of relations between rural and urban places...’<sup>949</sup> In Shepherd’s *A Pass in the Grampians* the transformation of a rural farming town is demonstrated through two central female figures navigating the sanctity of rural tradition and the allure of urbanisation and change – all amongst a backdrop of road-building, deforestation, and agricultural technological changes. By depicting these paralleled stories simultaneously Shepherd implies that there is an inherent bond between urban and rural in terms of the social and industrial transformation of landscapes.

The transformative power of modernity on the landscape is a core concern of Shepherd’s writing, and the direct impact of various influences of modernity on the rural landscape itself in *A Pass in the Grampians* is emphasised throughout. The opening chapter of the novel focuses on Alison Durno and James Durno<sup>950</sup> – whom Shepherd notes live ‘on the edge of a moorland’ and thus are instantly suggested to be existing within a periphery – siblings whom Shepherd establishes as being innately connected to the landscape as rural inhabitants.<sup>951</sup> Shepherd writes that they are ‘both crooked, from a lifetime of labour and exposure [...and] the faces of both were seamed, their lean fingers hard and brown like heather roots [...hers like] the tough hardness of heather wood [and his] like a dirty

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<sup>949</sup> Bluemel and McCluskey, *Rural Modernity in Britain*, p. 1.

<sup>950</sup> From here onwards, James Durno will be referred to as ‘Durno’, and Alison Durno as ‘Alison’, as in Shepherd’s novel.

<sup>951</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 1.

fungus.<sup>952</sup> Both Watson and Pyke have commented on the association of Shepherd's characters with the earth. Pyke considers *The Quarry Wood's* Geordie, for instance, who 'is the weather, he is dirt, [...] he is associated with [the] sky in solid comfort.'<sup>953</sup> Pyke is considering the opposition between written knowledge and elemental knowledge and the ability for Martha to – metaphorically – ground herself by staying close to Geordie. However, Shepherd's comparison of the Durno siblings in *A Pass in the Grampians* implies that a connection with the earth also results in a deepened susceptibility to natural dangers; the transformation of their bodies as a direct result of exposure, the hardening of their skin, the rootedness of themselves to the earth, and the implication of fungal decay. In line with this thesis' central argument – that the rural is inextricably linked to effects of modernity – the immediacy with which Shepherd assures this connection between the Durno siblings and the land can thus indicate that they are susceptible to the same modern influences and will therefore be affected in kind.

Shepherd also extends this connection to include other residents of the town. Indeed, when Kilgour reflects on the planned construction of houses he is equally dismayed by the disruption to the landscape and the removal of the woods as he is about the removal of a traditional way of living. When Kilgour 'looked at the woods that were to be cut [...] it seemed to him that he was looking at the end of an order that he loved', and Shepherd therefore presents each consequence as having equal value.<sup>954</sup> Similarly, Shepherd introduces the concept of 'the modern barbarian' in *A Pass in the Grampians*, referring to those who have 'no sense of the past nor regard for the future [with] no responsibility towards either'.<sup>955</sup> As with Kilgour's reflection that he is looking at the end of an order, Shepherd's modern

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<sup>952</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 2.

<sup>953</sup> Jenny Pyke, 'To the South England, to the West Eternity', p. 138.

<sup>954</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 26.

<sup>955</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 52.



barbarian by '[slapping a] shoddy house down [is] destroying the continuity of a tradition, spoiling the heritage for those that come after.'<sup>956</sup> Again, both the destruction of the landscape by the replacing of woodland for shoddy housing, and the destruction of tradition are viewed of as equally damaging. Julia Ditter identifies Shepherd's tendency to 'focus on the ability of humans to shape the earth and their own futures, even if this may come with unintended consequences when considered from a planetary perspective.'<sup>957</sup> For Shepherd's modern barbarian, for example, there is not an attack of change in general which allows communities to shape the earth and their community, but of change that offers no future benefit or has disastrous consequences. In this sense, it could be argued that influences of modernity are viewed negatively by Shepherd when they simultaneously disrupt tradition and omit future wellbeing.

Just as Shepherd mirrors the Durno siblings to the landscape wherein the natural elements weather human and mountain faces, Shepherd also utilises this mirroring to introduce pivotal moments of change and to demonstrate rural characters' awareness of the new and its implications. Alison's 'impassive', 'controlled and sweet' face and countenance reflect the moorland itself.<sup>958</sup> Shepherd writes that Alison's face mirrors 'too earnestly the wide emptiness of moor and the terrible mountains, expecting an event that did not come'.<sup>959</sup> Shortly before this reflection that the unnamed event 'did not come', Durno has revealed to Alison that Bella Cassie (also known as Dorabel Cassidy) has returned to the town; a return which is to alter community relationships beyond recognition. Therefore, whilst again interconnecting rural inhabitants with their landscape, Shepherd is also introducing the threat

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<sup>956</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 52.

<sup>957</sup> Julia Ditter, "'Ghosts of the Future": Elegiac Temporalities and Planetary Futures in Nancy Brysson Morrison's *The Gowk Storm*' in *Scottish Literary Review*, 14.1 (2022), 171 – 190 (p. 181).

<sup>958</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 3.

<sup>959</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, pp. 3 – 4.

of instability and a sense of hinging between the consistency of moor and mountain, and the potential for sudden change. I noted earlier that often with rural modernity, influences of modernity are reflected as aftershocks from the epicentre, yet Shepherd opens *A Pass in the Grampians* with a pivotal moment of change and allows for the longer-term effects of rural modernity (such as technological advancements, deforestation and agricultural transformation, and societal movements) to be directly juxtaposed with a sudden shock of newness. Likewise, therefore, Shepherd establishes this rural locale *as* an epicentre in its own right; it is both susceptible to aftershocks from urbanised sites of modernity, but is also a place wherein pivotal moments of change happen, thereby producing its own ripple effects. With this in mind it can be seen that Shepherd ensures that the characters are shown to have an awareness of the new. That is to say that they are not simply passive, and changes do not happen *to* them, but rather that impacts of modernity occur *with* them. For example:

Kilgour was dimly aware that such a period of growth was in being around him; that men were advancing from knowledge to knowledge at an incalculable pace, and that the relation between man and the great elemental background of his existence was changed.<sup>960</sup>

Crucially, Kilgour's 'dimly aware' considerations of the ongoing changes are not seen as wholly negative – there is a focus on knowledge advancements, for example. However, there is a sense that there is a distinction between the speed of changes, and the speed that these changes are able to be implemented into a new mode of existence. Nonetheless, Shepherd does not suggest that Kilgour or other residents are left behind whilst urban areas progress. Instead, Kilgour is presented as being at the centre of changes just as, according to Bell, Shepherd's writing moves her into 'the centre of things' despite writing from a geographical

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<sup>960</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 26.

– and, arguably, literary – periphery.<sup>961</sup> Again, this highlights the unique workings of rural modernity. Rural locations are shown to be recipients of the aftershocks of urbanised modernity, that is to say from the traditional core sites of modernisation; Andrew Thacker cites London, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna as four central European cities, but other cities such as New York, Prague, and Edinburgh could also be considered. However, they simultaneously host their own epicentres causing their own internalised aftershocks.<sup>962</sup>

Similarly, the argument of this thesis that rural modernity can be understood as the traditional suddenly and shockingly juxtaposed with the new is again evident. In *The Living Mountain* Shepherd foregrounds these juxtapositions and appeals for balance. For example, she contrasts the way humanity’s presence is evident through various markers and recordings throughout the Cairngorms but is also ‘disturbingly evident in these latter days in the wrecked aeroplanes that lie scattered over the mountains.’<sup>963</sup> These references to aeroplanes align with Simon Goulding’s assessment that the interwar period saw rural landscapes completely transformed by the development and presence of airfields and aeroplanes.<sup>964</sup> Goulding notes that aviation altered both ‘the spatial relationship between the established rural community and [sites of airfields]’ and the ‘aural landscape’.<sup>965</sup> Shepherd is similarly ‘disturbed’ by the spatial intrusion of the wrecked aeroplanes. Furthermore, she considers man’s manipulation of the animal environment, writing:

Man’s touch is on the beast creation too. He has driven the snow bunting from its nesting-sites, banished the caper-cailzie and re-introduced it from abroad.

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<sup>961</sup> Bell, ‘Into the Centre of Things: Poetic Travel Narratives in the Work of Kathleen Jamie and Nan Shepherd’, p. 4.

<sup>962</sup> Andrew Thacker, *Modernism, Space, and the City* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019).

<sup>963</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 77.

<sup>964</sup> Simon W. Goulding, ‘“Watch the Skies!”: Guernica, Dresden and the Age of the Bomber in George Orwell and Rex Warner’ in *Aviation in the Literature and Culture of Interwar Britain*, eds Michael McCluskey and Luke Seaber (Boston: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), pp. 319 – 338 (p. 327).

<sup>965</sup> Goulding, ‘Watch the Skies!’, p. 328.

He has protected the grouse and all but destroyed the peregrine. He tends the red deer and exterminates the wild cat. He maintains, in fact, the economy of the red deer's life, and the red deer is at the heart of a human economy that covers this mountain mass and its surrounding glens. There are signs that this economy is cracking, and though the economy of the shooting estate is one for which I have little sympathy, I am aware that a turn of the wrist does not end it. The deer himself might perish from our mountains if man ceased to kill him; or degenerate if left to his wild; and on the crofts and small hill-farms wrested from the heather and kept productive by unremitting labour, the margin between a living and a sub-living may be decided by the extra wage of ghillie or under-keeper. Without that wage, or its equivalent in some other guise, the hill croft might well revert to heather.<sup>966</sup>

Shepherd here suggests that for the rural landscape to thrive economically, manufactured balance is required. Her language invites a comparison to Lefebvre's in *The Urban Revolution*. Lefebvre considers the altering economies of societies which ultimately leads to 'complete urbanization.'<sup>967</sup> The impact on rural areas (the 'countryside' in Lefebvre's text) is a 'loss of agricultural production [...which is] absorbed or obliterated by larger units.'<sup>968</sup> Just as Lefebvre refers to the '[bursting] apart' of economical forms, Shepherd is likewise acknowledging the ruptures of the agricultural economy, whereby crofting, shooting, and the 'unremitting labour' of the glens is under threat.<sup>969</sup> When Shepherd suggests that without the necessary economy of the mountains it may as well 'revert to heather', her stance mirrors Lefebvre's assessment that the only areas completely untouched by urbanization 'are those

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<sup>966</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 80.

<sup>967</sup> Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, p. 1.

<sup>968</sup> Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, p. 2.

<sup>969</sup> Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, p. 2.

that are stagnant and dying, those that are given over to “nature”.<sup>970</sup> Shepherd and Lefebvre both suggest that for the health and livelihood of the rural society relies, at least in some part, on a connection with urbanization and economical labour. Without at least some human interaction, the landscape stagnates.

Walton assesses this same passage and argues that although ‘there’s a slippery quality to [Shepherd’s] reasoning’ wherein she veers between different views, Shepherd ultimately displays a ‘cautious synthesis’ and a ‘meaningful, perhaps even vital, stance.’<sup>971</sup> Walton’s view of Shepherd aligns with the argument in this chapter therefore; Shepherd seeks a balance between the environment and humanity, so that neither is subjected to undue suffering. In this passage, for instance, certain species must be restricted, whilst others must be protected, in order to prevent rural people and landscapes from further suffering. Walton ascribes Shepherd’s synthesis, in part, to the sociological and geographical evidence of the Highland Clearances, and the transformation of the Highlands into a ‘run-for-profit’ landscape.<sup>972</sup> The economic disruption to rural societies ‘increased the urgency of making money from the land even in ways that, to lesser or greater extent, were known to be environmentally damaging.’<sup>973</sup> As such, Shepherd’s approach acknowledges the necessity for careful and mutually beneficial human interaction with the land. This appeal to balance is central in Shepherd’s fiction too, and evidence of technological advancements – and urban influences – is paired with the rural communities who are subject to them.

### Changing Gears: Urbanisation and Transportation

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<sup>970</sup> Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, p. 4.

<sup>971</sup> Walton, *The Living World: Nan Shepherd and Environmental Thought*, pp. 89 – 90.

<sup>972</sup> Walton, *The Living World: Nan Shepherd and Environmental Thought*, pp. 86 – 90.

<sup>973</sup> Walton, *The Living World: Nan Shepherd and Environmental Thought*, p. 90.

Shepherd acknowledges the impact of technological advancements and developments within the arts, but also reinforces the centrality of rural people to these developments. In an amusing aside for example, Mary in *A Pass in the Grampians* – who holds a city-based job as an editor and typist – receives a manuscript and notes that she ‘couldn’t make head nor tail of what it meant [as] the words were all in the wrong places [b]ut the author thanked [her] for the beautiful typing so [he must have] meant them like that’.<sup>974</sup> What is initially obvious is the way in which Shepherd explicitly and light-heartedly makes reference to traditional forms of modernist literature, and the meandering nature of stream-of-consciousness prose and experimentalism. However, beyond Shepherd’s display of understanding of modernist aesthetics, what is also key is Shepherd’s highlighting of Mary’s – and indeed her own – interesting position within modernist literary networks. Despite her lifelong residency in Aberdeen, Shepherd was by no means outwith the major literary networks. Her close friendships with fellow Scottish novelists Neil Gunn and Jessie Kesson both spanned several decades and included consistent feedback and commentary on one another’s works. Shepherd also held close ties with other major modernist women writers in Scotland, and Charlotte Peacock is insistent that the Renaissance/Modernism movements were ‘not just background noise [...and like] Lorna Moon, Willa Muir, Catherine Carswell and Naomi Mitchison she was very much part of the movement which began in the inter-war years.’<sup>975</sup> Whilst Shepherd did not necessarily share each of the core aims of the Renaissance leaders, there is clear evidence of her interest in these new literary styles and her willingness to engage with them light-heartedly.

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<sup>974</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 30.

<sup>975</sup> Charlotte Peacock, *Into the Mountain: A Life of Nan Shepherd* (Cambridge: Galileo Publishers, 2017) p. 177.

Transportation is a further facet of modernity which Shepherd often returns to. As with much of her outlook on modernity, Shepherd – like Muir – approaches modern transportation in a balanced way. In Muir’s fiction, there is a frequent deliberation between the broadening exploratory prospects offered by trains and cars, such as with Elise’s Europeanism and the comparison between train journeys and rebirth in *Imagined Corners*, but also their greater propensity for danger as with Johnny Ritchie’s suicide, or the mass travel towards sites of warfare in *Mrs. Ritchie*. For Shepherd, there is on the one hand the suggestion that modern cars are directly at odds with nature, as Kilgour states that ‘there’s been sheep on this blamed hill since long afore you or your bit cars were heard o’ [...] and sheep have the first pick’ of the road, and Shepherd therefore introduces a dichotomy between the two and a sense of competition.<sup>976</sup> Yet, on the other hand ‘farmers had motor-cars nowadays, Kilgour reflected. He had seen a man sit in his car and herd home the cattle he had bought at the Mart.’<sup>977</sup> Shepherd complicates the perhaps expected clash between the rural and modernity, utilising the lifestyles of farmers to present a more nuanced relationship between rural landscapes and urbanisation. After initially suggesting that sheep and cars must compete for space, Shepherd then instead presents the potential for harmony between farmland and modern developments, and again subtly bridges the space between technological modernity and rural landscapes. Rather than suggesting that modern transportation is sure to eliminate farmland or the necessity for farming traditions, Shepherd instead implies that the two are capable of coexisting. Again, this links back to the earlier note that – for Shepherd – the so-called modern ‘barbarian’ is not the person who introduces modern features to traditional ways of life, but is the person who does so without respect for

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<sup>976</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p.2.

<sup>977</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 24.

the past and for the future. In this sense, the farmer's motorcar is a symbol of the successful integration of modernity and a further statement against thoughtlessness.

Once again when considering the coexistence of rural and urban spaces, Shepherd utilises the imagery of cars to signify the bridging together of these spaces. When, for example, Dorabel takes Jenny Kilgour on her first car ride through the Grampians following an evening of dinner and drinks and initially 'Jenny laughed at the thought of the car [as] for her, who walked, or cycled, the roads, at any hour and in any weather! As well send an aeroplane for the wild geese as a car for Jenny.'<sup>978</sup> At this point, Jenny considers the car as a symbol of a life which she does not or cannot yet inhabit. Despite an earlier conversation wherein Dorabel had urged Jenny to move to London with her and Dorabel's companion Barney, the effect of urbanised paraphernalia within Jenny's rural setting remains startling. Jenny's current life in Aberdeenshire is separate from a future in London which 'she couldn't remember what she would do, but she knew she was to be there.'<sup>979</sup> Indeed, the blending of past (couldn't remember) and future tenses (she would do) implies an intermingling of these two spaces. Further, the journey itself is reflective again of intertwined modernity and tradition. The 'throb of the engine' and the car's haste is contrasted with hedgehogs 'galloping clumsily' in the road, and the earthy, solid structures of parapets, hills, and water is seen for the first time at speed. Shepherd writes:

She heard the roar of the water far below. Her breath choked her as the car rocked between the parapets. Now switchback over the hump and away, up the long slope like a bird. Their movement was the one reality. The black shapes of hills, the rutted

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<sup>978</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 60.

<sup>979</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 60.



road, changing subtly under their lights, the unfathomable sky, were no more than the framework that held this exhilaration, gave it position in time and space.<sup>980</sup>

What is clear here is the way in which Shepherd again emphasises the compatibility of modernity and the rural landscape. Walton, in considering Shepherd's relationship with modernism, notes that modernism 'rejects the fantasy of the detached human observer and the stable subject of observation. Places become continuous and transitional with the human [and] such depictions urge consideration of the materiality of the body and the environment that holds it.'<sup>981</sup> Although Walton is not explicitly discussing this passage from *A Pass in the Grampians*, the actively unstable mode of observation of the fast-moving car and the melding together of the changing landscape and Jenny's inner experience mirrors Walton's statement. Indeed, Jenny's surroundings change 'subtly under [the car] lights', as new details and new ways of observing are uncovered.<sup>982</sup> Furthermore, Shepherd suggests that it is only the grandeur and consistency of the hills and the 'unfathomable sky' that give the exhilaration of modern travel its power. Just as Walton notes that the environment 'holds' the body, in this passage it is the landscape that cradles the new, rather than the new lending meaning to the landscape. The car itself moves 'like a bird'.<sup>983</sup> Shepherd's note that this particular moment is held in 'time and space' further emphasises the inevitability of change; by measuring this particular marker of newness (the car and the speed of travel) against the constancy of the hills, Shepherd asserts that the elemental is able to embrace urbanisation and modernity. Whilst the elemental is only subtly changed by modernity, aspects of modernity can only be viewed as such by the elemental. Similarly, in *The Living Mountain* Shepherd makes a light-

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<sup>980</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 62.

<sup>981</sup> Walton, *The Living World: Nan Shepherd and Environmental Thought*, p. 172.

<sup>982</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 62.

<sup>983</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 62.

hearted reference to the potential confusion wrought by the intermingling of technological advancements and the natural. She writes:

It was this strong undeviating flight on steady wings that made a member of the Observer Corps [...] cry out in excitement, 'Here's a plane I can't identify! What's this one, do you think?' McGregor looked and said, without a glimmer, 'That's the one they call the Golden Eagle.' 'Didn't know there was such a one,' said the other; and he could hardly be convinced that he was looking at a bird and not a plane. And just this morning, in my own garden on Lower Deeside, fifty miles from the eagle country, I caught sight of three planes very high against white clouds, wheeling in circle round one another, and my first amazed reaction was 'Eagles!'<sup>984</sup>

The mistaking of eagles for planes and vice versa demonstrates again the linking between the natural and the technological. The excitement of the Observer and of Shepherd in their respective positions gives no suggestion that aircraft may be intruding or damaging the natural landscapes. Furthermore, I note that Shepherd's particular identification of planes is a realisation only made possible by her knowledge of the natural. In both cases it is again the grandeur of the natural landscape which allows for a new way of seeing and understanding urbanisation and modernity. Just as the Golden Eagle and unidentified planes can represent a unity between aviation and birdwatching, the car journey acts as a vehicle for Jenny's own embracing of new possibilities ('til now she had been utterly satisfied with what was', but now 'Jenny couldn't understand it, couldn't understand it at all, [s]he had never felt like this before') and further emphasises the intertwined relationship between urban and rural modernities.<sup>985</sup>

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<sup>984</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 62.

<sup>985</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 68.

Moreover, in *A Pass in the Grampians* a scene earlier in the novel utilises cars once again as a bridging metaphor between urban and rural. A quiet scene is interrupted when ‘with a snort from the horn a car ran into the yard [...] a car the colour of mustard. With scarlet spokes [...] It was like an advertisement hoarding in the dim summery pleasantness of the yard.’<sup>986</sup> Shepherd explicitly conveys the lurid and multi-coloured car as an advertisement, the car’s horn announcing the arrival of the glamorous urbane into the comparatively ‘dim’ yet pleasant garden – a description which is itself patronising. That the car is said to snort rather than, for example, honk may also suggest a sense of mockery; the visiting urbanite scoffing at the dim pleasantness of the rural inhabitants. The scene is also reminiscent of Virginia Woolf’s airborne toffee advertisement in *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925):

The sound of an aeroplane bored ominously into the ears of the crowd. There it was coming over the trees, letting out white smoke from behind, which curled and twisted, actually writing something! making letters in the sky! Everyone looked up.<sup>987</sup>

In both instances there is a direct link between modern transportation and materialism, alongside the sudden sensory intrusions of the advertisements. Both announce themselves abruptly with a snort of a horn or the boring of aeroplane engines respectively, and both hold a clear visual contrast against natural surroundings. Indeed, it is pertinent that Woolf selects the imagery of the trees to emphasise the modern technology of the aeroplane, thereby further dividing the modern from the natural. Both also have the ability to captivate their audiences and represent a break in the monotony of passing time, but in Shepherd’s novel the moment also represents an aggressive interruption against an apparent rural sanctity. Bella Cassidy’s arrival in her car interrupts Durno’s reflections on the ‘happy contentment’ of those gathered

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<sup>986</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 32.

<sup>987</sup> Virginia Woolf, ‘Mrs. Dalloway’ in *Virginia Woolf: The Complete Collection*, (Golden Deer Classics, 2016), Chapter 6, paragraph 1, Kindle edition.

in his living room;<sup>988</sup> ‘no one thought. Their minds were drugged and easy. Mary forgot London, Jenny forgot the untasted world, the old farmer himself forgot the passing of his kind.’<sup>989</sup> That Bella Cassidy’s sudden arrival occurs at this moment seems on first reading to be testament to the incompatibility between rural lifestyles and the ‘untasted world’ of modernity’s epicentres. Yet this scene could again be representing more than just a juxtaposition between these two apparently disparate spheres, and instead indicates the inextricable bond bridged between the two. To argue simply that Bella represents the intrusive urban and the dangers of the modern is also therefore to accept the Kailyard-esque idea of the sacred rural landscape. I believe that, in further promotion of the coexistence and partnership between tradition and modernity, Shepherd is separating herself from this line of thinking. Whilst Durno sits in the happy contentment of the uninterrupted sacred space of his rural home, Shepherd’s narration reveals something rather more uncomfortable. That they all sit in ‘drugged’ intoxication suggests, perhaps, a passivity or (self) imposed susceptibility to a life that is cut off from others as well as a lack of knowledge of life outside of rurality. In further support of this, alternative ways of living are described as ‘untasted’, and thereby out of sync with Mary and Jenny’s lives.

Finally, Durno’s forgetfulness when it comes to the passing of his kind is an example of the historical suspension and frozen tableau of rural life discussed in reference to the Kailyard. The complacent drugged atmosphere and the temporary removal of the threat of modernity align to briefly suggest that these characters and their lives are, similarly to Barrie’s *A Window in Thrums*, ‘exempt from the effects of urbanization’.<sup>990</sup> The timely interruption of this drugged state of suspension therefore represents Shepherd’s further

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<sup>988</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 31.

<sup>989</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, pp. 31 – 32.

<sup>990</sup> Cook, ‘The Home-ly Kailyard Nation’, p. 1058.

suggestion that these two states of living – urbanised and traditional – cannot (and arguably should not) be separate. Indeed, three years prior to the publication of *A Pass in the Grampians*, Shepherd in a letter to Neil Gunn wrote:

I have a keen relish of the coarse, salty, vulgar life about [me and] at the same time an intolerable intolerance of it....if one could combine the two-? irradiate the common? That should make something universal.<sup>991</sup>

Shepherd's striving towards universality will be returned to when discussing her status as rural stravaiger and her adoption of meditative practices, but her attraction towards the removal of barriers and the exposure of the commonalities of juxtaposed ways of life is a further example of her stance that rurality and urban life are not entirely separate. Indeed, Carol Anderson considers the way that even the titling of the chapters in *A Pass in the Grampians*, wherein the headings range around names, signifies that 'all exist as part of a community, interrelationships vital.'<sup>992</sup> Further, this irradiation which Shepherd calls for parallels the claim of this thesis that rural modernity is characterised by the simultaneous effecting of change and the receptivity to change and the active choices made by characters and by Shepherd to bridge these spheres. For this particular moment in *A Pass in the Grampians* then, the irradiated common is the character of Dorabel Cassidy. Her return from city life to 'the edge of the moorland' where she grew up via her advertisement-car acts as the moment Shepherd weaves together these two apparently disparate worlds.<sup>993</sup>

### A Country Woman Still? Dorabel Cassidy and the Union of Spaces

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<sup>991</sup> Nan Shepherd to Neil Gunn (NLS: 14 March 1930).

<sup>992</sup> Carol Anderson, 'Writing Spaces' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Women's Writing*, ed. by Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), pp. 113 – 121 (p. 119).

<sup>993</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 1.

Dorabel Cassidy's position as the bridging force between urban and rural modernities is a repeated theme throughout *A Pass in the Grampians*; indeed, 'her years in London notwithstanding, she was a country woman still.'<sup>994</sup> Anderson declares *A Pass in the Grampians* 'fascinating as a modernist fiction located entirely in a remote place and actively about modernity'.<sup>995</sup> Anderson is remarking on the unity in Shepherd's novel between the seemingly remote and a traditional idea of 'modernity'. In response to this, I suggest that Dorabel (Bella) is frequently deployed as a metaphor for impending change and invasive modernity, but she also represents the duality of interwar rural Scotland and – more specifically – Shepherd's own conflicting feelings regarding the changing landscape (socially and geographically) of Scotland. Dorabel consistently reflects on the juxtaposition between life in London and life in the country; for example, she can walk calmly 'without flurry in her movements' when in the country as she is away from the 'confusion of sounds, smells and movements she had constantly to be sorting out in London',<sup>996</sup> and she wanted 'colour and lights and music and dancing. And cities. Cities crammed with people. Noise and movement, not the eerie desolation of the moor'.<sup>997</sup> Despite these explicit contrasts, however, Shepherd moulds Dorabel to inhabit both areas simultaneously. Shepherd also uses Dorabel to mock both the Kailyard and anti-Kailyard arguments regarding outsider views of rural Scotland, as Dorabel notes that she is 'not sentimental over it [...she is] very happy in London, but [does not] want to find this place different.'<sup>998</sup> Returning to Watson's assertion that Shepherd's writing 'utterly eschews sentimental naturalism, and she never once slips into Kailyard or polemical anti-Kailyard postures,' Shepherd nods to both Kailyard's sentimentality and anti-

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<sup>994</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 59.

<sup>995</sup> Anderson, 'Writing Spaces' p. 119.

<sup>996</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 29.

<sup>997</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 46.

<sup>998</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 54.

Kailyard's keenness to reflect the grimmer reality of life in rural Scotland.<sup>999</sup> Dorabel again acts as the tie between opposing spaces and Shepherd as a literary figure is bridging these two sides of the debate.

Shepherd's utilisation of the gramophone is a clear example of the coexistence and interweaving of urban technological modernity and modernity in rural spaces. Dorabel's frustration at the 'old fogey' playing on her portable wireless causes her to replace the song on the gramophone with a recording of her own voice,<sup>1000</sup> one of 'purest melody [...] like syrup.'<sup>1001</sup> Instantly, Dorabel is explicitly cast as a new voice, directly counteracting the old (male) voices, and she thus physically removes a piece of the old from the rural to replace it with modern vivacity. Beyond that, the gramophone recording and sharing of it to an audience represents Dorabel's ability to coexist in three spaces; the urban where the song was recorded, a second liminal space of the physical recording wherein a preserved version of an urbanised self is preserved and intact, and now in the rural. This layering of selves and of modern states is most acute in the following extract:

When the song was ended, Dorabel wound up the gramophone and began it again.

This time she sang as well. One shut one's eyes and there were two Dorabels, diverging just enough to assure one there were two. One opened them again, hastily, in panic lest the two were really there. It was a drunkard's replication.<sup>1002</sup>

Jenny's assurance that there are multiple versions of Dorabel is reflective again of Dorabel's ability to navigate rural and urban spaces at ease, and her ability to present both spaces simultaneously to others, and the gramophone is utilised as a vehicle to reflect the broadening of modern female prospects. In doing so, Shepherd implies that rural modernity offers

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<sup>999</sup> Watson, 'Introduction', p. x.

<sup>1000</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 57.

<sup>1001</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 58.

<sup>1002</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 58.

women in particular new opportunities to break free from traditional confining social structures; Bella Cassie represents ‘a whole new world of art and desire and generous gratification’.<sup>1003</sup> Indeed, at the time of publication whilst due to the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act of 1919 women were able to access many more professional and public positions, the majority of married women either gave up their positions or did not have one to begin with. Peacock states that ‘society, predominantly, still saw women’s work as “in the home”, caring, cooking and cleaning’, which further elevates Dorabel as a beacon for potential change.<sup>1004</sup> On a similar note, as discussed earlier in the chapter Martha Ironside in *The Quarry Wood* is reflective of the effects of rural modernity on women in particular and in their ability to embrace change. For Martha, like Dorabel, this occurs in the adoption and subversion of the lad (or, indeed, lass) o’pairts narrative which sees her go to university, flourish, and then return back to her rural childhood home. Shepherd parallels Martha’s individual experience with the wider national experience, noting that:

While her universe was thus widening both in time and in space, Scotland grew wider too. Hitherto her own blue valley, the city with its spires and dirty trawlers, had been her measure of Scotland. Now it grew. The North came alive [...] There flocked in their hundreds her fellow-students, grave, gay, eager, anxious, earnest, flippant, stupid and humble and wise in their own conceits...

Martha’s experience is thus mirrored in the experience of hundreds of other new students, and it can be read that the broader the potentials for young women and those from rural areas, the broader Scotland becomes as a nation. Shepherd certainly highlights the threads of national connection, and argues for the protection of these connections between urban and rural spaces. I am reminded of Edwin Muir’s *Scottish Journey*, and it seems that his

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<sup>1003</sup> Watson, “‘To know Being’: Substance and Spirit in the Work of Nan Shepherd”, p. 419.

<sup>1004</sup> Peacock, *Into the Mountain*, p. 118.



reflections that ‘one part of [Scotland’s] life is bound to the tradition and closely bound to the soil; another part is modern and has no immediate bond to the soil’ are significant here, in that they also clearly highlight the centrality of Shepherd and her female characters in the bridging of these two parts of Scotland and Shepherd’s hesitant approach to separation.<sup>1005</sup>

Dorabel Cassidy and Martha Ironside both then echo broader national changes in their ability to straddle rural and urban, and both reflect Shepherd’s belief that the two are at their best when interconnecting. Watson argues that Dorabel is ‘one of Nan Shepherd’s most memorable creations – greedy for chocolate cake, greedy for life, greedy for recognition, incapable of shame’, yet my reading of Dorabel is that – rather than the negative connotations that are aligned with greediness – she is receptive to the possibilities of modernity.<sup>1006</sup>

Dorabel’s shedding of her childhood name she grew up with whilst raised in Boggiewalls (Bella Cassie) as well as her learning of her true heritage as Bella Durno and her refusal to accept this title (‘Durno! What does being a Durno matter?’) further reinforces Dorabel as a figurehead of the existence and possibilities of rural modernity.<sup>1007</sup> This, of course, is a stark break from Martha Ironside’s joyful realisation when looking at her Father that she has ‘come from him. She too was at one with the earth [and would] like to follow a plough.’<sup>1008</sup> Dorabel does not allow rural or urban lives to define her as she claims: ‘I’m what I’ve made myself, amn’t I? I’m Dorabel Cassidy’.<sup>1009</sup> Shepherd’s portrait of Dorabel as a self-made woman able both to leave and return to Boggiewalls freely, and able to reject the constraints of names and the weight of familial tradition held within those names, further posits Shepherd’s writing as central within the sphere of Scottish literary modernism and particularly in regards to Scottish

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<sup>1005</sup> Muir, *Scottish Journey*, p. 103.

<sup>1006</sup> Watson, ‘Introduction’, p. ix.

<sup>1007</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 101.

<sup>1008</sup> Shepherd, *The Quarry Wood*, p. 204.

<sup>1009</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 101.

women's literary modernism. Peacock agrees with such an analysis, and she considers that it is precisely Shepherd's focus on Scottish female identity which makes her writing 'intrinsically modern'.<sup>1010</sup> Dorabel therefore holds a unique position as both a 'country woman still' and a focus on the foregrounding of urbanisation against a backdrop of national and global concerns.

Shepherd's frequent return to the supposed divide between the urban and the rural serves as a subversion of this standard juxtaposition. For Shepherd, the two spaces are not disparate but are interlinked – no more clearly so than by the people who inhabit them. All the while, nature acts as a symbol of permanence; the foundation which holds and makes possible all human-led change. The final section of this chapter will therefore examine this relationship with specific focus on the role of Shepherd's characters – and Shepherd herself – as a rural *flâneur*, and *stravaiger* able to use walking as a means to reclaim rural space.

#### *Flâneur*, flaneuse, flânerie: Theorising the Urban and Rural Walker

As discussed in Chapter 1, the analysis of rural panopticism by Philo, Parr and Burns explicitly considers the Scottish Highlands as ideal sites for Bentham's original Panopticon design. The remote locations mean that it is normal for 'community members to make judgements about what might be "normal" or "routine" for a given individual and start drawing inferences accordingly' in a way that would not be possible in a city or in any location with a higher population.<sup>1011</sup> Due to the heightened visibility of individuals (as a result both of low population and sparser buildings), rural areas are the idea space for panopticonic communities. Shepherd exposes the structure of a rural panopticon within each of her texts as a way to demonstrate their propensity for communal watchfulness, but like

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<sup>1010</sup> Peacock, *Into the Mountain*, p. 177.

<sup>1011</sup> Philo, Parr and Burns, 'The Rural Panopticon', p. 236.

Muir and Moon she simultaneously exposes the structure's weakness. For example, Shepherd's often claustrophobic rural spaces also provide opportunities for the reclamation of agency and space by those who walk there. Although rurally panopticonic existence can have the ability to immobilise residents, the act of walking can be utilised as a powerful tool to reclaim agency, (re)conquer space, and allow walkers to access deeper self-understanding. Through an examination of the representation of walking by Shepherd in particular – most notably in *The Living Mountain* – and utilising the foundations of *flâneur* and *flâneuse* theories but in a specifically rural, Scottish context, the rural walker or *stravaiger* can be understood as one whose walking bridges tradition and modernity. The *flâneur* is still most commonly associated with the male Parisian, able to walk leisurely through the city, to see without being seen, and to then write of his experiences. However, in many senses the rural walker has many of the same motivations as the urban *flâneur*. Both seek to gain a greater understanding of self and of their surroundings, and both use walking as a way to reclaim lost space. It seems fair to assert, then, that the rural walker shares motives with the traditional *flâneur*.

Walter Benjamin, when reflecting on Charles Baudelaire, claimed that urbanisation in Paris provided the ability to 'stroll about everywhere in the city',<sup>1012</sup> and thereby allowed urban walkers to read the city, and, Baudelaire writes, to 'reap aesthetic meaning from the spectacle of the teeming crowds.'<sup>1013</sup> Keith Tester argues that 'the *flâneur* is the individual sovereign of the order of things who, as the poet or as the artist, is able to transform faces and things so that for him they have only that meaning which he attributes to them.'<sup>1014</sup> For

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<sup>1012</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings Vol. 4, 1938 – 1940* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 19.

<sup>1013</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. by Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1970).

<sup>1014</sup> Keith Tester, 'Introduction', in *The Flâneur* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 1 – 21 (p. 6).

Tester, the true *flâneur* as described by Baudelaire and Benjamin is both male and a poet. Further, Tester assigns flânerie's 'observation of the fleeting and the transitory [as] the other half of modernity to the permanent and central sense of self'; in other words, the *flâneur* seeks self-knowledge through the act of gazing and of transforming the gaze artistically. Edwin Muir also writes of life in central Edinburgh as a 'platform life', when walking people 'are aware of themselves as a moving spectacle' in which the gaze is both received and returned.<sup>1015</sup> The traditional urban *flâneur* and the rural walker both – in the words of Klaus Benesch and Francois Specq – walk in a way which 'encapsulates a fundamental paradox of modern life' and which can 'alleviate tensions between mobility and immobility, space and place, progress and stasis.'<sup>1016</sup> These tensions are each central in exploring not only the aesthetics of rural modernity, but the effects of rural modernity on women, and their own internal perspectives on these tensions. For Shepherd in particular, walking acts as a way to meditatively engage with these tensions. Iain Sinclair has argued that walking can act as a means to prevent the past from vanishing – similarly to the argument made by Michel de Certeau in his metaphorical depiction of the city as language, which depends on a clear understanding of a location's grammar to survive.<sup>1017</sup> Memory is made – and erosion avoided – through walking. In terms of rural modernity's position as a space battling tradition and modernity, walking therefore exists as a bridge that can tie together memories of the past with new discoveries.

The majority of academic work on the role and presence of the *flâneur* in Modernist literature has centred the male experience. This, according to critics such as Janet Wolff,

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<sup>1015</sup> Edwin Muir, *Scottish Journey*, pp.16-17.

<sup>1016</sup> Klaus Benesch and Francois Specq, *Walking and the Aesthetics of Modernity: Pedestrian Mobility in Literature and the Arts* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), p. vii.

<sup>1017</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

Rebecca Solnit, Deborah Parsons, and Griselda Pollock is not due to a widespread female lack of interest in walking, but instead due to sexual divisions, the impossibility of invisibility for a woman on her own, the lack of safety for lone women walkers, and the luxury of walking as a pastime.<sup>1018</sup> As Kerri Andrews reasons in *Wanderers: A History of Women Walking*, ‘the history of walking has always been women’s history, though you would not know it from what has been published on the subject.’<sup>1019</sup> Certainly, Solnit notes that whilst the definition of a *flâneur* has never been satisfactorily or concretely agreed upon, ‘the image of an observant and solitary man’ has been the one constant.<sup>1020</sup> Conor McGarrigle in his discussion of the contemporary anonymous cyber*flâneur* writes that ‘the gendered nature of the *flâneur* [...] is evident in his ability as a lone male to stroll [...] unnoticed and unhindered’ and that this role was not (and still is not) equally afforded.<sup>1021</sup> Similarly, Tester argues that, in regards to the classic *flâneur* as described by Baudelaire, ‘there is no doubt that the poet [and thereby the *flâneur*] is the “man” who can reap aesthetic meaning’ from the city of Paris.<sup>1022</sup> Elizabeth Wilson counters that women *were* walking in the cities, but often in disguises so that they could be protected and enjoy their new position as urban voyeurs.<sup>1023</sup> Georges Sand, for example, is cited in both Solnit’s text and Lauren Elkin’s *Flâneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice and London* as wearing men’s

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<sup>1018</sup> Janet Wolff, ‘The Invisible Flâneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity’ in *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 3 (1985), 37 – 46; Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001); Deborah Parsons, *Streetwalking in the Metropolis: Women, the City, and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, (London: Routledge, 1988).

<sup>1019</sup> Kerri Andrews, *Wanderers: A History of Women Walking* (London: Reaktion Books, 2020), p. 17.

<sup>1020</sup> Solnit, *Wanderlust*, p. 198.

<sup>1021</sup> Conor McGarrigle, ‘Forget the *Flâneur*’, in *Proceedings of the 19<sup>th</sup> International Symposium of Electronic Art*, ISEA2013, Sydney (2013) <<http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/9475>>. (The ‘cyber*flâneur*’ is a figure who is able to roam online anonymously.)

<sup>1022</sup> Tester, ‘Introduction’, pp. 1 – 2.

<sup>1023</sup> Elizabeth Wilson, ‘The invisible *flâneur*’, in *Post-modern Cities and Spaces* (Oxford: Blackwell Press, 1995).

clothing for walking, an act which Solnit claims is practical rather than subversive – although I would argue that it is both of these things.<sup>1024</sup> In terms of locating the female *flâneur* and differentiating her motives and style from the male *flâneur*, Clare Olivia Parsons and Mary Louise Pratt both suggest that women’s walking serves primarily to redefine the woman’s perception of herself rather than to reclaim urban space, and that they are ultimately destined to remain a product to be consumed by the male *flâneur*, although as this section discusses the deepening of self-knowledge and the reclaiming of spaces often occur and are sought after simultaneously.<sup>1025</sup> Isabelle Baudino explores rural photography to explore the way in which the female traveller creates ‘a pictorial space that she could inhabit as an aesthetic subject rather than figuring as its aesthetic object,’ thereby rejecting the oppressive voyeurism and materialism of life in the city.<sup>1026</sup> Lauren Elkin’s highly acclaimed text sets out to redress the balance in studies of the *flâneur* and – although she somewhat unfairly suggests that Solnit’s *Wanderlust* dismisses the idea of the female *flâneur*, which I feel does little justice to the breadth of women walkers discussed by Solnit – rejects the common reference to the female urban stroller as ‘most likely a streetwalker’, and mocks the idea that ‘a penis were a requisite walking appendage, like a cane.’<sup>1027</sup>

There can be no doubt that women were indeed walking in the city, and while the existence of the *flâneuse* is becoming more widely accepted the idea of the rural *flâneuse* is yet more contentious. Many critics hint at a distinction between the motives of an urban or

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<sup>1024</sup> Solnit, *Wanderlust*, p. 203.

<sup>1025</sup> Clare Olivia Parsons, ‘Women travellers and the spectacle of modernity’, in *Women’s Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 26.5 (1997), 399 – 422; Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturalism* (London: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>1026</sup> Isabelle Baudino, ‘Marianne Colston’s Art of Walking: Gendering the Picturesque in *Journal of a Tour in France, Switzerland, and Italy*’ in *Walking and the Aesthetics of Modernity* eds Klaus Benesch and Francois Specq (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), pp. 85 – 101 (p. 86).

<sup>1027</sup> Lauren Elkin, *Flâneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice and London* (London: Vintage, 2017), p. 8; p. 8; p. 19.

rural walker. Elkin argues that the city is rigid and that suburbs are transient and this then has a counter-effect on the style and motives of walking, yet she does not include rural walking in her text as a potentially subversive or, indeed, interesting act.<sup>1028</sup> Tester clearly defines the motives of the urban walker. Returning to Baudelaire's poet as the archetypal *flâneur*, Tester quotes Baudelaire's 'The Painter of Modern Life', in which Baudelaire states that: 'for the perfect idler, for the passionate observer it becomes an immense source of enjoyment to establish his dwelling in the throng, in the ebb and flow, the bustle, the fleeting and the infinite.'<sup>1029</sup> Whilst Frederic Gros *does* offer a comparison between rural walking and urban walking throughout his text, he does not dwell on them, instead noting that longer excursions in nature are linked directly to 'the process of self-liberation',<sup>1030</sup> whilst the urban *flâneur* is intrinsically linked to 'the mercantilization of the world [wherein] everything becomes a consumer product', even the self.<sup>1031</sup> Gros certainly does not comment on women's walking. Solnit does explicitly compare the purposes of rural and urban walking, stating that:

The history of both urban and rural walking is a history of freedom and of the definition of pleasure. But rural walking has found a moral imperative in the love of nature that has allowed it to defend and open up the countryside. Urban walking has always been a shadier business, easily turning to soliciting, cruising, promenading, shopping, rioting, [etc].<sup>1032</sup>

However, Solnit's analysis still implies that the motivations for urban and rural walkers differ greatly which in turn would discount the presence of a rural *flâneur*. For Solnit, rural walking is considered to be a safer act – particularly for women – and one that is more serene and

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<sup>1028</sup> Elkin, *Flâneuse*, pp. 96 – 98.

<sup>1029</sup> Tester, 'Introduction', p. 2.

<sup>1030</sup> Frederic Gros, *A Philosophy of Walking* (London: Verso, 2015), p. 3.

<sup>1031</sup> Gros, *A Philosophy of Walking*, p. 177.

<sup>1032</sup> Solnit, *Wanderlust*, pp. 173 – 174.

intrinsically linked to an appreciation of the natural and with less opportunity for veering off-course into expensive, dangerous, or political activities. I would question Solnit's note that rural walking has a 'moral imperative' in the love of nature. As this thesis has already indicated, there is a danger in aligning rurality with morality – and urbanity with 'shadier' characteristics – and doing so reinforces reductive stereotypes. Further, it may not simply be a 'love of nature' that encourages people to walk in rural areas but rather a requirement to work on the land in order to survive. Similarly, whilst indeed an appreciation of the natural world *may* be present, rural walking is not intrinsically anti-political. Although meditative, Shepherd's walking can be read as a decisively feminist and targeted action, particularly in her fiction writing.

The stravaiger adds further depth to this discussion and the term allows for an original approach to work on women's walking with scope beyond this chapter's focus on Shepherd. This thesis presents a new approach to discussions of women's walking by firmly grounding an analysis of rural *flânerie* in a Scottish context and demonstrates that, like the urban *flâneur*, the stravaiger is also a keen observer. Yet, unlike the *flâneur*, the stravaiger is not burdened with gendered connotations. Additionally, the term is not associated with a specific period or literary movement. There are therefore extensive opportunities to utilise the term in future work. The Dictionary of the Scots Language offers several overlapping definitions for stravaiging and stravaigers, with the earliest recorded use of the word in Edinburgh in 1773. To stravaig is 'to roam, wander idly, gad about in a casual manner'; the stravaiger is 'a wanderer, a roaming vagabond person, a stroller'; stravaigie is 'a roaming about, an aimless, casual rambling, a stroll' and a walk which involves 'going beyond the usual bounds, errant, capricious.'<sup>1033</sup> Alongside these definitions, I would add that the stravaiger – particularly the

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<sup>1033</sup> Scottish Language Dictionaries Ltd, *Stravaig* (2004) <<http://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/stravaig>> [Accessed 25 March 2019].



female stravaiger – is able to experience the joy and personal enlightenment of aimless walking, and the observing stravaiger is uniquely attuned to their environment. In my analysis, the female stravaiger’s ability to evolve alongside their environment is only possible due to the lack of watchfulness and a solitude which is impossible for the *flâneuse* to experience. Further, analysis using this term considers the nuances of walking and its benefits when the walking woman is the observer, rather than the observed.

Shepherd undoubtedly writes characters who fit this prototype of a stravaiger who roams aimlessly and – often – joyfully and she can be read as one herself; in *The Living Mountain* she refers to the way in which ‘the mountain gives itself most completely when [she has] no destination, when [she reaches] nowhere in particular.’<sup>1034</sup> As a woman Shepherd certainly stravaigs beyond what would have been the usual bounds of mountaineering. In the context of this thesis, these ‘beyond the usual bounds’ strolls occur with limited watchfulness but ample observation.

When discussing the urban walks of the Parisian poet, Tester notes that he ‘is a man who is driven out of the private and into the public by his own search for meaning. He is the man who is only at home existentially when he is not at home physically’, therefore considering the walking space as the space wherein self-knowledge can be garnered.<sup>1035</sup> However, this thesis argues that just as urban and rural spaces are written as interlinked by Shepherd, there are likewise greater overlaps between urban and rural walkers than many critics acknowledge. As with R.S White’s celebration of the work of Emotional Geography scholars for their ‘widening the terms of the discipline to include any form of landscape (or built environment for that matter), not just the city’, I similarly argue that it is precisely within the shared search for self-knowledge and the reclamation of selfhood and space that

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<sup>1034</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 15.

<sup>1035</sup> Tester, ‘Introduction’, p. 2.

unites city and country walkers.<sup>1036</sup> I maintain that Shepherd focuses on nature as the foundation which makes possible facets of human-led change, and walking is used as a tool to view and further bridge supposedly disparate spaces.

### Spangin', Stravaiging, and the Power of the Rural *Flâneur*<sup>1037</sup>

In many ways, it is difficult to discuss Shepherd's writing and *The Living Mountain* without romanticising it. When analysing Shepherd's work her insistence on a greater appreciation of nature is paramount, and her Zen-like walking through the hills and mountains of the Cairngorms is decorated with moments of great emotional clarity regarding the workings of the world. There are therefore instances wherein it may seem to make more sense to place Shepherd alongside such Romantic writers and walkers as Wordsworth and Coleridge, rather than to mirror her with the archetypal Parisian *flâneur* who grapples with sprawling modern life. Simon J. White's argument that 'the defining trait of [Romantic heroes] is often that they have a particular relationship with an originary nature that shapes their character [and] their muse is often a mountainous landscape' seems particularly applicable to Shepherd, for example.<sup>1038</sup> Shepherd's closing paragraph of *The Living Mountain* sees her most explicitly align her idea of self with the mountain, 'for as [she penetrates] more deeply into the mountain's life, [she penetrates] also into [her] own.'<sup>1039</sup> However, I maintain that Shepherd can and should still be reconsidered as a rural *flâneur* and stravaiger. She and her characters, like the Parisian *flâneur*, demonstrate a preference for lone observation which can be transferred into creative energy. Certainly, Erlend Clouston explicitly referred to Shepherd as

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<sup>1036</sup> R.S White, 'Emotional Landscapes: Romantic Travels in Scotland' in *The Keats-Shelley Review*, 27.2 (2013), 76 – 90 (p. 89).

<sup>1037</sup> Shepherd, *The Quarry Wood*, p. 111.

<sup>1038</sup> Simon J. White, *Romanticism and the Rural Community* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 2.

<sup>1039</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 108.

a stravaiging *flâneur* who united Zen philosophies with the *flâneur*'s appetite for self and spatial exploration.<sup>1040</sup> The walking and reflections portrayed in Shepherd's texts may be meditative, but they grapple with the tensions of modern society. In her fiction, walking occurs at pivotal moments to represent the tangible link between life paths which themselves often reflect a choice between tradition and modernity or rural and urban. Walking is also seen as a tool to escape or to release emotional tension, and the repetition of footsteps encourages a metronomic stream-of-consciousness which follows Shepherd and her characters through literal journeys and journeys of self-discovery. Whilst Shepherd's language may often closely align to the language of Romantics, the force behind them is distinctly modern.

In her forward to *The Living Mountain*, written some thirty years after Shepherd first stowed away the original manuscript in a desk drawer, she refers to the text as 'the tale of [her] traffic with a mountain'.<sup>1041</sup> Shepherd's word choice here is striking as it can suggest a mutual exchange, a busy and bustling space, and perhaps most fittingly a sensation of movement. Shepherd's traffic *with* the mountain suggests she moves alongside or within it, indicating a union between self and nature. Equally, central to *The Living Mountain* is the observation of minutiae in a changeable environment. For Shepherd, to know the mountain is to experience its many personalities; 'the thing to be known grows with the knowing'.<sup>1042</sup> Her traffic with the mountain thus makes reference to Shepherd's own movements and the changeability of her landscape. Shepherd, like archetypal urban *flâneurs*, manoeuvres her way through an environment that constantly grows and forces her to learn anew and re-map

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<sup>1040</sup> Erlend Clouston, 'Zen and the Art of Rucksack Maintenance: Nan Shepherd's Extraordinary Journey from *Flâneur* to Fiver', Scottish Poetry Library, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2019.

<sup>1041</sup> Nan Shepherd, 'Forward' in *The Living Mountain* (Edinburgh: Canongate Press, 2013), pp. xli – xliii (xliii).

<sup>1042</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 108.

previously recognisable spaces. *A Pass in the Grampians* explicitly contrasts the experience of walking in London with walking in the country. On her return from the city, Mary 'walked heel to the ground, calmly, without flurry in her movements; and her senses were keen and unspoilt by the confusion of sounds, smells and movements she had constantly to be sorting out in London.'<sup>1043</sup> Without the confusion on her senses which she experiences in London, Mary may be able to garner more reliable information of her surroundings and to create the union between self and environment which Shepherd appeals for. Similarly, Shepherd's journey to reach her conclusive 'I am' is indicative of walking being the tool through which she is able not just to re-map and reclaim spaces, but to create herself.<sup>1044</sup> Andrews likewise examines Shepherd's 'iambic "I am" [as] as chant uttered by the feet' which leads to 'an extraordinary intimacy between human and mountain'.<sup>1045</sup> Such intimacy between self and space would not be possible in Mary's spoilt London, and the stravaiger is instead able to simultaneously explore their environment and their physical being simultaneously.

Shepherd's drive for 'infinity' and her attempts to place herself amongst the collective,<sup>1046</sup> be it elemental, man, animal or technology, seems to be a clear contrast to Williams's note in *The Country and the City* that in the modern city there is a lack of collective consciousness.<sup>1047</sup> Williams ties this to the way in which the 'perception of the new qualities of the modern city had been associated, from the beginning, with a man walking, as if alone, in its streets.'<sup>1048</sup> Likewise, Michel de Certeau argues that the city walker is a 'seeing god' who 'must remove himself from the obscure interlacings of everyday behaviour and

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<sup>1043</sup> Shepherd, *A Pass in the Grampians*, p. 29.

<sup>1044</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 108.

<sup>1045</sup> Andrews, *Wanderers: A History of Women Walking*, p. 181.

<sup>1046</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 98.

<sup>1047</sup> Williams, *The Country and the City*, p. 215.

<sup>1048</sup> Williams, *The Country and the City*, p. 233.

make himself a stranger to it.’<sup>1049</sup> Shepherd, on the other hand, is directly engaged with the interlaced patterns of everyday behaviour, particularly the behaviour of and on the mountain. Whereas rural panopticism increases the threat of negative interweaving of lives via gossip, walking allows for the binding together of individuals to create a collective narrative and to bridge together disparate spaces or people. Shepherd observes whilst stravaiging and consciously ‘walks among [ungovernable] elementals’<sup>1050</sup> to establish that ‘nothing has reference to [her], the looker’ but rather to establish that everything is interconnected.<sup>1051</sup> Whereas the urban *flâneur* finds individual, poetic meaning from walking through an urbanised world, the stravaiger such as Shepherd roots herself within the landscape. Both share the search for self-knowledge, but by removing the individual looker, or de Certeau’s “seeing god”, Shepherd’s stravaiger is able to bridge the distance between the self and the walked space. The stravaiger’s search for self-knowledge is united with the ungovernable elementals in order to locate and make sense of the new and locate that which unites: ‘the common experience’.<sup>1052</sup>

Shepherd makes frequent references to the past and the present and identifies multiform moments of unity whilst walking. Similarly to Dorabel Cassidy’s status as a bridging character, Shepherd urges others to unite old and new and to appreciate the combination of disparate movements. Shepherd writes that ‘one cannot know the rivers till one has seen them at their sources’,<sup>1053</sup> and that in the Cairngorms ‘one seems where one is and where one is going at the same time,’ both of which can be understood as metaphors

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<sup>1049</sup> Michel de Certeau, ‘Practices of Space’ in *The Signs*, ed. by Marshall Blonsky (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp. 122 – 135 (p. 124)

<sup>1050</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 4.

<sup>1051</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 11.

<sup>1052</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 20.

<sup>1053</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 4.

encouraging others to and learn from tradition and roots in order to advance.<sup>1054</sup> When walking she insists that it is possible to be ‘surprised by a new vision of the familiar range’,<sup>1055</sup> refers to an ‘interplay between two movements in simultaneous action’,<sup>1056</sup> and takes pleasure in spotting the perfect formation of two flying birds as ‘two halves of one organism’.<sup>1057</sup> Again, it is possible to read this as the bridging between supposedly disparate spheres such as the urban and the rural, or the traditional and the new. In one of *The Living Mountain*’s most striking examples of walking bridging the gap between traditional landscapes and the new impacts of modernity on this space, Shepherd discusses the impacts of the war on her stravaiging within the mountains:

Walking in the dark, oddly enough, can reveal new knowledge about a familiar place. In a moonless week, with overcast skies and wartime blackout, I walked night after night over the moory path from Whitewell to Upper Tullochgrue to hear the news broadcast. Two pine trees that stood out against the sky were my signposts, and no matter how dark the night sky was always appreciably lighter than the trees [...] Yet now, when my eyes were in my feet, I did not know its bumps and holes, nor where the trickles of water crossed it, nor where it rose and fell. It astonished me that my memory was so much in the eye and so little in the feet, for I am not awkward in the dark and walk easily and happily in it. Yet here I am stumbling because the rock has made a hump in the ground.<sup>1058</sup>

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<sup>1054</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 13.

<sup>1055</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, 20.

<sup>1056</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 31.

<sup>1057</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 69.

<sup>1058</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 46.

Shepherd's juxtaposition between her familiar place and the consequences of wartime blackout indicates one side-effect of the war on those living in rural areas. Indeed, this is the sole instance in *The Living Mountain* wherein Shepherd's Cairngorm walk has an explicit purpose: to "hear the news broadcast". However, as with before, Shepherd's response is not to bemoan the altering of the landscape or to wish for rural isolation. Instead, Shepherd alters the way in which she walks, adapting herself to a landscape impacted by modernity. By placing her eyes in her feet, walking is used as a combative tool against the potential restrictiveness of modern side-effects. Navigating with her feet, what Rachel Gilman describes as 'how the eye grounds vision in bodily experience,' and looking ahead via her footsteps propels walking as a method to avoid succumbing to wartime dangers and isolation.<sup>1059</sup> It is also presented as a further opportunity for growth for Shepherd. Wartime blackout leads directly to Shepherd exploring and understanding familiar rural landscapes in new ways and providing her with new knowledge. Shepherd also maps the landscape, identifying elemental signposts and using the 'appreciably lighter' night sky as a guiding light. The changeability of the landscape is also highlighted in this passage, a direct side-effect of wartime and modernity. Like the urban *flâneur*, Shepherd is faced with the task of navigating spaces which are constantly under threat of being reconfigured. Stravaiging, walking with her eyes in her feet, firmly unites the power of observing with the physical mapping and exploration of spaces in order to create new meaning. It is through this that Shepherd learns more of her landscape and of herself.

In *The Living Mountain*, stravaiging is showcased as the preferred mode of travel. Yet, Shepherd reflects on the privilege of *choosing* walking as a means to achieve the establishment or reclamation of selfhood. Shepherd writes that 'the sustained rhythm of

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<sup>1059</sup> Rachel Gilman, 'Reading the Word: Spirit Materiality in the Mountain Landscapes of Nan Shepherd' in *Dialogue*, 52.4 (2019), 29 – 38 (p. 34).

movement in a long climb has also its part in inducing the sense of physical well-being, and this cannot be captured by any mode of mechanical ascent'.<sup>1060</sup> Thus, walking allows for the attainment of personal well-being and, crucially, cannot be rivalled by artificial ascent. Indeed, the relationship between the mountain and Shepherd as respectful walker is depicted as a mutual exchange as 'if jeeps find it out, or a funicular railway disfigures it, part of its meaning will be gone.'<sup>1061</sup> For Shepherd, as much of its meaning is contained in self-knowledge wrought via walking, technological advancements pose a significant threat. However, Shepherd also acknowledges: 'that by so living I am slowing down the tempo of life; if I had to do these things every day and all the time I should be shutting the door on other activities and interests; and I can understand why the young people resent it.'<sup>1062</sup> Shepherd hints here at the classed implications of having the freedom to stravaig as well as the necessity of technological advancements for those who work on the mountain and require revitalised tools to keep the economy afloat. As with the urban *flâneur*, the freedom to roam without direction and to glean poetic meaning from such a walk requires a level of financial stability, physical ability, and looser time constraints.

### Conclusion

Shepherd insists on the bridging of the apparently disparate spaces of urban and rural, with herself and her characters consciously and actively attempting to unite these spaces. Shepherd highlights many potential impacts of modernity on the rural landscape such as technological advancements, alterations to geography, and an increase in opportunities for women. Whilst she in many cases exposes the possible dangers of each of these impacts, she also

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<sup>1060</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 8.

<sup>1061</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 14.

<sup>1062</sup> Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, p. 82.



acknowledges the benefits they each may hold to rural communities, and she celebrates the ability to see things anew.

Shepherd's fiction attests to the impacts made on rural areas and people by modernity, but also the impact of humanity on the landscape. As such, Shepherd can be read as an ecofeminist who strives for a renewed approach towards caring for nature. Similarly, in *A Pass in the Grampians* emphasises the rootedness of rural residents to the earth, whilst not diminishing their own ability to be forces of modern change, and in *The Living Mountain* Shepherd attempts to find a balance between humanity and the land which seeks to maintain the health of each. In both texts, thoughtlessness when combined with modernity is, for Shepherd, a credible threat to the environment and regulatory communities attempt to prevent unnecessary change. In *The Living Mountain*, Shepherd adopts a place-sensitive style which maps her individual experiences onto the landscape as a means to connect the geological with the personal and in her fiction, characters such as Bella Cassidy act as connective forces. In both cases, Shepherd co-opts behaviours from both spaces and combines a respect for the natural with an openness to the new.

Finally, by combining theories of walking and watchfulness the figure of the stravaiger represents Shepherd's stance that the rural space can be reclaimed by women. As a roving observer, whose motives extend beyond seeking knowledge of others to instead gain knowledge of oneself, Shepherd returns and inverts the panopticonic gaze from the high platforms of the Cairngorms. The result of this is that stravaiging can provide women walkers with more agency (arguably more than is often provided to the flâneuse), acknowledge the responsibilities of the individual to their landscape and fellow community members, and allow stravaigers to combine the language of watchfulness with the power of self-possession and self-judgement. Therefore, whereas Chapters 2 and 3 examined the claustrophobia and entrapment inherent to the rural panopticon and Chapter 4 provided evidence of the

possibility to adopt watchfulness as a tool and to wage war on a perceived enemy, this final chapter on Shepherd offers a more positive conclusion to the union of rural modernity and watchfulness. Shepherd's approach in *The Living Mountain* suggests that a meditative balanced approach to nature – and, indeed, to modernity – can provide vital opportunities to improve self-enlightenment and the ongoing preservation of the Scottish landscape.

## Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, watchfulness has been argued to be a core characteristic of rural modernity. The analysed responses of three Scottish women writers of the interwar period provides necessary nuance to existing studies on Scottish literature, modernity, and experiences of the rural in the early-twentieth century. The writing of Willa Muir, Lorna Moon, and Nan Shepherd provides an insight into the reality of modernity on the rural experience. More specifically, their writing reveals the ways in which women were able to respond to the pressures and opportunities that arose from life within a rural or semi-rural community. In response to Muir's *Mrs Grundy*, Joy Hendry remarks on Muir's appeal for a 'reappraisal of women's roles.'<sup>1063</sup> This thesis similarly examines how each of the studied authors critique the various gendered imbalances that result from life within the communities of which they write. Additionally, this thesis is an attempt to continue the ongoing amendments in contemporary scholarship in reassessing women's contributions to Scottish literature. As such, the thesis may not be able to resolve Muir's original appeal, but it has contributed to the reintegration of the three writers' literary reputations and assessment of their own 'roles' within Scottish literary modernity.

Alongside considering the position of Willa Muir, Lorna Moon and Nan Shepherd within broader discussions of Scottish literature and modernism, this thesis has demonstrated through theoretical and literary analysis that each of these writers provides their own response to the implications of rural watchfulness. Moreover, the research provided has argued that women are disproportionately impacted by watchfulness. In order to maintain a tight focus on what could otherwise be a limitless analysis of the layered and varied themes and stylistic attributes of these writers' texts, this study's literary analysis is divided into three clear sections: everyday life within a patriarchal and Presbyterian semi-rural panopticon in

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<sup>1063</sup> Hendry, 'Twentieth-century Women's Writing: The Nest of Singing Birds', p. 303.

Willa Muir's writing; (everyday) death, mourning and grief in Lorna Moon's fiction; and the potential for rural reclamation and rebirth in the writing of Nan Shepherd. As such, the approach of the literary analysis of the thesis is cyclical in exploring life, death, and resurrection within the rural panopticon.

Additionally, each author provides a clear response to watchfulness. Muir posits that departure from the semi-rural town – and therefore from watchfulness – will be of more benefit to women than life within it. Moon ridicules the rituals inherent to a rural Scottish town and highlights the benefits of tactical assimilation as a tool to navigate these rituals. Finally, Shepherd appeals for balance and rebirth and produces neutral ground that simultaneously embraces tradition and receives modernity.

This thesis has not had the space to consider the full bodies of work for these writers. For instance, Shepherd's poetry, which has received recent consideration in Kerri Andrews' *Wanderers*, is deserving of supplementary attention in readings of Shepherd as an ecofeminist. Likewise, whilst some analysis of letters and journals has been provided, additional evaluation of the unpublished works, journals, and letters of Muir, Moon and Shepherd would further illuminate the relationships between the writers and the spaces they write of and from. Uncensored writing – not written for the watchful eyes of readers – will provide additional insights into the realities of the writers' lived experiences of rural and semi-rural Scotland and literary networks. Similarly, this thesis has purposefully separated the discussions of the three writers to allow for closer analysis of individual responses to specific aspects of watchfulness. However, further research would benefit from considering the thematic overlaps in more detail: Moon and Shepherd both critique the presence of overbearing religious influences in rural communities; Shepherd and Muir both consider PTSD, mourning, and the implications of rural warfare; and Muir and Moon both champion self-discovery through spatial exploration.

This thesis focused on the interconnection between rural modernity and watchfulness. As such, the first chapter of this thesis provided biographical context of the three focus authors and presented a way of positioning each author within a definition of Scottish rural modernity prior to providing a rural approach to Foucauldian theories of surveillance. The chapter firmly situated each author within a discussion of a specifically rural Scottish modernity, but also within the critical-theoretical framework of surveillance and watchfulness studies which I argued is a counterpart *to* rural modernity. The methodology of this thesis provides a necessary gendered approach to the existing scholarship on the rural panopticon. Although there is ample criticism of Foucault's gender-neutral approach to the panopticon and Foucauldian approaches to literary analysis, this thesis is currently the only reading of the rural panopticon in literature which engages either with women's writing or with Scottish modernity. The frameworks that have been established in this thesis can therefore enhance future studies of women's writing, Scottish literary modernism, and of Scottish women's writing beyond the time period covered in this thesis.

Similarly, future work might consider the aesthetics of Scottish rural modernism in greater depth. The central focus of this thesis was to examine the responses of Muir, Moon, and Shepherd to one overarching feature of rural modernity. Kristin Bluemel and Michael McCluskey's *Rural Modernity in Britain: A Critical Intervention* was considered in the Introduction as providing the clearest definition of rural modernity, and their collection proves that rural Britain was impacted by modernisation as much – if not more – than urban Britain. My work expands on that of Bluemel and McCluskey by exploring how rural modernity influenced Scottish literary modernism and by demonstrating that certain aspects of rural modernity – chiefly, watchfulness – had a more significant impact on women. This thesis is therefore necessarily limited in its scope. There is ample opportunity to explore other thematic and aesthetic characteristics of Scottish rural modernism, and to contribute further

insights to an exciting field of research. For example, it would be fitting to extend the enquiries of the thesis further by developing theories of race, sexuality, and class into my existing methodology in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of Scottish rural modernism.

The thesis offered an acknowledgement of the modernist stylings of each focus writer's work, which – particularly in the case of Moon – has previously been discussed predominantly as anti-Kailyard rather than modernist. There is also an underpinning of each writer's critical reception at the time of publication; many of these reviews explicitly refer to the texts as 'modern' and consider the novels and the novelists against popular male counterparts such as Hugh MacDiarmid and Lewis Grassie Gibbon. Thus, the thesis acknowledged each writer's individual relationship with literary networks and other figures of the Scottish Renaissance movement to cement the necessity of their inclusion in discussions of Scottish literary modernism.

Yet, there is merit in expanding this discussion further still. For instance, a future iteration of this work could develop a sharper comparison between men's and women's depictions of watchfulness. This would allow, for example, the similarities of Lewis Grassie Gibbon's writing to that of both Moon and Shepherd – which are raised in the thesis – to be more comprehensively discussed. This thesis has demonstrated that watchfulness is central to Scottish literary modernism and has provided a critical analysis of the work of three women writers to watchfulness. Further work with a broader array of responses to rural modernity would strengthen the evidence of this thesis that women are disproportionately impacted by the negative implications of watchfulness and of the claustrophobia of the rural panopticon. The relationship between Shepherd and Neil Gunn, and the metaphysical similarities in their work, could also be expanded.

In a similar vein, further research into other rural and semi-rural women's writing in Britain more broadly – such as Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Lolly Willowes* (1926) – would complement my existing research and would allow for a more thorough discussion into how women's writing responds to an understanding of national identity. Furthermore, although this thesis has considered the broader characteristics of Scottish literary modernity and women's contributions to it, only Muir, Moon, and Shepherd are discussed in depth. Extending the enquiries into watchfulness and rural modernity in terms of the writers and texts considered would also lend meaningful knowledge to the field.

There are areas of personal interest which I would like to explore more thoroughly. The third chapter of this thesis provided an original approach to Moon's work – which is itself underdiscussed even in contemporary Scottish literary scholarship – by utilising theories of grief and trauma to expose how women in rural communities were impacted by national attitude changes towards private and public responses to tragedy. In future, I would like to examine the ways in which Scottish women's writing from the early-twentieth century to the present responds to trauma and grief. As I established in Chapter 3, there was a national transformation of public and private mourning during and after the First World War. I envisage a study which begins at this point of national transformation, and continues onwards to explore the evolution of grief and trauma in Scottish women's writing. At the time of writing, there is no extended study into Scottish women's writing and trauma despite these themes being central to the work of many key writers. Such a study would combine theories of trauma and grief with close literary analysis of writers such as Moon, Muriel Spark, Janice Galloway, and Jenni Fagan in order to consider the relationship between trauma, gender, and Scottish national identity. A close focus on these theories using the work of a variety of authors would provide a valuable intervention in scholarship of Scottish women's writing.

When considering the stravaiger, there is also the opportunity to expand the line of enquiry to other works by women in order to continue the critical reconstruction of the history of walking and women's relationship to the rural space. Muir and Moon also both champion self-discovery through spatial exploration, for example. In this vein – and as the stravaiger is not strictly associated with a specific time period or literary movement as the *flâneur* is – extending the enquiry in terms of dates would further enhance future discussions of the transformation of women's walking and the transformation of rural Scotland. This thesis is concerned with interwar women's writing and Scottish literary modernism, yet in future work I would be interested in extending the study of Scottish women's writing and the stravaiger to include contemporary writing. For example, the identification of rebirth as central to the experience of the stravaiger in Chapter 5 is also an essential feature of texts such as Amy Liptrot's 2016 memoir *The Outrun*. I would therefore like to explore the continuing tradition of women's walking and further establish the stravaiger as a term which can be used to critically engage with women's experiences of the rural and semi-rural space. Moreover, there are class implications regarding the disparity of experiencing 'land' as a site for labor and exertion in comparison with the metaphysical 'earth' which exists as an opportunity for self-discovery rather than work. Such implications and their visibility or, indeed, absence in Scottish women's writing and existing scholarship of such writing require further discussion. A more explicit analysis of class within the rural and semi-rural space would be an enriching and necessary addition to future work.

Above all, this thesis communicates the various ways in which these three writers responded to watchfulness and acknowledges the realities of life within a panopticonic society. The thesis demonstrates that concentrating on the relationship between watchfulness and rural modernity (in its myriad manifestations) can increase critical appreciation of Muir, Moon, and Shepherd. As such, this thesis contributes to the existing criticism of these writers



by encouraging a discussion which focuses on their experiences of Presbyterianism and escape, mourning and adaptation, and the empowerment of stravaiging, whilst continuing the critical appeal to consider their works as central to studies of Scottish literary modernism.

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