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**RALPH CONNOR, HUGH MACLENNAN
AND ALICE MUNRO –
THREE SCOTTISH-CANADIAN AUTHORS**

Introduction

uch has been written about the impact Scottish literature had on 19th century Canadian fiction. John Galt, Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson are often discussed as models for numerous Canadian imitators and it is an issue of debate whether their long-standing influence delayed the development of an authentically Canadian literature.¹

Scott's historical romances were readily accepted by Canadian readers, because of the nostalgic note he struck in the presentation of his characters. Their qualities were thought among the readers of the new colony to be close to their own, so that Scott's fiction tended to be read for gratifying a need for identification and for its assumed realism. Apart from his reception in Canada, Scott inspired Canadian authors to continue historical romances within their own context. Of the English-Canadian authors Major John Richardson made a lasting contribution to this genre.² Two other Lowland Scottish writers, John Galt and Robert Ballantyne, had a crucial impact on the developing school of Canadian realist

and adventure writing, whereas Stevenson's style, his notion of imaginative literature and his psychological studies served as popular models for Canadian writers in the 1890s. Bliss Carman, Gilbert Parker, Marshall Saunders and Agnes Laut are just a handful of Canadian writers from among many more inspired by Stevenson. Parallel to his impact the sentimental idylls of the Lowland Kailyarders began to attract readers' and writers' attention overseas. A Canadian Kailyard modelled on the themes and figures of the Lowland Scottish original could sell very successfully, because the patterns of religion, education and politics presented there still governed the social life of Canadian villages and towns. Names which come to mind here are Ralph Connor, who will be dealt with later, R.L. Richardson and Sarah Jeanette Duncan.

As a primary source of inspiration Scottish literature in Canada has been on the decline since World War I, yet Scottish influence on Canadian letters is no issue of the past. Major Canadian authors of the 19th and 20th century show a continuing attachment to Scottish literary patterns. Only recently Marjory Harper analysed Scottish, Canadian and American prose of the 19th and 20th century focussing on Scottish emigration. Her conclusion that the works demonstrate "not only the characteristic emblems of national identity transplanted by the Victorian Scots, but also the continuing relevance of Scottish emigrant mythology to a modern readership"³ holds true for the prose under scrutiny in the present article. The novels and short stories dealt with

thematize a Scottish identity on Canadian soil (Connor), put forward a Canadian literary identity supported by 'Scottish patterns' (MacLennan) or demonstrate an 'invisible' or hardly recognizable individual 'Scottishness' (Munro). The emphasis will not be on the emulation of set models, but on different voices of a culture in the process of change from Scottish-Canadian to Canadian-Scottish.⁴

Ralph Connor *The Man from Glengarry*
and *Glengarry School Days*

From his two dozen books written over a period of forty years *The Man from Glengarry* (1901) and its sequel *Glengarry School Days* (1902) stand out as the most acclaimed. Of Scottish descent himself Charles W. Gordon (1860-1937), an ordained Presbyterian minister in Calgary, the Banff region and at St. Stephens's, Winnipeg, turned into 'Ralph Connor' in 1898 when his first novel *Black Rock* appeared with the Westminster Publishing Company.⁵

Structurally, the first of the two novels is written in the tradition of romance, adventure tales and "Entwicklungsroman". Thematically, it treats the profound dual role Scots have played in the course of Empire history at home and abroad and which is reflected in their double status as "colonized" and "colonizer".⁶ In his preface Connor points to the second aspect⁷, while the textual corpus has references to a Highland Scottish substratum pointing to the eviction or other forms of enforced emigration of the Glengarry settlers from Scotland

[*The Man*, 14]. Presbyterian religion, customs and Gaelic speech add to the local colour of their land of adoption and its lively portrayal, but the time before the emigration or the reasons for their decision to leave Scotland appear blurred.⁸ Connor's is the literature of the settlement myth dedicated to the generation of the Scottish 'founding fathers' of Canada. Their dislocation from Scotland caused by stronger forces than themselves in the past is not allowed a significant position in Connor's success story of a hardy, resilient race: it is absent, sometimes vaguely felt and substituted by an (imperial) act of establishing roots in the new land.⁹ Connor's 'Glengarry' is primarily Scottish, but without the old painful memories; that the pioneering act is also 'colonial' is no concern of the author. David Craig has reminded us:

In Ontario the culture so drastically reshaped was the native-American... two settlements with Highland names... were established at the expense of Indian villages.... So one people scorned as primitive thrive at the expense of another.¹⁰

Adopting the patterns of an "Entwicklungsroman" the novel parallels the various stages of the protagonist's and Canada's development from their "childhood" in the dense forests of eastern Ontario to their "adulthood" in the new West.¹¹

The first two chapters of the novel introduce the

white ethnics of pre-confederation Canada. Irish, French and above all Highland Scots made their way into the Ontario woodlands between 1800 and 1850, where lumber camps during the winter provided precious raw material. Uncivilized acts of violence among the men seem to have survived from old European conflicts [*The Man*, 17-35], but as soon as the scene moves to Indian Lands, the Highlanders' Ontario settlement, the strife of the past loses significance and the civilizing influence of Christian morals soothes old wounds.¹² Connor's Calvinism is a "gospel of love" and even serves - along with pressures from Irish and French-Canadian settlements in the neighbourhood - to bring together disunited clans from Scotland.¹³ Glengarry is thus advanced in Connor's presentation as "a new Canadian clan" and the ideological foundation is laid for what will follow as the story expands from region to nation and from East to West.¹⁴ Solidly anchored in their faith and safely directed by a fatherly minister, determined, strong and sound in mind and body, Connor's Highland Scottish settlers possess the pioneering qualities required to build a nation.

The image of the wandering and enterprising Scot rising to the top administrative jobs of the British Empire after the Union of 1707 or directing the course of economic and political development in their adopted countries had gained some popularity at the turn of the century. Connor explicitly uses this image within what appears to be a closed tribal world in which Ranald for instance can urge the first Canadian Prime Minister John

Alexander Macdonald - himself of Scottish descent - to give his support to linking the West Canadian resources to the East by the CPR. As Ranald's missionary drive is underscored by "personal moral purity...equality of opportunity through education, social advancement through individual initiative...and social balance and harmony" Presbyterian values are introduced in the text.¹⁵ Content corresponds with form as the process of exploring, settling and developing the Canadian West is narrated by means of a carefully organized text pattern including maps, historical figures, well-arranged chapters and a clear line of plot development. Connor's textual organization does not conflict with a Calvinist thought pattern in concord with the guided settling of the Canadian West. As a nation is carved out of bush and rock with the help of Presbyterian doctrines, so the text is structured to give reason and order to an otherwise chaotic world. In other words, the Calvinist doctrine is a conquering tool which tackles 'bush' and 'text' alike.

If Connor's novel ended here, it would be in line with an older Scottish writing tradition about Canada.¹⁶ But it differs from the fiction of Scottish authors who never settled in Canada for good and whose works resulting from the remote perspective created a 'greater Scotland' transplanted to Canada. In contrast, Connor draws an outline of a 'Scottish Empire' substantially enriched by a 'confederate spirit' in that in the course of the plot's westward movement Scottish culture and Canadian nature [*The Man*, 353] are synthesized and form a unit which comes close to a textual

confederation.¹⁷ The mode of structuring the text reflects the administrative mode of settling the Canadian West as against the haphazard, individual settlement patterns in the U.S. According to Frye the Canadian settler surrounded by a threatening nature and at risk of being cut off from his cultural roots struggles for a preservation of his value system within a homogeneous society.¹⁸ Frye's "garrison mentality" is based on a Scottish frame of thoughts in Connor's *The Man from Glengarry*. Taking violent scenes, a positive hero and the characteristics of an adventure story into consideration the philosophical substance is aesthetically fused into what can be termed a Canadian western. Taken together the major thrust of the text glorifies the contributions of the Scottish Highlanders to the Canadian nation building myth and can consequently be classified as a piece of hagiographic writing.

Glengarry School Days (1902), a sequel to the novel, consists of fifteen sketches, many of them grouped around figures the reader came across in *The Man from Glengarry*. Modelled on the Scottish Kailyard formula this collection is a setback compared with the novel as it almost entirely depicts the inner world of a timeless Scottish community in Ontario. Being parables with a didactic intention these stories were seemingly written with an eye on cashing in on the success of his Scottish counterparts.¹⁹ Connor did not modify their literary recipe: the dominie and the minister at the centre of a static community of simple, God-fearing people, sacrificing mothers, healthy lovable children and stern Calvinist

fathers. Nostalgia ranks high and stifles any realistic attempt, so reducing a Canadian cultural make-up to a negligible minimum.

Hugh MacLennan's Canadian literary nationalism

When I first thought of writing this novel Canada was virtually an uncharacterized country. It seemed to me then that if our literature was to be anything but purely regional, it must be directed to at least two audiences. One was the Canadian public, which took the Canadian scene for granted but never defined its particular essence. The other was the international public, which had never thought about Canada at all, and knew nothing whatever about us.²⁰

This statement by MacLennan made in relation to his first published novel *Barometer Rising* (1941) puts the author's overall literary politics in a nutshell including his Calvinist-based didactic habits. Furthermore, as we will see, it implies the very special - peripheral - angle from which MacLennan was to see his country in connection with "its particular essence" as part of an outsider's definition of Canada.²¹

Nova Scotia (*Each Man's Son*), Halifax (*Barometer Rising*) and Montreal/Quebec (*Two Solitudes*; *The Watch that Ends the Night*) are MacLennan's favourite places.²² This was not always the case with his novels.

In his first two unpublished novels "So All Their

Praises" (1933) and "A Man Should Rejoice" (1937) Nova Scotia stands aside from the European and American centres. Both novels centre on young Canadian protagonists in search of ideological security in a world of upheaval, strife and disintegration prior to World War II. Weimar's and Hitler's Germany are as much the places of hot political debates about the future course as are New York and Lorbeerstein, a socialist model village in Austria and last refuge of a bunch of anarchist and socialist emigrants from Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. Despite the sympathies with communism, an outright hatred of U.S. American big business capitalism and a thinly disguised partisanship, MacLennan's early works lack the formal and ideological criteria to make them socialist realist fiction, instead they disintegrate because of their romantic concepts and defeatist notions. Amidst the welter of philosophizing, political ideas, places, figures and sub-plots, Nova Scotia's nature represents tranquility and a place of refuge, where political sores can be cured. In sum, warts and all, the two novels belong to the political fiction of the 1930s and their socialist visions. That the author did not come to grips with the complexity of his material is confirmed by a publisher's letter of rejection: "Our chief criticism of the book seems to be it does not really get anywhere, though it manages to tell a great deal about the changing world we live in."²³ Finally, the bad reception of the manuscript with American publishers had a decisive bearing on MacLennan's new approach to literature:

...after five years of trying, I spent an evening trying to discover if there was any common denominator in these letters of rejection. There was. In writing the first book with the scene set in Europe it was obvious I was not European - nor again an American - like Hemingway. The result...was that the book had no coherent point of view - coherent, that is, to an American reader. The second novel, with a scene set in the U.S., was equally off-beam. If I was an American ...then what kind of American was I? Suddenly I realized that no matter how hard he may try, few writers can escape their own environment. They are stuck with their country whether they want to be or not... And from this point on I was committed, at least for a time of working life, to the discovery of Canada as a literary scene.²⁴

As a result MacLennan's fiction moved into Canada, using particularly French- and East Canadian material. Consequently, Halifax and Cape Breton/Nova Scotia, where MacLennan was born in 1907 of Scottish Highland descent, turned into metaphors in the author's cultural rhetoric of a Canada in transition from colony to nation.²⁵ Being one of the founding provinces of the Canadian nation and by its nature Highland Scottish, Cape Breton/Nova Scotia has a great significance in MacLennan's design of Canadian

literary nationalism. As a “stepping stone into a new world”, Nova Scotia symbolises a state of ‘betweenness’ in his first published novel *Barometer Rising* (1941).²⁶

1. Charting Nova Scotia

The novel appeared at a time of “resurgent nationalism” in Canada, caused by World War I when for many Canada had come of age and found its new role in the Commonwealth. As Canada’s ties with Britain ceased to be of ultimate importance for the country’s political and cultural development, the literary responses of groups like the Confederation Poets lost their attractiveness. In prose fiction, historical romances and imperial issues seemed to be a matter of the past and though Morley Callaghan had first put his prose into a realistic mode, MacLennan found everything to his advantage for the introduction of his pioneering realistic “national romances” to the Canadian literary scene.²⁷ Time seemed to be ripe for a national prose and MacLennan started by ‘charting’ his home province and from there proceeded to delineating a Canadian identity.

Barometer Rising and *Each Man’s Son*, (1951) both set in Nova Scotia, are complementary novels with a strong emphasis, firstly, on the literary existence and historical importance of Halifax written simultaneously for an American and Canadian readership and, secondly, - from an inside perspective - on the province’s state of mind.²⁸

Barometer Rising is a portrayal of Halifax in those eight days in December 1917 culminating in the notorious Halifax Explosion. The character of the book is made clear from the outset: "It seems necessary to offer more than a conventional statement about the names of the characters in this book, since it is one of the first ever written to use Halifax." And he also qualifies another important feature:

Nova Scotia family names have...been employed; to avoid them would have been too definite a loss. Since there is no great variety in Scottish given names, the combinations are inevitably repetitious.²⁹

A strong Scottish rhythmic undercurrent is maintained throughout the novel, though Halifax's metamorphosis from a British "Warden of the North" to a Canadian city is portrayed through three successive identities: British, Nova Scotian, Canadian.³⁰

At the first stage MacLennan's Halifax bears the characteristics of one of Britain's principal supply bases during the colonial wars in the past and for present operations against Germany during World War I [BR, 33]. "Its original purpose had been entirely military, and so far as England was concerned, Halifax had no further use."³¹ How much MacLennan considered Halifax involved in British affairs is clear from the following passage: "...the inhabitants...they still drank tea with all their meals.... The Citadel itself

flew the Union Jack in all weathers and was rightly considered a symbol and bastion of the British Empire.” [BR, 6].

Parallel to a colonial past and present an alternative pattern is evoked by the multi-cultural legacy from the

...forefathers, from the Loyalists who had come here generations ago from the United States..., from the English..., from the Irish..., from the Highlanders who had lost their clans at Culloden...unreconciled to be Americans or even Canadians...convinced that in being Nova Scotian they possessed a peculiar cause for satisfaction. [BR, 130]

Admittedly, the author creates a Nova Scotian identity from multiple ethnic sources, yet in the following his main focus is on the influential contributions of the Highland Scottish pioneers, represented by old Alec MacKenzie or the younger Angus Murray and Neil Macrae. In particular the latter “seeks to re-establish trust - the clan fealty” in a modern world gone wrong.³² Not only their names are Scottish, but also - by implication or directly referred to - are their family backgrounds [BR, 96, 119, 206] and their speech [BR, 65].

MacLennan’s implication of a transition from colonial to post-colonial requires an appropriate imagery at a decisive turning point of the novel: mist veils Halifax, while a British cruiser sails towards the harbour to drop anchor. From the cruiser’s bridge “only [Halifax’s, U.Z.]

contours were distinguishable.... Underneath the mist was a disconnected, various life..." [BR, 141]. Colonial experience and post-colonial self-confidence place Halifax in an in-between position where old and new meet, where an ambivalent love-hate relationship with the mother country [BR, 33; 143] conflicts with a new awareness of the dominion's own value [BR, 143] and "a sense of identity can be achieved only by understanding and accepting one's past."³³ The carefully constructed equilibrium between colonial and post-colonial discourses is put to an abrupt end by MacLennan's dramatic presentation of the Halifax Explosion. Its symbolism certainly invites a political and national reading, as it implies that a Canadian nation will be born from the constructive energies of the Haligonians.³⁴ Nova Scotian pioneering activities, in particular their Scottish strands, hold the potentials for a Canadian future when the inhabitants of the nearly destroyed city seek a fresh start immediately after the explosion. [BR, 180]. Angus Murray, the alcoholic doctor, eventually commits himself to useful work [BR, 205] for the good of his community and - by implication - Canada:

We're the ones who make Canada what she is today...neither a colony nor an independent nation, neither English nor American.... Canada must therefore remain as she is, non-committal, until the day she becomes the keystone to hold the world together. [BR, 208].

Neil Macrae, the returning soldier, lost son and “post-colonial Canadian” after having set out on a symbolic mapping and exploring of his home town to help build anew from the debris of the old [BR, 178] comes to grips with Canada’s particular state of mind [BR, 200].³⁵ Even the explosion itself contributes to a symbolic reading in that the disaster turns Halifax - for the last time? - into an innocent victim [BR, 201, 217, 218] of uncontrollable forces.³⁶ The “rising wind” at the end [BR, 219] points to Canada’s future mission for the good of the world [BR, 218].³⁷

The transitional nature of place and text already comprises strong references to a future Canada. Textual markers like “snow” and “silence”, culminating in the “silent persistence of the falling snow” [BR, 197] support a Canadian and post-colonial undercurrent towards the end of the novel. “Snow” symbolically covers up an unfriendly past and offers a fresh start, “silence” marks the beginning of a process of re-appropriation of alienated words in whose course the ‘colony’ reaches an understanding of its own language and authentic meaning.³⁸ In more than one way MacLennan’s imagination “came home” in *Barometer Rising* as he found “words for [the Canadian] space-lessness”³⁹ and attempted to end his family’s and generation’s transitional silence about their ancestors’ collective displacement from Scotland.⁴⁰ If “Who am I when I am transported?” is a fundamental question in post-colonial and Canadian literature⁴¹, then MacLennan’s fictional and non-fictional answers bear a specific Nova Scotian connotation from an overall

Scottish discourse. Parallels in respect to the peripheral positions of all three countries/regions in relation to their respective dominant neighbours are drawn elsewhere in MacLennan's work.⁴² The "images of there" merge into "images of here", the physical environment (Halifax) changes from a colonial place to Canadian city, "silence" moves in the direction of "Canada".⁴³ All in all the reader is made the witness of a post-colonial, slow, and tough process of detachment from the imperial centre and Canada's new role as international mediator is modelled on MacLennan's image of the Scots: "The Scotch, who had learned from experience how to live with the English and by temperament were akin to the French, became in time the cement which bound Canada together."⁴⁴

Two similar states of cultural oppositions - Scottish/Gaelic vs. English and Canadian vs. American/British - have been translated into realistic literature, reflected upon from a marginalized perspective and from there been raised to a national level.

2. Inside Nova Scotia

Each Man's Son (1951) continues MacLennan's literary journey into the Scottish culture of his home province. It shifts from the topographical exploration in *Barometer Rising* to a psychological portrait of a fictitious Cape Breton community.⁴⁵ This time the other side of a Scottish legacy is at the centre of the plot: "To Cape Breton the Highlanders... brought with them an ancient

curse, intensified by John Calvin and branded upon their souls by John Knox....” And specifying its nature: “Daniel Ainslie ... did not know... that every day of his life was haunted by a sense of sin, a legacy of the ancient curse.”⁴⁶ In stark contrast to Ralph Connor’s moderate Calvinism of love, *Each Man’s Son* delves into the machinations of a repressive doctrine and its harmful impact on the sexually inhibited doctor, David Ainslie, modelled on MacLennan’s own father, and the beaten prize boxer, Archie MacNeil. It is based on MacLennan’s interpretation of the Calvinist religion “that God was each man’s personal enemy, and that a man committed a sin merely by existing.”⁴⁷ The setting is entirely Nova Scotian, so that the author thought of the text as a folk novel⁴⁸ but it appears spiritually connected with a Scottish past through crucial moments of cultural, here: religious, colonisation:

Our people were poets once, before the damned Lowlanders got to us with their religion. The old Celts knew as well as Christ did that only the sinner can become the saint because only the sinner can understand the need and the allness of love. Then the Lowlanders with their Calvinism made us ashamed of living. [*Each Man’s Son*, 66].

The psychological side of Calvinist moral rigidity is hence underscored by a discourse of power politics and in relation to its colonizing implications.⁴⁹ What had

seemed a coherent peripheral culture in *Barometer Rising*, now reveals its internal divide along the axis of Lowland and Highland sub-cultures and - in relation to them - of historical moments of dislocation.⁵⁰ Resulting from this a sense of defeatism rules the text [*Each Man's Son*, 67] originating from MacLennan's general idea of Canadian history:

I also grew up knowing that for the descendants of the evicted Scotch, those who had made their way here and done so much to build Canada, that old eighteenth century defeat had been an ultimate blessing.... The four ethnic groups which came together to create Confederation - the French, the Loyalists, the Scotch and the Irish - were equally the children of four separate defeats and abandonments.⁵¹

The protagonists' personal defeats in *Each Man's Son* are deeply rooted in a fundamental division between "mind" and "body" caused by Calvinist Scottish culture.⁵² Ainslie, the intellectual, cannot bring himself to a clear acceptance of his sexuality until he discovers at the very end of the novel through his adopted son Alan, that love is a chief component of a full life. Archie MacNeil, the boxer, resorts to physical violence in the face of incomprehensible forces and dies after killing his wife and her lover. Both men, though different in many ways, share the inability to come to terms with their

Calvinist-shaped personalities. Both men in their different ways set out on their own self-exploring journeys, which are denied a fusion. In a symbolic ending, “mind” and “body” stay separate as Ainslie meets Archie for the first time at the moment of the latter’s death. MacLennan’s literary attempt at exorcising the Calvinist blemish on Nova Scotian culture implies a historical continuity both in terms of content and narrative strategies between the old and the new world.⁵³ Hence this particular novel reflects a literary and political conservatism as it proceeds on the hypothesis of a Scottish “cultural schizophrenia” and disregards literary modes in Scotland to overcome what was felt to be an English cultural imperialism.⁵⁴ Indicators which could have signalled an alternative to the implied ‘Jekyll-and-Hyde syndrome’ are absent from the text as for instance a Gaelic counter-discourse is not regarded a potential source of textual resistance.⁵⁵ Instead Archie dies, Ainslie’s promise of change is vague, his wife will never be capable of giving birth. The lingering impact of Calvinism on the reformed Calvinist writer’s mind produces from a post-colonial point of view the paradoxical effect that a colonial legacy and its master text survive and re-surface and leaves “a Highlander lost in the lowlands of the shrewd men.” [*Each Man’s Son*, 113].

Colonial mind and post-colonial body - that is imperial notions of the now dominant Lowland Scottish culture and colonial counter discourses - are juxtaposed without being synthesized. Therefore *Each Man’s Son* fits neatly into “‘second world’ spaces [which] are

characterized by the ambiguity and ambivalence of both oppositional and complicit positions.”⁵⁶

3. ‘Scottish’ French Canada

Two anecdotes in “Scotchman’s Return” precisely describe MacLennan’s basic politics which made him the social documentary writer he was and chiefly provided the themes of his novels. The first concerns his father’s traumatic encounter with a British officer on board a British battlecruiser. The latter’s “arrogant disdain” of the civilian natives and their fledgling airforce hurts the father’s pride as a “Scotch” and Canadian.⁵⁷ The second concerns the author’s encounter with an American tourist during his first trip to Scotland in 1958 whom he overhears making critical remarks about the consequences of Puritanism in the presence of an Edinburgh car dealer. The Canadian’s and Scot’s final mutual affirmation of living next to “difficult neighbours” exposes in essence one of MacLennan’s primary writing impulses.⁵⁸

Apart from emotional references to a Celtic myth⁵⁹, he feels part of⁶⁰, and the assumption of the dialectics of history⁶¹, the essay touches upon fundamental issues which had become the hallmarks of his particular post-colonial way of writing from within a settler community. By drawing an analogy between Scotland’s past and Canada’s present, he issues at once a warning against imperial strategies and uncontrolled capitalist materialism:

There... is the bait... and it is the same bait England offered the Lowland Scotch after she lost the American colonies and had yet to consolidate her second empire in India, Asia, and Africa. The Scotch swallowed it whole, and the long-term results of that ingestion should be remembered by Canadian voters and decision-makers today. After a temporary prosperity, Scotland went into a long decline.... The ablest men left Scotland.... How many Scotsmen gained greatly in living standards because of the total economic and cultural union of the two countries?.... It could be the same in Canada.... But more important is the question of our priceless resources, and the knowledge that we are trustees for them, and the equally clear knowledge that the present American compulsion is to squander them for the sake of an affluence that has already made the United States one of the world's most unhappy lands.⁶²

In order to arrive at this particular image of the Scots MacLennan draws up two Scottish identities. For the Scots in Scotland he draws on notorious events and characteristics of their history which show them on the losing side and simultaneously eschewing hints to their colonizing undertakings in the service of the British Empire. Consequently, MacLennan's selective historiog-

raphy manages to present the Scots as a whole as victims of “betrayals” and “miseries”. As a major part of the Scottish Gaeldom Canadians hold in their “collective consciousness a memory of Scotland’s loss to England. It accounts for our profound distrust of any expression of self-confident rational nationalism.”⁶³

In stark contrast to their ‘home identity’ MacLennan constructs a Scottish ‘exile identity’ reminiscent of Connor’s notions and like his underlining the Highland Scots’ assumed nation-building prowess.⁶⁴ *Two Solitudes* (1945) and - to a lesser extent - *The Watch that ends the Night* (1958) continue the national discourse which he had begun in *Barometer Rising* in that both novels imply a historical analogy between Scotland and French Canada and from there proceed to an assumed spiritual affinity which allies both races.⁶⁵ Without elaborating Cameron refers to the underlying alliance: “Siding with the underdog was easy for a Nova Scotian of Scottish background.”⁶⁶

Canada “pulled from the outside by two cultures” in *Barometer Rising* is now represented as being pulled from the inside by two cultures - French and English.⁶⁷ The author does not pull the punches about his sympathies with the French Canadians and by implication draws a parallel with a Scottish experience grounded in a sense of defeat: “I have simply liked and admired most of my French-speaking compatriots and have believed, rightly or wrongly, that I understood how they felt. After all, I too came from a defeated minority race.”⁶⁸ The historical lesson learnt put them and the other charter

members of Canada - the Irish, the Scots and the Loyalists - in a privileged position for Canadian Confederation. It can therefore be concluded that MacLennan's version of the Canadian founding myth rests with the downtrodden or, in his own words, the "left-over materials in history's workshop."⁶⁹

MacLennan's didactic approach towards the novel as an art form has often been the object of critical response.⁷⁰ An analysis of the alternative/oppositional connotation of his fiction, however, has been largely neglected. Again his choice of place takes a prominent symbolic position. In *Two Solitudes* the setting shifts from the Nova Scotian periphery to the even more troubled periphery of Quebec and Montreal. In contrast to *Barometer Rising*, this novel is not a portrait of a city, yet its cultural outlines are sketched as they are of significance for the novel's political rhetorics. Here is a scene at the end of World War I:

Most of the flags across the street were Union Jacks, but there were also a few Tricolours and Old Glories. He noticed that the crowd here was entirely English. Farther east it would be French. It was the sort of thing you always watched for in Montreal.⁷¹

Being bi-cultural and bi-lingual, but politically and economically dominated by English oligarchies, Montreal stands as a symbol in MacLennan's national epic of instilling an awareness of "an artificial pulling of

the two [French and English] races" inside the country [*Two Solitudes*, 331]. On the whole, the antithetical structure of the novel supports the major thesis of an Anglo-Saxon colonization of French Canada through the narrative device of juxtaposition. French Catholics stand against English Protestants, the Quebec countryside contrasts with Anglo-Canadian urbanism and in all cases French Canadians lose out. This is a climate in which Quebec separatism can evolve as MacLennan makes clear by the creation of the French radical Marius Tallard, whose emotional rejection of English predominance apparently foreshadows the Quebec Separatist Movement in the 1960s.⁷² Yet, "by staying with the crown throughout the [American] Revolution, the French-Canadians made possible the existence of Canada as a nation" and therefore have the historical right to have a say in the development of modern Canada.⁷³ It would be wrong to assume a black-and-white thesis novel, since divisions occur within each ethnic group. Athanase Tallard, the innovative French Canadian entrepreneur splits with his community and, above all, with his faith, but the biggest rift appears on the 'English' side represented by the Scottish-Canadian business man Huntley McQueen and the retired Nova Scotian sailor Captain Yardley.

Hard-nosed, efficient, stern and sometimes brutal, Huntley combines many traits of MacLennan's Scottish types. Ambivalence is their foremost characteristic, because they oscillate between their 'victim identities' surviving through collective consciousness and their

top positions in modern Canada. Scottish-Canadian achievements in MacLennan's writing are suggested to eliminate the loser's stamp on Scottish culture and thus aim at an imaginary revision of the course of British history. The following portrait of the Methuen tycoons includes the pre-eminent features of the Scottish success story in Canada as well as MacLennan's densest description of the Scots on the make:

The Methuens felt themselves as much an integral part of Montreal as the mountain around which the city was built. They had been wealthy for a sufficient number of generations... they incubated their money, increasing it by compound interest and the growth of the Canadian Pacific Railway. They... went to a Presbyterian church every Sunday and contributed regularly to charities and hospitals. They served as governors of schools and universities, sat as trustees on societies founded to promote the arts, joined militia regiments.... No Methuen found it possible to feel inferior to the English in any respect whatever; rather they considered themselves an extension of the British Isles, more vigorous than the English because their blood was Scotch, more moral because they were Presbyterians. Every branch of the family enjoyed a quiet satisfaction whenever visiting Englishmen entered their homes and

remarked in surprise that no one could possibly mistake them for Americans. [*Two Solitudes*, 148; 149].

MacLennan's apparently firm grip on Canadian identity based on solid Scottish patterns of clannishness and perseverance loosens for McQueen's strict Presbyterian vein which ruins Catholic French Athanase. His victimization symbolically disrupts the mythical bond between Scots and French [*Two Solitudes*, 14; 211-217] MacLennan suggests and points to *Each Man's Son* where a similar destructive Presbyterian doctrine colonized the Highlanders' minds. MacLennan's "Scotch...by temperament...akin to the French" are therefore to be sought elsewhere and are found in the lowly orders of Celtic Nova Scotia.⁷⁴ MacLennan's use of "Scotch" primarily, though by no means always, implies a Celtic link absent from Lowland Scots.⁷⁵ How much he thought *Two Solitudes* to be Celtic can be inferred from a letter to the American film director John Ford concerning a film adaptation:

For me it would be more than an honour if you undertook to produce my work in film; it would assure the success of a kind of story that could easily be spoiled, for you profoundly understand the Celtic mind and, by implication, would have no more difficulty than I had in understanding the mind of French Canada.⁷⁶

Captain Yardley, a retired sea captain from Nova Scotia, is juxtaposed with McQueen's rigid Ontario Scottishness. Settling amidst French Canadians in the Quebec countryside he is soon accepted by the locals on the grounds of his egalitarian conduct, "...he was very different from their notion of an English-Canadian. He was friendly, there was nothing high and mighty about him, he was ready to ask them for advice." [*Two Solitudes*, 21]. It's no wonder that solidarity with the French Canadians comes easily to him [*Two Solitudes*, 186] as he never shed his Nova Scotian background [*Two Solitudes*, 300].

With this figure MacLennan moves from a Scottish-Canadian to a Nova Scotian-Canadian focus and on to a Canadian identity. Yardley's liminal space he occupies between Anglo- and French Canada, old and young, makes him the transitional device the author required for a representation of a Canada on her way to national adulthood. It is the novel's symbolic climax when Paul, son of Athanase Tallard, marries Heather, Yardley's granddaughter, "one quarter Nova Scotian" [*Two Solitudes*, 326]. MacLennan's literary synthesis of Canada from a Celtic or "Scotch" substratum in *Barometer Rising* and *Each Man's Son* is complemented by his vision of a kindred French spirit to overcome a "national schizophrenia".⁷⁷

MacLennan's fifth book *The Watch that ends the Night* (1958) is another of his Montreal novels, but this time the city is set against the background of international affairs in the turbulent 1930s (Spanish Civil War,

Nazi Germany, Stalin's Russia) rather than a symbol of national divisions. The plot revolves around a *ménage à trois*: Jerome Martell, a brilliant Montreal doctor, political idealist and womanizer, George Stewart, university teacher, political commentator and I-narrator and his wife Catherine, first wife to Jerome. Several minor figures complete the picture of intellectual Montreal in the 1930s. It is also a novel of loss and quest, a settlers' community's odyssey exemplified by a protagonist's unsettled position within Canadian society. Jerome Martell is another of MacLennan's marginalized and hybridized characters⁷⁸ of Nova Scotian/Maritimes descent. This is what the I-narrator says about him:

I suppose his background was responsible for his indifference to the social shades one learns in Montreal.... He had grown up in Nova Scotia, and this small but senior province is only a part of Canada by reason of a political agreement. [*The Watch*, 157-158].

This egalitarian spirit on the periphery of central Canada which MacLennan repeatedly describes as having survived into modern times makes Nova Scotia a metaphorical starting point for MacLennan's literary exploration of Canada. A canoe trip by young Jerome from the New Brunswick forests through "semi-ghost towns of a colonial past" [*The Watch*, 195] to Moncton railway station symbolically denotes the stages

of Canadian colonization. That the protagonist later works as a committed doctor for the good of his community like some of MacLennan's previous main characters supports the author's choice of the genre of the 'Entwicklungsroman' to overcome the cultural limbo into which he saw his country exist and eventually wither.

We conclude: MacLennan's 'thesis novels' under scrutiny here take their themes and motifs from Canadian contexts. Their driving writing impulse sets them against British and American literature for their awareness of both countries' cultural ascendancy rooted in a translation of Scottish experience with English imperialism. This sense of a "Scotch" sensitivity derives from a reconstruction of a Celtic legacy in Nova Scotia and its proximity to French Canadian otherness in opposition to English dominance.⁷⁹ Unlike Connor's "monothematic" nationalism MacLennan's national epics thus are attempts at transforming moments of cultural subordination into literary markers of a settler community.⁸⁰

Alice Munro - the individualization of the Scottish heritage

In comparison with Connor and MacLennan Alice Munro's fiction differs in two respects: she prefers short stories to collective portraits of ethnic groups (*The Man from Glengarry*) or national epics (*Barometer*

Rising, Two Solitudes) and her narratives centre on female characters.

Her choice of the short story genre implies a downright rejection of epic literature as a medium of the representation of national causes. Instead, she uses her narratives to thematize the effects of dominant discourses on the individual female mind. The stories treated here are character studies of women racked with chauvinist discourses, in particular Scottish Calvinism.

In an interview Alice Munro admits that as she became middle aged she started taking an interest in Scotland and recognized the Scottish influence in her writing.⁸¹ Consequently, Scottish topics, figures and places enter her works in the 1990s. This is particularly the case with "Friend of my Youth" and "Hold me fast, don't let me pass".⁸² Apart from Munro's favourite themes of female quests, broken family ties and mother-daughter relations in sometimes dispirited surroundings both stories signify female returns to Scottish roots. Munro considered this to be a characteristic feature of Canadian culture: "...we never really repudiated what we call the 'old country' the way the Americans did, and the way the Australians to a later extent have."⁸³

Though set in the Ottawa Valley the first of the stories is on the one hand informed by a 'spiritual' return to Scotland in that the doctrines of Calvinist dissenters, the Cameronians, play a crucial part. On the other, metafictional and intertextual strategies support a story-in-a-story of a young female narrator following her mother's narration about her past, but

modifies, comments on and parts with it in the end. Her scepticism is the guiding impulse of the narrative as it moves on three narrative levels. When the daughter retells her mother's past in a Cameronian household and her relationship with Flora, the eldest of two sisters, Flora turns into a Presbyterian angel ["The Friend", 6-8; 13-15; 19]. When commented upon by the daughter-narrator, Flora is made into a "Presbyterian witch" ["The Friend", 20-21] and, finally, on the third level, the reader realizes that the story basically deals with a mother-daughter relationship via different attitudes towards sex ["The Friend", 20-23; 25, 26].

The post-modern complexity of the narrative structure originates from different discourses, shifting, playing with notions of reality, fiction and meta-fiction ["The Friend", 20-23; 24-26], transcending figures and blurring narrative positions. It can be safely assumed that Munro's sceptical narrator responds to James Hogg's novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824).⁸⁴ Both texts deconstruct central narrative strategies based on a Presbyterian definition of the "sinful [female] body".⁸⁵

Women caught up in this theology find their bodies inscribed into a negative, contradictory discourse: although the body is effaced, it lurks under its effacement as a continuing threat to a spiritual identity.⁸⁶

Munro's narrator thus tries to break away from what

is felt to be a repression of female bodies by male dominated ideologies and their texts. Gender and ethnics are the pre-eminent characteristics of rewriting a colonising Scottish discourse about women, texts and history. In short, male Scottish patterns in "Friend of my Youth" serve to be made over into Canadian post-modern strategies.

"Narratives of Scottish culture... seem to form some kind of connective tissue between" the people in the narrators' past and "their own personal stories."⁸⁷ "Hold me fast, don't let me pass" set entirely in Scotland is such a story. Hazel, a biology teacher from Walley, Ontario, has taken a leave of absence to trace her late husband's past in wartime Scotland and suddenly finds herself on a quest into her own self. Abrupt breaks, flashbacks, and erratic shifts in time and place characterise Munro's style-mix and correspond with her protagonist's travel into the past. Again the quest is two-fold as the psychological side is underpinned by a sub-narrative about particular events of the Scottish past (Flodden, Philiphaugh). While Hazel undergoes a change from being a "meek" ["Hold me fast", 87] wife to being a middle-aged woman drinking whisky and contemplating sex with a near-stranger, she also learns about the evasiveness and unreliability of reconstructed Scottish history and Canadian present. The eponymous line "Hold me fast, don't let me pass" from the Scottish ballad "Tam Lin" about a shape-shifting man captures the symbolic essence of the story.

The story's theme of questioning old relations

personal and cultural does not lead to a full-scale Canadian reading. Its open-endedness outlines a space waiting to be filled. Whereas Connor's and MacLennan's didactic literature help create a Canadian literary (proto-) nationalism on the basis of a sometimes vague 'Scottishness', Munro's short fiction translates the very process of alienation from a Scottish heritage into individual fates. Textual disintegration follows the recognition of a mythologized Scottish past which is broken into narrative crystals for a special form of continuity.⁸⁸ There is no aesthetic approach to the representation of the Scottish pioneering spirit her father Robert Laidlaw pictured in his novel *The MacGregors* (1979), but only "the place as it impinges on the characters".⁸⁹

We conclude with a review of Laidlaw's novel by Timothy Findley exemplifying the transition from his Scottish novel to his daughter's 'Scottish' stories. He writes: "...in [them, U.Z.] through fiction, his daughter makes her break with the past that is implicit in her father's book without destroying that past."⁹⁰

Conclusion

It is a matter of the record that Canada was the first colony or group of colonies which achieved political independence without a violent revolution and without severing its ties with the European motherland.⁹¹

This article has tried to measure the extent to which unsevered links with a “European motherland” bear upon the fiction of Connor, MacLennan and Munro, who are from different social backgrounds and cultural environments, but united by common Scottish ties to which their aesthetic approaches respond differently.

Ralph Connor’s fiction is built around the figure of the enterprising Calvinist Scot and Canadian in the making, with no great concern about his humiliating past, but a clear prospect of a bright future in his land of adoption. In contrast to the Scottish-Canadian thrust of the contents, a Kailyard formula places his fiction in the literary mainstream of the Scottish ‘motherland’. Homely autostereotypes answer as much to a sense of class and cultural displacement as they could be successfully marketed among old settlers and new immigrants socialized in British literary tastes of the day.

Hugh MacLennan’s anti-modern(ist) novels offer two discourses: a “reimagined” Nova Scotia “intrinsically Scottish and Calvinist”⁹², and a deconstructed version in opposition to the Anglo-Scottish/British religious and cultural usurpation of Gaelic Scotland. Translating historical defeat into an attribute of Canadian nationalism causes ambivalence to linger in his fiction; that is, here he comes closest to a settler society’s post-colonial point of view which had not lost its strong affiliation with a particular Nova Scotian identity in his fiction of the 1950s.⁹³ Therefore his being “passionately British” occasionally retreats behind a Nova Scotian imagination of essential Highland ‘Scottishness’.

Alice Munro 'returns' to dislocating moments in the Scottish past relevant to a feminist and post-colonial Canadian present in order to put a critical distance between a hegemonic European master narrative and her attempts at re-writing it for a distinctive Canadian "cultural self-image."⁹⁴ Issues of gender and nationality are often interrelated in Canadian writing and consequently the representation of history comes through personal stories of rites of passage or other representations of family history. 'Scotland' in Munro's fiction distinguishes itself from Connor's and MacLennan's in that it no longer serves as a mythical force from which to reconstruct a literary nationalism, but as a narrative foil against which re-writing a new individual identity is made possible. Stephen Scobie's *Taking the Gate - A Journey through Scotland* is a recent example of post-modern Canadian literature measuring the distance between the two 'motherlands' - Scottish and Canadian - without severing the links.⁹⁵

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Endnotes

¹ Elizabeth Waterston, "The Lowland Tradition in Canadian Literature", in: W. Stanford Reid (ed.), The Scottish Tradition in Canada, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart 1976; 1988, 203-231. Waldemar Zacharasiewicz, "The Rise of Cultural Nationalism in the New World: The Scottish Element and Example", in: Horst W. Drescher et. al. (Hrsg.), Nationalism in Literature - Literarischer Nationalismus, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang 1989, 315-334; 323.

² Wacousta (1832); The Canadian Brothers; or, The Prophecy Fulfilled (1840).

³ Marjorie Harper, "Adventure or Exile? The Scottish Emigrant in Fiction", in: Scottish Literary Journal 23,1 (May 1996), 21-32; 21.

⁴ As Margaret Laurence's The Diviners has been the object of many analyses, it will not be considered here, though it unquestionably belongs to this group. See Harper, "Adventure", 31, FN 18.

⁵ For a detailed account of his life and work see John Lennox, "Charles W. Gordon ['Ralph Connor'] (1860-1937)", in: Robert Lecker et. al. (eds.), Canadian Writers and their Works, Vol. 3, Oakville: ECW Press 1988, 103-159.

⁶ See Chris Gittings, "Canada and Scotland: Conceptualizing 'Postcolonial' Spaces", in: Essays on Canadian Writing 56 (1995), 134-161, 137.

⁷ "The solid forests of Glengarry have vanished, and with the forests the men who conquered them.... It is part of the purpose of this book to so picture these men and their times that they may not drop quite out of mind." The Man from Glengarry, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart 1993 (New Canadian Library), 9. All quotations from this edition in the text.

⁸ For peculiarities of speech see Ian Pringle, "The Gaelic Substratum in the English of Glengarry County and its Reflection in the Novels of Ralph Connor", in: Canadian Journal of Linguistics 26,1 (1981), 126-140.

⁹ Hunter notes a “gesture of defiance” in the generations of Highland emigrants after Culloden. (James Hunter, A Dance Called America, Edinburgh and London: Mainstream Publishing 1994, 81-85); Cf. K.J. Duncan, “Patterns of Settlement in the East”, in: Reid, The Scottish Tradition, 49-75.

¹⁰ David Craig, On the Crofter’s Trail, London: Jonathan Cape 1990; 1992, 199. See also 119.

¹¹ Two rites of passage signify the awakening of Ranald’s personality and Canada’s identity: Ranald saves the lives of the minister’s wife and her son and later assists in bringing about the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway linking the East and West of Canada.

¹² On the settlement of Glengarry see Pringle, “The Gaelic Substratum”, 129.

¹³ See Lennox, “Charles W. Gordon”, 141.

¹⁴ Roy Daniells, “Glengarry Revisited”, in: Canadian Literature 31 (Winter 1967), 45-53; 47.

¹⁵ See Fraser in Lennox, “Charles W. Gordon”, 129.

¹⁶ John Galt in *Bogle Corbet* (1831) reconstructed a greater (Canadian) Scotland. John Buchan’s Sick Heart River (1941) continues this tradition. On Galt’s and Buchan’s Scottish-Canadian fiction see Uwe Zagratzki, “John Galt and John Buchan - Two Scottish writers in Canada”. Soon to be published in Konrad Groß (ed.), Informal Empire? Cultural Relations Between Canada, The United States and Europe, Kiel: I&F Verlag 1998.

¹⁷ When Ranald is joined by the rueful French-Canadian LeNoir, who had killed his father, this serves as a reminder of Connor’s humanist interpretation of Calvinist doctrine [242-245] as well as a symbolic merging of French and British cultures.

¹⁸ Walter Pache, “‘Recipe for a Canadian Novel’ Kanadische Literatur im landeskundlichen Kontext”, in: Franz Kuna, Heinz Tschachler (Hrsg.), Dialog der Texte: Literatur der Landeskunde, Tübingen: Günter Narr 1986, 505-525; 509; see also Northrop Frye, “Conclusion”, in: Carl F. Klinck (ed.),

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Literary History of Canada, Vol. II, Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press 1965; 1976, 333-361; see also Alan R. Turner, "Scottish Settlement of the West", in: Reid, The Scottish Tradition, 76-91.

¹⁹ Well-known Scottish Kailyarders in the last two decades of the 19th century were J.M. Barrie, S.R. Crockett and John Watson.

²⁰ MacLennan quoted from David Staines (ed.), "Introduction", in: The Canadian Imagination, Cambridge/Mass., London: Harvard University Press 1977, 1-22; 4.

²¹ MacLennan's classical training explains the didactic element in his writing. See his "The Future of the Novel as an Art Form", in: Hugh MacLennan, Scotchman's Return and other Essays, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons 1960, 142-158; also: Roger Hyman "Too many Voices, too many Times: Hugh MacLennan's unfulfilled Ambitions" in: Queen's Quarterly 89, 2 (Summer 1982) 313-324, 313.

²² On MacLennan's choice of landscapes and places compare Susanne Bach, "The Geography of Perception in Hugh MacLennan's Maritime Novels", in: Wolfgang Hochbruck, James O. Taylor (eds.), Down East - Critical Essays on Contemporary Maritime Canadian Literature, Trier: WVT 1996, 81-93.; Mari Bordessa, "Hugh MacLennan's Landscapes: Literary Renditions of a Northern Environment", in: Jörn Carlsen, Bengt Streijffert (eds.), Essays in Canadian Literature, Lund: The Nordic Association for Canadian Studies, 1989, 19-30; Paul Goetsch, Das Romanwerk Hugh MacLennans. Eine Studie zum literarischen Nationalismus in Kanada, Hamburg 1961; Paul Goetsch (ed.), Hugh MacLennan, Toronto 1973.

²³ Harcourt, Brace and Co. (September 1935) reject "So all their Praises". (Hugh MacLennan Papers, McGill, Box 6,4).

²⁴ "The Discovery of Canada as a Literary Scene", n.d. (Hugh MacLennan Papers, McGill University, Box 5, 38). See also Elspeth Cameron, Hugh MacLennan - A writer's life, Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press 1981, Chapter 5.

²⁵ The great-grandfather Neil MacLennan had arrived from Applecross, Ross and Cromarty, in Cape Breton in 1832. See Cameron, Hugh MacLennan, 4.

²⁶ Hugh MacLennan, "The Scottish Touch: Cape Breton", Holiday - Canada Issue, (April 1964), pp 86. Also T.D. MacLulich, Hugh MacLennan, Boston: Twayne Publishers 1983, 31.

²⁷ Cameron, Hugh MacLennan, 135-136; Isabel Bassett, "The Transformation of Imperialism: Connor to MacLennan", in: Journal of Canadian Fiction 2,1 (1984), 58-62; 60; MacLulich, Hugh MacLennan, 31-32; T.D. MacLulich, Between Europe and America, Oakville: ECW Press 1988.

²⁸ David Arnason pointed out that Barometer Rising was "the first novel written in Canada, by a Canadian, in which a peculiarly Canadian consciousness manifests itself." ("Canadian Nationalism in Search of a Form: Hugh MacLennan's Barometer Rising", in: Journal of Canadian Fiction, Vol.1,4 (Fall 1972), 68-71; 68).

²⁹ "Foreword" in: Barometer Rising, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart 1991. All quotations from this edition in the text. For a critical analysis of Nova Scotia's Scottish contributions see Ian McKay, "Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954", in: Acadiensis, 21, 2 (1992), 5-47; Ian McKay, The Quest of the Folk, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press 1994.

³⁰ The quotation refers to a book of the same name by Thomas Radall, Halifax - Warden of the North, 1964.

³¹ MacLennan in "Halifax - my home town", in: "The Star Weekly Magazine" (April 7, 1962) (Hugh MacLennan Papers, University of Calgary, Second Acc. 380/86.2, 9.6).

³² Reshard Gool, "A Political Lesson", in: North Dakota Quarterly, 52,3 (1984), 24-42; 36. Another feature is taken up by Gool there: "If one wanted to press the Calvinist case, one could argue that the portrait Barometer Rising offers of humanity is one of permanent displacement...", 32.

³³ MacLulich, Hugh MacLennan, 35.

³⁴ The vision of Canada as a national community rests with a sense of geography covering all Canadian regions. [BR, 79.]

³⁵ MacLulich, Hugh MacLennan, 35.

³⁶ MacLennan's knowledge of Calvinist doctrines includes a wrathful God punishing evil.

³⁷ On the issue of the "mission" in Canadian literature see Isabel Bassett, "The Transformation of Imperialism", 58-62.

³⁸ Dennis Lee, "Writing in Colonial Space", in: Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin (eds.), The post-colonial studies reader, London and New York: Routledge 1995, 397-401.

³⁹ *op. cit.*, 400.

⁴⁰ Cf. MacLennan's "Scotland bled at Culloden, But Canada was enriched", in: "The Montreal Star" (June 23, 1962).

⁴¹ Alan Lawson, "The Discovery of Nationality in Australian and Canadian Literatures", in: Ashcroft, The post-colonial studies reader, 167-169.

⁴² "Scotland's Fate: Canada's Lesson", in: Elspeth Cameron (ed.), The Other Side of Hugh MacLennan, Toronto: Macmillan of Canada 1978, 260-268.

⁴³ Lawson, "The Discovery", 168.

⁴⁴ MacLennan, "Who and what are the Canadians" (c. 1965) (Hugh MacLennan Papers, McGill, Box 5, 21). See also "Scotland bled", *op. cit.*

⁴⁵ MacLennan's intention was to write about a subject which was at once universal and Canadian (see Cameron, Hugh MacLennan, 227). I will focus on the Gaelic/Scottish subtext at the expense of the Greek tragedy patterns in the novel.

⁴⁶ MacLennan in "Author's Note", Each Man's Son, Toronto: New Press Canadian Classics 1991, VIII, IX. All quotations from this edition in the text. Prior to this novel MacLennan had dealt with the Canadian and American variants of Calvinism (The Precipice, 1948).

⁴⁷ Letter by MacLennan to John Gray, 12 August 1950, in: Cameron, Hugh MacLennan, 229.

⁴⁸ MacLulich, Hugh MacLennan, 65.

⁴⁹ Calvinism continued to be on his mind: "There is a dour-

ness in English-speaking Canada that came from the raw Calvinism of the Scotch and the diluted Calvinism of the United Empire Loyalists which has even infected the French Canadians." In: "An English-Speaking Quebecker Looks at Quebec", address to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, Montreal, January 22, 1966. (Hugh MacLennan Papers, University of Calgary, 14.4.7-9 Box 4). On Calvinism in the novel see D.J. Dooley, "Each Man's Son: The Daemon of Hope and Imagination", in: Journal of Canadian Studies, 14 (1979/80), 66-75. On psychology see Larry MacDonald, "Psychologism and the Philosophy of Progress: The Recent Fiction of MacLennan, Davies and Atwood", in: Studies in Canadian Literature, 9,2 (1984), 121-143.

⁵⁰ Gittings, "Canada and Scotland", 151. The colonizing character of Lowland Scottish agencies is given evidence by the "Scottish Society of Promulgation of Christianity in the Highlands" in the 18th century.

⁵¹ "Canada and Scotland - An Analogy", in: Maclean's (1972), (Hugh MacLennan Papers, McGill, 14,46). See also "Canada between covers", in: Saturday review of Literature (7 September 1946), 30 in: MacLulich, Hugh MacLennan, 53. It is interesting to note that the English are not included in the Canadian "founding races". MacLennan is ambiguous about this point, see "The Meaning of Canada", in: "Century 1867-1967", The Montreal Star, February 13, 1967, (Hugh MacLennan Papers, University of Calgary, First Acc. 14.4.29) where the English are mentioned. It will concern us again later.

⁵² On the split of "heart" and "head" in Scottish culture see Tom Nairn, The Break-up of Britain, London: NLB 1977. See also Warren Tallman on the novel's Calvinist syndrome, "Wolf in the Snow", in: Eli Mandel (ed.), Contexts of Canadian Criticism, Chicago 1971, 243-245 here from MacLulich, Hugh MacLennan, 76.

⁵³ Here James Hogg's (The Private Confessions and Memoirs of a Justified Sinner, 1824) and Robert Louis Stevenson's

fiction (The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde, 1886) come to mind as well as the motif of the alter ego or the "doppelgänger".

⁵⁴ Cf. the political fiction by Scottish writers of the 1930s.

⁵⁵ See Gittings, "Canada and Scotland", 143. Dan Ainslie complains about the "general childishness of this whole place." [Each Man's Son, 33].

⁵⁶ Gillian Whitlock, "Outlaws of the Text", in: Ashcroft, The post-colonial studies reader, 349-352. Cf. Hyman, "Too many Voices", 317.

⁵⁷ MacLennan, "Scotchman's Return", 3. In this article MacLennan's father figures as an exemplary Highland "Scotch". The author here makes a striking distinction between "Scots" and "Scotch": "He was neither a Scot nor yet was he Scottish; he never used those genteel appellations.... He was simply Scotch". ["Scotchman's Return", 1].

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁹ He uses terms as "clairvoyance, doomed, exiled, feeling of failure, melancholic" to describe the Celtic pattern. ["Scotchman's Return"].

⁶⁰ See his reiterated use of collective "we".

⁶¹ "Here, of course, was the supreme triumph of the civilization which, in wrecking the clansmen, had made it possible for me to think of Canada as home." *Ibid.*, 11. Some reviewers noticed the focus of the book: "Although the title essay treats warmly of MacLennan's return to the country of his ancestors, the book as a whole is uniquely Canadian in point of view." ("Press", Pittsburgh, Pa., Hugh MacLennan Papers, University of Calgary, First Acc., 14, 10, 1).

⁶² "Scotland's Fate", 267; see also "Canada and Scotland".

⁶³ "Scotland's Fate", 262.

⁶⁴ Cf. "Scotchman's Return".

⁶⁵ See "Who and What are the Canadians". How strong the French-Celtic Scottish alliance seemed to be for MacLennan is repeated in many of his writings: "Canada might have had a chance, with her balance of French and Celts...". Letter to

A.L. Rowse, 4 April 1973 (Hugh MacLennan Papers, University of Calgary, First Acc. 14.3.5.6b). In "Scotland's Fate" he wrote illuminating the proximity of French and Scottish: "Tens of thousands of starving Highlanders emigrated to Canada, my own forbears among them, and now their descendants here number several millions, many of them speaking French." (262).

⁶⁶ Cameron, Hugh MacLennan, 186.

⁶⁷ Arnason, "Canadian Nationalism", 70.

⁶⁸ MacLennan, "The Other Solitude", n.d. (Hugh MacLennan Papers, McGill, 5, 8). See also "Scotland's Fate", 260; 264.

⁶⁹ MacLennan, "Canada: its many faces", offprint from the 1969 world book, an Annual Supplement to the World Book Encyclopaedia. (Hugh MacLennan Papers, University of Calgary, First Acc. 14.7.3).

⁷⁰ Hyman mentions MacLennan's "insistence that art must work to improve society." Hyman, "Too many voices", 316.

⁷¹ Two Solitudes, Toronto: Stoddart Publishing 1993, 206. All quotations from this edition in the text.

⁷² See Two Solitudes, 53, 158, 179, 181, 314. MacLennan writes years later: "The Quebec Separatist Movement reminded me early on of the Scotch Jacobites of the first half of the 18th century." Letter to James Sinclair, 31 January 1983 (Hugh MacLennan Papers, University of Calgary, Second Acc., 380/86.2,5.64).

⁷³ "Who and What are the Canadians", (Hugh MacLennan Papers, McGill, 5.21).

⁷⁴ "Who and What are the Canadians", (Hugh MacLennan Papers, McGill, 5.21).

⁷⁵ MacLennan keeps referring to the Celtic heritage and French history of Cape Breton/Nova Scotia in terms of language, temperament etc. Cf. "The Scottish Touch: Cape Breton", in: Cameron (ed.), The Other Side of Hugh MacLennan, 214-224.

⁷⁶ Oct. 29, 1968 (Hugh MacLennan Papers, University of Calgary, First Acc., 14.1.24.21a).

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⁷⁷ Cameron, Hugh MacLennan, 166.

⁷⁸ "I don't know who I am", says Martell, The Watch that ends the Night, Toronto: General Paperbacks 1991, 169; 367. All quotations from this edition in the text. Barbara Pell thinks that the author shows his figures in quest of a new religion after the repudiation of Calvinism. ("Faith and Fiction: Hugh MacLennan's The Watch that ends the Night", in: Canadian Literature 128 (1991), 39-50. On the anti-Presbyterian aspects see William Closson James, "Two Montreal Theodices: Hugh MacLennan's The Watch that ends the Night and A.M. Klein's The Second Scroll", in: Theology and Literature 7,2 (1993), 198-206.

⁷⁹ See also Ian MacKay, "Tartanism Triumphant".

⁸⁰ J. Lee Thompson, John H. Thompson, "Ralph Connor and the Canadian Identity", in: Queen's Quarterly (1972), 159-170; 169.

⁸¹ Chris Gittings, "The Scottish Ancestor: a Conversation with Alice Munro", in: Scotlands 2 (1994), 83-96; 83-84. With regard to her Scottish background she wrote: "My family name was Laidlaw.... [They] were tenant-farmers, shepherds, agricultural labourers, from the Ettrick valley in the Scottish border country. They came to Canada in 1818 and cleared Crown Land...." (Alice Munro Papers, University of Calgary, Acc. 396/87.3.4) or in: "Working for a Living", in: Grand Street 1,1 (1981).

⁸² Here used Alice Munro, Friend of my Youth, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1995, 3-26; 74-105. All quotations from this edition in the text.

⁸³ Gittings, "The Scottish Ancestor", 96.

⁸⁴ Munro recognized a direct ancestry between herself and James Hogg. See Gittings, "The Scottish Ancestor", 84.

⁸⁵ Jennie Rubio, "'Escaping her Carapace': Calvinism and the Body in Alice Munro and Elspeth Barker", in: Scotlands 2.1. (1995), 74-87.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁸⁷ Gittings, "The Scottish Ancestor", 93.

⁸⁸ See her story "Wilderness Station" contained in Munro's recent anthology Open Secrets (1994), where the history of a Scottish settler's community in Huron county is narrated through various letters from different correspondents resulting in pluralistic perspectives of one incident.

⁸⁹ Gittings, "The Scottish Ancestor", 94. An untitled holograph draft fragment of the story found in the Calgary Archives contains a more detailed Scottish background. (Alice Munro Papers, University of Calgary, No. 396/87.3, 6.4).

⁹⁰ "The Globe and Mail", 19 May 1979 (Alice Munro Papers, University of Calgary, First Acc. 37, 3.14). David Wesley in "Hamilton Spectator" (14 April 1979): "His hopeful and vibrant tone jars with that of his daughter, who often sees the legacy of the society she grew up in as suffocating, sterile and grey. Somewhere, Laidlaw's living breathing Scots turned into the stone-souled people perceived by his daughter." (Alice Munro Papers, University of Calgary, Second Acc. 38, 13.14).

⁹¹ Hugh MacLennan, "The world when we were born" (CBC, 1 July 1967) (Hugh MacLennan Papers, University of Calgary, First Acc., 14.4.48).


⁹² Ian McKay, The Quest, 221; 223.

⁹³ McKay draws a different conclusion. *Ibid.*, 221.

⁹⁴ Stephen Regan, "'The Presence of the Past': Modernism and Postmodernism in Canadian Short Fiction", in: Coral Ann Howells and Lynette Hunter (eds.), Narrative Strategies in Canadian Literature, Milton Keynes, Philadelphia: Open University Press 1991, 108-133. See also on the following.

⁹⁵ Red Deer: Red Deer College Press 1996.

THE POEMS OF RICHARD MAITLAND

 Richard Maitland (1496-1586) is not a well-known poet, except to medieval-renaissance specialists; he usually rates about two short poems in a long anthology. I have discovered only two articles on his poetry, one by Maurice Lee which - while certainly valuable - is historical rather than literary (1969), and a useful commentary on some of the better poems by Alasdair MacDonald (1970).¹ The comparative neglect is understandable, as Maitland's range is narrow: the majority of his forty-four surviving poems are about the breakdown of law and order, a consequence of the civil war that became endemic in mid-sixteenth-century Scotland. Most of Maitland's remaining poems offer moral and religious instruction, to counter the ungodly times. This suggests a further reason why he tends to be passed over: moral verses usually lack appeal. Yet he is a better poet than a cursory look would indicate, and deserves more attention. Within his main themes of corruption and devastation, there is variety in form, tone, and topic; and the better poems are distinctive and moving. These are almost always the less general and more specific poems, a point that will be amplified shortly. I shall begin with a brief introduction to Maitland's career and his poetry, and then examine three poems in more detail.

He seems to have begun composing poetry abnormally late, in his sixties, and about the time that he became blind - he was so by 1561. We probably have all the poems he wished to preserve, as they survive in his own two collections, the Maitland Folio and Quarto². The latter manuscript is dated 1585 (shortly before Maitland's death) and is written by his daughter, or at least her amanuensis. His earliest dateable poems celebrate the taking of Calais, from the English by the French; and the marriage of Mary, Queen of Scots, to the Dauphin of France. These events occurred in 1558. The latest poem where one can at least estimate a date is a complaint against "lang proces" in the courts. It is addressed to James VI, and apparently assumes that the King has reached the age of majority and is able to make his own decisions. Ages of majority are flexible, but the poem can hardly have been written before 1579, when James entered Edinburgh amid much traditional ceremony and seemed, at the age of thirteen, to be assuming some of the duties of a king. (Maitland was then eighty-three - and of course the poem may well be later than this.)

In between are poems referring to various political and social events, such as the Assembly of the Protestant "Lords of the Congregation," who banded against the French Regent in 1559; the disputes between supporters and enemies of Queen Mary in the later 1560s; and the pillaging of Scotland in the early 1570s.³ The poems not only give information on political events but also about the daily life of the period. Maitland was a judge from 1554 to 1581, which coincides with his career as a poet,

and he quite often discusses legal proceedings, with the theme that these are breaking down under the pressures of corruption or naked force. Thus he complains about unjust “new found lawis”: “Be quhilk sum trew men ar opprest / Of housis and landis dispocest.” He also describes life in court and on farms, and has a very long description of the extravagant clothes of burgers’ wives. He does, in fact, provide a detailed account of the political and social conditions of his times.⁴

Maitland’s basic political predilections, at least in the earlier poems, are conservative and patriotic. He sympathizes with the (French) Queen Regent and the old religion, and is suspicious of the Protestant reformers and their English allies. He approves of the French capture of Calais, because at that juncture Scotland was more linked with France than England, and because of the precedent for the Scots retaking Berwick. His anger at the “Thieves of Liddesdale” despoiling north, into Scotland, has as corollary the assumption that they should be going south, into England. His house and lands were at Lethington, twenty miles east of Edinburgh: understandably, the area he is most concerned about is Lothian, and after that Lowland Scotland. In “The Assembly of the Congregation” (which begins “Eternall god tak away thy scourge”) he prays: “That all trew folk from Berwik to Bahquidder / May leif in rest unreft in this new yeir.” This covers the land from the English border to the Highland one, Berwick being “rightfully” Scottish, and Balquidder only ten miles inside the Highland line. One would not expect Maitland to see

England as home territory - and he emphatically does not - but it is noteworthy that the Highlands, except perhaps for a narrow strip bordering the Lowlands, are also outside his purview.

Maitland's official position is that poetry should convey general truths rather than comment on particular situations. "On the Malyce of Poyetis" is against writers who attack individuals, a practice which Maitland sees as both risky and unethical, and when he himself writes against treason (which seems a safe theme) he says: "I will not speik in speciall / Bot pray all in generall / That wicked vyce to flie."⁵ Certainly, some of the poems one would expect to be specific are not. In those on Queen Mary's marriage and the taking of Calais, the political event merely provides the occasion to offer general sentiments (except for the conclusion of the Calais poem). And his poem on the "pleasouris of Aige" is written in the first person, but is made up of general reflections on old age.

Yet many poems are specific in that they actually investigate political events and situations, or individuals' actions; and some poems relate Maitland's personal situation. A political poem advocating "Unione amangis the Lordis" points out the dangers of bringing in either English or French troops. If the King's supporters win the immediate war with the help of the English, it will be at a heavy price: "quhat thay get in hand / Castell toun or land / Thay will it not restoir." If, on the other hand, the Queen's supporters win by French assistance, the Scots will soon find themselves vassals of France.

“Remember how thay pleit yow befoir.” A “Lament for the Disorderis of the Cuntrie” begins in conventional terms with appeals to God and denunciation of murder, but then becomes more particular.

Som hes thair place brint in ane gleid
Thair guddis spuilyit halallie
Thair servantis slaine sum brint to deid
Thair selvis taine uncourteouslie.

This point about the burning of servants suggests that Maitland had in mind events that had recently occurred. That impression is made stronger by what follows, where he states that “for ane missive bill” the owners of the houses would have obeyed the Regent. A “missive bill” is presumably just a written order, and the implication is that the Regent, Morton, has needlessly ordered looting and killing. Other poems are not only specific but personal: “Solace in Age” is, at least in part, about Maitland’s own predicament, rather than any old man’s. “My hous my landis and my geir / Fra me they hauld.”

Where Maitland is general, he understandably tends to be conventional: where he is specific, he is likely to be distinctive. With few exceptions, the best poems are specific in one of the ways suggested above. Their most evident merits are that they are rhetorically controlled and develop a clear argument; and their language is, if not colorful, pithy and resonant. To explain this last point: Maitland’s poetry is not rich in images, but his concentrated language often produces a kind of

synecdoche common in proverbs. There are several examples in his best known poem, "Satire on the Age." For example: "We cum to bar with Iak and steill." A jak is a soldier's coat and the phrase means that disputes are settled less by law than by force. Again: "I saw na gysars all this yeir / Bot kirkmen cled lyik men of weir." Gysars, ministers, and soldiers represent - respectively - traditional merrymaking, religion, and war; and the first two are abruptly cancelled by the third. A final example: Maitland contrasts the worlds of past and present by saying: "They had lang formis quhair we haive stuillis." The changes in furniture also indicate changing values, from communal feasting and presumably sharing, to a more individual and selfish life. The benches and stools become symbols.

I want now to look at three of Maitland's poems in more detail, and attempt to bring out their merits. These are, "Aganis Oppressioun of the Commounis," which is not well known, and "In this New Yeir" and "Aganis the Theives of Liddisdail," which are liable to turn up in anthologies. "Aganis Oppressioun of the Commounis" has an uninspiring title - the poet can hardly say he is in favour of oppression - and a conventional opening. The common people are being ill treated by "thift and reif and plaine oppressioun." However, a clear argument then emerges. The oppression is explained as excessive demands for rent and services, so that the tenants can no longer pay rent or work their own farms - and thus face eviction. The third verse addresses a wider political situation, the replacement of the Church as landlord

with much harsher temporal lords. Then there is more detail on these landlords' demands and the consequences for the tenants, who cannot tend their own farms "Thocht all thair bairnis sould want breid." The results, noted in the fifth verse, are waste land - because many tenants have been driven off - and loss of status. "Mony hes quhippes now in thair hand / That wont to have bayth Iak and speir." They are now merely poor farmers, whereas they were at least yeomen.

This is both the conclusion of the first half of the poem and the starting premise for the second half. Again, the poet uses proverbial symbolism. Jak (soldier's coat) and spear signify being armed and ready for combat: whips signify farmers too poor and unskilled to take up arms. A class has been dispossessed of its wealth, status, and function. The poem then amplifies this point with the images of tenants left with "ane crukit meir" (a run-down horse) turf for saddles, and only stones and clods for weapons. Logically enough, the poet then appeals to the Lords to treat their tenants better; the primary reason is charity, but another now begins to emerge. Let the Commons live "sufficiëntlie to thair estait" so that "thai may serve yow baith air & lait." The Commons have a function in society beyond providing wealth to the Lords, and this is now made explicit: without well-provided Commons, the Lords will not be able to defend the country, or themselves.

Predictably, the last verse urges the Lords to help the Commons and states that God will reward them if they deal justly, and otherwise "plaige" them. But an

additional point is made, which is also a development of the previous argument: the Lords' successors may fall into the ranks of the Commons and then be treated equally badly. There is some force to this since, if the Commons can be declassed, so can the Lords; and, moreover, the decay of the Commons is likely to cause the decay of the landowners. As late as the nineteenth century, some of the evicted Highlanders are reported to have said: "Since you have preferred sheep to men, let sheep defend you." That sentiment, that a Lord needs well-provided men, was not an anachronism in Maitland's time. The poem is, then, less general and conventional than the opening leads one to expect. There is a well-developed argument, and the main points are conveyed forcefully, in terse images.

"In this new yeir" (which appears only in the Maitland Quarto) has a dominating refrain - it opens the poem, of course - and, as in many of Maitland's poems, it maintains the tone and central theme. New Year is traditionally a time of hope, so that its conjunction with "weir" sets up a contrast, that then runs through the poem. There is another tension that becomes obvious as the poem proceeds: there is "na caus to sing" as the poet reiterates, and yet he is singing, for the rhythm of the refrain is insistently musical. Each verse then sets up a contrast, the first two dealing with the main warring factions: "Frenchmen" and the Protestant Lords of the Congregation; and then the invading armies of England and France. In the third verse, the Border and "borrowmuire" are less clear as

entities and probably carry several associations. The Burrowmuir is beside Edinburgh and therefore central; when placed with the "Border" the two together refer to the whole country. Second, the Border is usually turbulent and lawless, but now even Lothian is in the same state. And finally, the Borrowmuir was where criminals were executed; Maitland is partly stressing his theme of criminal plundering, and partly suggesting that there will yet be a reckoning for the plunderers.

The last two verses move away from the political situation. Being merry is set off against dying, and this world against the next. In all the verses, the final word or phrase receives heavy emphasis, because it is final, and because it rhymes with the key word "sing." Thus, in the first verse, the image of "bair biging" (buildings destroyed down to the walls) sums up the state of the country; in the second verse, "cuming" evokes the invading armies of England and France; in the third, "hing" suggests both criminality and retribution. Then "na thing" is part simply negative, in keeping with the previous verses, and part humorous, marking a shift in tone. "Ending" signifies death, but also heaven and, perhaps, the end of the wars; the lament has moved to a rather positive conclusion. The poem as a whole has a conversational tone; the voice is from the remote past, but it vividly conveys hopes and fears.

"Aganis the Theives of Liddisdail" moves on swiftly, like the thieves - or raiders - themselves. The first four verses follow their movements. First there is the warning that they are abroad, and nothing is safe. The

second verse gives a more close-up view: they are on the move, breaking down gates, then doors - to enter houses. The actual plundering is then described: they search out everything movable and, if there is resistance, kill and burn. The fourth to sixth verses give an account of the wider effects of the robberies, beginning with an aerial view: the thieves are spreading out to the north, from Ettrick (on the Borders) to Lauderdale, into the usually safe Lothians. Farming is halted and the countryside wasted. At best, farmers have to pay blackmail, which only delays the onset of poverty.

In the next five verses, we are given the names of individual thieves, which come thick and fast, brief descriptions that bring out their rapacity, and comprehensive lists of what they steal. Not much distinction is made between the thieves, except perhaps that the first two operate on a bigger scale. Their names may well be generic rather than referring to specific people. It is not very significant that the first names are standard - Will, Hab, Jok, two Johnes, Hob - as there was a small pool of first names available, except perhaps for the upper class. But the second designation is, in each case, suspiciously general: "lawis," "schawis," "lairdis,"⁶ "park," "syide" seem to mean, respectively, rounded hills, woods or flat land beside hills, associate of a landed man, meadow, wide valley. These are the main features of the border landscape, and hardly act as distinguishing terms. ("Clements Hob" does sound more like an actual name: "Clements" could be a patronymic or a place. But even here there may be puns on "clam," to grope at, and

“clem,” low and untrustworthy - to indicate a small-time thief.) These are, then, probably a mass of archetypal thieves rather than historical individuals. The last four verses touch on the political causes for the thieves’ devastations. Most great men are unable to prevent the thieves crossing their lands. Some great man must be backing the robbers; and if there is only one, that implies the Regent, Morton. The ending is, typically for Maitland, defiant: he expects to see at least some of the thieves hanged.

This poem begins with urgent denunciation and never loses momentum. The tone is colloquial and the points made at first seem random, as by someone pouring out their grievances without thought of ordering them, but the poem actually maintains a clear line of thought: from an account of the raiders’ movements, to the widespread devastation they create, to an inventory of thieves and what they steal, to the political cause, and finally to the hope of justice and revenge. Many of the images are compressed and suggestive. “Yet,” “dure” (stanza two), “bair wais” (“walls,” stanza seven) work as metonymy. The state of those paying blackmail is brought home with equally simple images.

Thay that had flesche & breid & aill,
Now ar sa wraikit
Maid puir and nakit
Fane to be staikit with walter caill.

That is, they are left with cabbage leaves in water.

These are compressed images, like those found in proverbs.

Other effects derive from expansion, from details and lists that seem capable of widening out indefinitely. There is the list of thieves' names, which suggests a never-ending succession of bandits picking the country clean. We also have an extended list of what they steal. "Thay leif not spindill, spone nor speit / Bed, boster, blanket, sark nor scheit" - and so on, to include almost every household item one can think of. This brings out, not only the ferocity of the thieves, but also their petty greed and the total destruction they cause - like a swarm of locusts. And the lists, which are apparently going to account for everything in a given category, also create an impression of realism.

These poems are very different in form, but all concerned with the conditions of the times. Resemblances will be evident in theme and imagery, and in the characteristics of the speaker, which come through strongly. As elsewhere, Maitland is tender hearted - he seems genuinely concerned about the state of the poor, for example - but also clear thinking and tough minded. He complains a lot, and indeed all these poems might be termed laments, but also suggests solutions. And he never seems entirely helpless; there is a vein of defiance in these, and most other poems. Maitland does more than project an appealing personality, however. He is, in at least twelve to fifteen poems, a good poet; with a distinctive personal tone, strong logical control, and starkly expressive language. He should be more widely read.

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The texts of the poems are based on the Quarto Manuscript. I have not anglicized words or even regularized spelling (though tempted) as these procedures are likely to cause more problems than they solve. The poems are more easily comprehensible if read aloud, and of course preferably in a Scots accent.

Aganis Oppressioun of the Commounis

It is greit pitie for to se
How the commounis of this countrie
For thift and reif and plaine oppressioun
Can na thing keip in thair possessioun
Quhairof that thay may mak ane lyfe
Yit nane will punische that transgressioun
Thocht nocht be left to man nor wyfe.

Sum with deir ferme ar herreit haill
That wont to pay bot pennie maill
Sum be thair lordis ar opprest
Put fra the land that thay possest
Sair service hes sum hereit sone
For cariadge als sum hes no rest
Thocht thair awin worke sould ly undone.

Sum commounis that hes bene weill staikit
Under kirkmen ar now all wraikit
Sen that the teynd and the kirklandis
Come in greit temporalle mennis handis
Thay gar the tennentis pay sic sowmes
As thay will ask or quha gainestandis
Thay wilbe put sone fra thair rowmes.

The Teynd that tennentis had befoir
Of thair awin malingis corne and stoir
Thair lairdis hes taine it our thair heid
And garris thame to his yaird it leid
Bot thair awin stok thay dar not steir
Thocht all thair bairnis sould want breid
Quill thay have led that teynd ilk yeir.

Sic extortioun and Taxatioun
Wes never sene into this natioun
Taine of the commounis of this land
Of quhilk sum left waist lyand
Becaus few may sic chairgis beir
Mony has quhippis now in thair hand
That wont to have bayth lak and speir.

Quhairthrow the hail commounitie
Is brocht now to sic povertie
For thay that had gud hors and geir
Hes scantlie now ane cruikit meir
And for thair saidillis thay have soddis
Thay have no wappinis worth for weir
Bot man deffend with stanis and cloddis.

Thairfoir my lordis I yow pray
For the puire commounis find sum gud way
Your land to thame for sic pryice geif
As on thair maling thay may leif
Sufficiëntlie to thair estait
Syne thame defend that nane thame greif
That may serve yow bayth air & lait.

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Riche commounis ar richt proffitabill
Quhen thay to serve thair lord ar abill
Thair native countrie to defend
Fra thame that hurt it wald pretend
For we wilbe our few ane nummer
Gif commounis to the weir not wend
Nobillis may not beir all the cummer.

Help the commounis bayth lord and laird
And god thairfoir sall yow rewarid
And gif ye will not thame supplie
God will yow plaige thairfoir Iustlie
And your successioun efter yow
Gif thay sall have na mair pitie
On the commounis nor ye have now.

In This New Yeir

In this new yeir I sie bot weir
Na caus to sing
In this new yeir I see bot weir
Na caus thair is to sing. [Refrain]

I can not sing for the Vexatioun
Of frenchemen and the congregatioun
That hes maid trowbill in this natioun
And monye bair biging.

I have na will to sing or danss
For feir of England and of France
God send thame sorrow and mischance
Is [sic] caus of thair cumming.

We ar sa rewlit ritche and puire
That we wait not quhair to be suire
The bourdour as the borrowmuire
Quhair sum perchance will hing.

And yit I think it best that we
Pluck up our hairt and mirrie be
For thocht we wald ly down and die
It will us helpe na thing.

Lat us pray god to stainche this weir
That we may leif withouttin feir
In mirrienes quhill we ar heir
And hevin at our ending.

In this new yeir I sie bot weir
Na caus to sing
In this new yeir I sie bot weir
Na caus thair is to sing.

Aganis the Theives of Liddisdail

Of Liddisdail the commoun theiffis
Sa pertlie steillis now and reiffis
That nane may keip
Hors nolt nor scheip
Nor yit dar sleip for thair mischeiffis.

Thay plainlie throw the countrie rydis
I trow the mekill devil thame gydis
Quhair thay onset
Ay in thair gait
Thair is na yet nor dure thame bydis.

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Thay leif richt nocht quhair ever thay ga
Thair can na thing be hid thame fra
For gif men wald thair housis hauld
Then waxe thay bald
To burne and sla.

Thay have neir hand hereit hail
Ettrik forrest and Lawderdaill
Now ar thay gaine
In Lowthiane
And spairis nane that thay will waill.

Thay landis ar with stouth sa socht
To extreme povertie ar brocht
Thay wicked schrowis
Hes laid the plowis
That nane or few is that ar left ocht.

Bot commoun taking of blak maill
thay that had flesche & breid & aill
Now ar sa wraikit
Maid puir and nakit
Faine to be staikit with walter caill.

Thay thefis that steillis and tursis hame
Ilk ane of thame hes ane to name
Will of the lawis
Hab of the schawis
To mak bair wais thay think na schame.

Thay spuilyie puire men of thair pakis
Thay leif thame nocht on bed nor bakis
Bayth hen and cok
With reill and rok
The lairdis lok all with him takis.

Thay leif not spindill, spone nor speit
Bed, boster, blanket, sark nor scheid
Ihone of the park
Rypis kist and ark
For all sic wark he is richt meit.

He is weill kend Ihone of the syide
A gretar theif did never ryide
He never tyris
For to brek byris
Our muire and myris our gud ane gyide.

Thair is ane callit Clementis Hob
Fra ilk puire wyfe reiffis thair wob
And all the laif
Quhat ever thay haif
The devill ressaif thairfoir his gob.

To sie sa greit stouth quha wald trowit
Bot gif sum greit man it allowit
Richt fair I rew
Thocht it be trew
Thair is sa few that dar avowit.

Of sum greit men thay have sic gait
That redye ar thame to debait
And will up weir
Thair stollin geir
That nane dar steir, thame air nor lait.

Quhat causis theiffis us our gang
Bot want of iustice us amang
Nane takis cair
Thocht all forfair
Na man will spair, now to doe wrang.

Of stouth thocht now thay cum gud speid
that nather of men nor god hes dreid
Yit or I die
Sum sall thame sie
Hing on a trie, quhill thay be deid.

Ralph Stewart
Acadia

Endnotes

¹ "Sir Richard Maitland of Lethington: a Christian Laird in the Age of Reformation." In Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe, ed. T.K. Rabb & J.E. Seigel. Princeton, NJ: Princeton U.P., 1969.

Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists' Society, Vol. 4 (1970).

² The Maitland Folio Manuscript, ed. W.A. Craigie. 2 Vols. Edinburgh & London: Blackwood, 1919 & 1927.

The Maitland Quarto Manuscript, ed. W.A. Craigie. Edinburgh & London: Blackwood, 1920.


³ The Poems of Sir Richard Maitland, ed. Joseph Bain. Glasgow: Maitland Club, 1830; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1973. pp 92, 53, 104.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp 99, 45, 27.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 87.

⁶ The Maitland Club edition, following the late eighteenth-century editor Pinkerton, has "landis" - which would probably mean "landed" - for "lairdis." There seems no good authority for this, but anyway it is equally unspecific.

**NATIONALITY, SOCIAL BACKGROUND,
AND WEALTH IN A MID-VICTORIAN
HIGHLAND REGIMENT: THE OFFICER
CORPS OF THE 78TH HIGHLAND
REGIMENT, 1869-1871**

his paper proposes to examine the make-up of the officer corps of the 78th Highland Regiment of Foot between the years 1869 to 1871 (when they were stationed in Halifax, Nova Scotia) with respect to national origins, social backgrounds, and financial circumstances. Based upon a close examination of the personal records of all the officers who served with the regiment in these years, it provides detail and raises issues concerning themes that have received a fair amount of historical attention over the last thirty years or so, but concerning which, in the opinion of this author, the 'definitive' study remains to be written.

The 78th Highland Regiment discussed here was that raised in 1793 by one Francis Humberston Mackenzie, chief of the clan Mackenzie and a descendent of the earls of Seaforth. Its associations were all with the clan Mackenzie and it bore no relationship

to the earlier 78th Highland Regiment that fought at Louisbourg and Quebec under Wolfe. The latter's associations were all Fraser, and probably merits C.P. Stacey's description of it as "less a British regiment than a war party of the clan Fraser."¹ This unit was of course disbanded at the conclusion of the Seven Year's War with many of its members taking their discharge in Canada, thereby becoming, in G.F.G. Stanley's words "the first Scots to form an integral part of Canadian life and history."²

The 78th raised in 1793 (after 1796 sub-titled the Ross-shire Buffs) was to spend a good portion of its career in India, which became the locale of its greatest military accomplishments. Thus it was one of three British (as distinct from Indian) regiments that won fame under Sir Arthur Wellesley at the battle of Assaye in 1797. During the Napoleonic wars probably its most notable achievement was its participation in the siege and capture of Fort Cornelis on the island of Java in 1811.³ The regiment probably gained its greatest military renown, however, in the Indian Mutiny of 1857-58. Under the command of Sir Henry Havelock it was in the van of the first British thrust down the Ganges into rebel held territory, and led the recapture of the town of Cawnpore and the first relief of the besieged British garrison at Lucknow. These feats, against a vastly more numerous enemy, in the hottest season of the year in India when British troops usually lay sweltering in their barracks, became one of the most celebrated epics of the Victorian army. Indeed, dubbed

with such sobriquets as “saviours of India” and “heroes of Lucknow”, their deeds commemorated by poets such as John Greenleaf Whittier and Alfred, Lord Tennyson, it is no exaggeration to say that the officers and men of the regiment for sometime afterwards enjoyed the status of great popular heroes. Although there were then only four officers left who had participated in these feats, and probably not a great many more rank and file, this aura to a great extent remained intact when, during the second leg of a North American tour (it was in Montreal from 1867-69), it spent two and a half years in garrison in Halifax.⁴

This is not an operational or a military study, however. Rather the aim here is to focus on the 78th as a representative Highland regiment at roughly the mid-point of the Victorian era, in an attempt to see what detailed research on the regiment’s officer corps for these years reveals concerning the national origins, social background, and financial circumstances of the membership.

A British Parliamentary return published in 1872 (the year after the 78th left Halifax) on the subject of nationality in the army reveals the following concerning the national composition of the officer corps of Scottish regiments. The five kilted Highland regiments, the 42nd, 78th, 79th, 92nd, and 93rd, contained by far the greatest number of Scottish officers, with the 79th Cameron Highlanders, the most Scottish of them all, having 25 Scotsmen as officers, and only eight English and seven Irish. The next highest were the 78th and

the 92nd Gordons, with nineteen, ten, and ten, and nineteen, twelve and five respectively. The 42nd Black Watch had nineteen Scotsmen, fifteen English, and five Irish; and the 93rd Sutherland Highlanders eighteen, ten, and seven, respectively. The next highest as a group were the trews-wearing Highland regiments, with the 74th and 91st regiments having sixteen Scottish officers each, and the 72nd Duke of Albany's and 71st Highland Light Infantry twelve each.⁵

The demographic mix in Lowland Scottish regiments was markedly different. The 1st Battalion of the Royal Scots (the 1st Regiment of Foot) with only three Scottish officers, compared with twenty-one English and ten Irish, was typical. The 1st Battalion of the 25th Scottish Borderers had four, twenty-three, and four respectively; the 26th Cameronians, four, twenty-seven, and eleven. Indeed, the national make-up of Lowland Scottish units was indistinguishable from that of any other British - i.e. non-Scottish - units on the return. And the same basic patterns held true for the rank and file as well.⁶

Readers of the *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* will have noticed some discussion concerning this situation recently, and also some puzzlement expressed as to why it should have been so.⁷ This phenomenon was, of course, noted some time ago by the Scottish and constitutional scholar, H.J. Hanham, in an important article, "Religion and Nationality in the Mid-Victorian Army", published in 1973. Noting that over the course of the nineteenth century the total

number of Scotsmen serving in the army declined, Hanham provides statistics which show that those who did join tended to congregate in the Highland regiments, while Scotsmen joined Lowland regiments in about the same numbers as they joined other non-Scottish regiments. "Highland regiments did better than Lowland ones", writes Hanham, "partly because their traditions were stronger."⁸

These traditions were, of course, all Highland ones, although since the beginning of the century, with the popularization and the romanticization of the image of the Highlander in writings such as the novels of Sir Walter Scott, they had increasingly become identified with a pan-Scottish identity. Scott's novels had of course enjoyed immense world-wide success, and they had done a great deal to foster a vision of Scotland that the international community, and indeed Scotsmen themselves, had come to equate with true Scottishness. This has been described by Hanham in another work as essentially the Scotland "of the modern tourist industry", with its special emphasis on kilts, bagpipes, clans, remote castles, and romantic Highland warriors.⁹ (This indeed seems to have been enjoying something of a revival lately in Hollywood.) While it may be true, as Hugh Trevor-Roper argued in his well-known article, "The Invention of the Highland Tradition in Scotland", that there was a great deal of misrepresentation, and indeed outright fraud, on the part of some of Scott's fellow Scottish antiquarians in promoting this picture of the past, it cannot be denied that by the second half

of the century it had become thoroughly implanted as the national mythology, in the Highlands as well as the Lowlands.¹⁰ In the popular mind, writes the historian Keith Webb, “the Scots had a common past, a history and heritage which all could share, sufficiently colourful and distinctive to ensure the symbols of Scotland international recognition.”¹¹ The Highland regiments, through numerous heroic and well-publicized deeds in imperial military campaigns had of course helped to add further glory to the image of the Highlander, and with their dress, music, and traditions, they had become in ways figureheads for this national mythology.

The Lowland regiments had, of course, been added to the army’s strength in the early to late seventeenth century long before such nationalistic considerations as went into the formation of the Highland regiments beginning in the mid-eighteenth century were ever conceived of or deemed necessary. As a consequence their dress and traditions took little or no recognition of their Scottish origins, and indeed were for the most part indistinguishable from the other regiments of the army. Thus by the mid-nineteenth century it would seem that most Scotsmen, whether Highlanders or Lowlanders, when they thought of their national regiments, thought firstly of Highland ones, especially those that wore the kilt, and only secondarily, if at all, of Lowland units.

In all there were 46 officers on the strength of the 78th during its years in Halifax (although not all at the same time, and three of them never served in the city). Of these, a total of nineteen (41%) were of Scottish

origin, eighteen (39%) of English, and eight (17%) of Irish nationality. Although the number of English-born officers about equalled the number of Scottish, in fact four of the former had strong Scottish family ties, as did at least two of the Irish-born officers. If these are added to the number of Scotsmen the latter's number increases to twenty-four, or fifty-four per cent of the total number of officers. A total of ten, or twenty-two per cent of the total, can be considered to be Highlanders - that is from the northwestern counties of Argyll, Inverness, and Ross & Cromarty (none were from Sutherland), and from the bits of bordering counties, such as Aberdeen, Perth, and Stirlingshire, that came within the Highland orbit.

That said, however, while it is true that statistically Highland regiments attracted a greater number of Scottish officers, and that about half the officers of the 78th were native born, nobody, not even Hanham, has yet attempted to ascertain the importance that the national or Highland factor actually played in influencing the choices of those who opted to become officers in Highland regiments. This in fact can be done by checking the correspondence contained in the officers' personal files in WO 31 at the Public Records Office, and this has revealed the following in the case of the officers of the 78th.

Of the 78th's Highland officers, only one, Captain George Forbes, son of John Forbes of Haddo House in Aberdeenshire, and Isabella, a Mackenzie of the Gairloch branch, had spent a significant period of time

with a non-Highland regiment - the 19th Foot, or Green Howards - in which he served for six years before transferring to the 78th in January 1861. And Captain Thomas Mackenzie of Ross-shire (son of one Forbes Mackenzie of the Glack branch of the family, who was one of the great so-called "improvers" or clearers of land in Ross-shire) served in the 20th East Devon Regiment for nine months in 1856 before securing a transfer to the 42nd Highlanders, and from thence, after a year, to the 78th. All the others had originally requested and had received initial appointments to Highland regiments.

Of all the officers, the influence of historical/cultural factors in influencing the choice of the 78th are perhaps most readily apparent in the case of one of its more junior captains, Colin Mackenzie, who joined the regiment in February 1862. Mackenzie, whose father was Treasurer of the Bank of Scotland in Edinburgh, was in fact a Lowlander, his family being from Peebleshire. It was descended, however, from Alexander Mackenzie-Fraser, who had formed a 78th second battalion during the Napoleonic period, and had died commanding a detachment from it in the ill-fated Walcheren expedition of 1809. First offered an Ensigncy in the 63rd Manchester Regiment, Mackenzie had turned it down, because, in the words of one of his referees, he was a "true Mackenzie",¹² and he preferred the 78th because "it was originally the Mackenzie regiment."¹³ This officer, it is interesting to note was the grandson of another Colin Mackenzie of Portmore House in Peebleshire, who had been a close friend of

Sir Walter Scott's, to whom, as has been noted, this nineteenth century preoccupation with Highland ways and traditions is in large part attributable. That Captain Colin Mackenzie was a great devotee of his national and family heritage, is suggested by his activity while in Halifax as a major force behind the organizing of a huge celebration marking the centenary of Scott's birth.¹⁴ And soon after the 78th left Halifax he retired from the army and took to writing, mostly on Scottish cultural themes.¹⁵ Indeed, he aspired to write a history of the 78th, but died before this could be done. The standard historical account of the regiment, Major H. Davidson's *History and Services of the 78th Highlanders (Ross-shire Buffs)* published in 1901, is based on materials collected but not used by him.¹⁶

In fact, the 78th had four officers bearing the surname Mackenzie in these years, a particularly bumper time for the number of officers bearing the name of the regiment's founding family. Three of these were from the Highlands - the commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Mackenzie of Avoch in Ross-shire, possibly a child of the manse, although his exact origins have not been traced; Captain Sir Alexander Muir-Mackenzie of Delvine, near Dunkeld in Perthshire, the regiment's only baronet; and Captain Thomas Mackenzie, who is discussed above. Although their documentation is missing, presumably family associations influenced these officers' decision to join the 78th as well.

Family tradition is clearly evident in the choice of

Ensign Allan Cameron, from Inverness-shire. Applying to the Horse Guards for a first commission on his son's behalf in August 1867, his father expressed interest in the 79th, 78th, and 93rd, with the 79th "preferred on account of its being a *Cameron* regiment" and the fact his father had "served in it as well as assisted in originally recruiting the regiment along with his friend Sir Allan Cameron."¹⁷ Ensign Cameron was a great grandson of the Donald Cameron of Clunes, known as 'old Clunes', who had helped Bonnie Prince Charlie to escape after the battle of Culloden. His father, also called Donald, had earned a fortune in the Australian gold rush and had purchased an estate on Beaully Firth in Inverness-shire, which he also called Clunes. A position in the 79th not being available at this time, Cameron went to his second choice, the 78th.

Ensign Arthur Dingwall Fordyce, whose family owned the large estate of Brucklay in northwest Aberdeenshire, preferred the 74th or the 92nd Gordons, the latter of which, at least, had traditionally recruited in his area. But when he was offered the 91st Argyllshire Regiment instead, and he heard of a vacancy opening up in the 78th, he snapped it up with alacrity. His older brother, who was then proprietor of Brucklay and head of the family, had written to the Horse Guards that Arthur would "much prefer" the 78th to the 91st and that he was "most anxious that my brother, who is a Scotchman and a Highlander should enter the army and the 78th Regiment."¹⁸

It would seem likely that nationalistic considerations

were behind Fordyce's predisposition in favour of the 78th over the the 91st. The latter regiment had been founded only a year after the 78th and had an honourable record; but in 1809 it had been dropped from the establishment of Highland regiments and was deprived of all its Highland appurtenances for many years afterwards. Although it was retitled as a Highland regiment in 1821 it was largely seen as Scottish "in name only" until 1864, when the officers at last succeeded in having the unit re-equipped with such standard Highland items as trews, doublets, and a pipe corps.¹⁹ It is possible that at the time that Fordyce was applying for a commission in 1867 the Highland credentials of this unit had not yet become fully re-established, at least amongst the committedly nationalistic.

The national factor was also important for the family of Lieutenant Edward Mayne Alexander, which owned the Westerton estate near Bridge of Allan in Stirlingshire. The father, retired Major General James Alexander had served with the English 14th Foot and had spent a number of years in Canada (his son Edward had in fact been born in Halifax, and he had written a fairly well-known account of his years here, entitled *L'Acadie or Seven Year's Explorations in British North America*). When considering a regiment for his son, his initial preference was for the 71st Highland Light Infantry, as he had "long known [it] in Canada." He was not by any means disappointed, however, when Edward was instead offered the 78th. "Lady Alexander & myself return many thanks" he wrote to the Horse Guards.

“Being Scotch ourselves we were anxious that he should serve in a national regiment & we are much pleased that he has been selected for a Scotch corps.”²⁰ It is worth noting that the reference here is to a “Scotch” unit, not specifically to a Highland one, perhaps an indication of the degree to which in some quarters the two concepts had by this time become identified.

The Highland factor was clearly foremost in the mind of Ensign George Frederick William Callander, proprietor of the Craigforth estate in county Stirling, and that of Ardkinglas in Argyllshire. Callander’s first choice (unfortunately not explained) was for the 78th, and in his recommendation to the Horse Guards, his kinsman, the Duke of Argyll, after commenting that the young man was “the owner of a considerable estate in the county and is a good steady lad”, remarked that “I suppose it is desirable to have Highland gentlemen connected with Highland regiments.”²¹

Significantly the first choice of seven of the eight Lowland officers was for a Highland regiment as well (the first choice of one not being recorded). Admittedly, however, the fact that the Edinburgh-born Captain Andrew Murray, evidently one of the 78th’s poorer officers, chose the Highland regiment over the English 60th King’s Royal Rifles was governed as much by economic considerations as anything else. When he was looking to join the regiment was in India where one could live much more cheaply than at other postings. He did note however, that he liked the 78th because it was a “Scotch Regiment”, and that an uncle had served

in it.²² Also, although the first choice of Captain George Lecky, Irish born but the stepson of the Scottish Earl of Carnwath, was the 78th, his second was the 60th. The first choices of all the other Lowland officers were exclusively Highland, however. Captain Oliver Graham of Edinburgh, whose father had been an officer of the East India Company army,²³ preferred the 78th or 79th in that order; Lieutenant William Francis Maitland-Kirwan of Gelston Castle in county Kirkcubright, the 79th Camerons, although he was “quite willing to accept the 78th in lieu of the 79th” when a position opened up in it instead.²⁴ Lieutenant C.J.B. Stewart of Edinburgh, whose father was an officer in the Madras Army, and later an official in the audit office at the Horse Guards, preferred the 74th and 42nd “or failing these two regiments some other highland corps”²⁵. And Ensign John Dodd of Roxburghshire, about whose background nothing is known, preferred simply a “highland regiment.”²⁶

The two English-born officers who had Scottish roots also elected to serve in a Highland unit. Lieutenant Charles Roberts, whose father was a merchant in Nottinghamshire, preferred the 78th or the 93rd, although, wrote the father, “I do not understand it”. (Another correspondent commented: “I suppose some Scotch blood in his veins makes him anxious for a Scotch Regiment”.)²⁷ Also, when Ensign William Wellington Sandeman of the estate of Liss near Stodham in Hampshire, but whose father was from Dumfries-shire and had served in the 42nd and 73rd Highland Regiments, was appointed to the 48th

Northamptonshire Regiment, the father informed the Horse Guards that his son “would be disappointed at not being appointed to the 42nd Royal Highlanders or to some other Highland Corps.”²⁸ Also, it is probably significant that Ensign John Henry Ewart, son of a wealthy East India merchant in Cheshire, but whose grandfather was from county Kirkcudbright (one of his sons was the William Ewart after whom Gladstone was named) served only one month in the Lowland regiment, the 21st Royal North British Fusiliers, before securing a transfer to the 78th. On the other hand, while the Edinburgh-born, but London-raised, Ensign Charles Carfrae, chose the 78th as one of his preferred regiments, the other was the 69th South Lancashire Regiment.²⁹

Of the remaining English and Irish officers, the desire to serve in a Highland regiment is less marked. The junior major, Augustus Warren, for example, served for ten years in the English 82nd (Prince of Wales Volunteers) Regiment before transferring to the 78th in 1859; the adjutant, Lieutenant Charles Edward Croker-King spent four years with a number of English regiments before transferring to the 78th in 1866. (The reason given by his commanding officer for his transfer to the 78th was “a severe domestic affliction and [he] is desirous of a change of scene.”³⁰) The Winchester-born Captain William Charles Smith, whose father was a Canadian by birth, actually requested the Royal Canadian Rifle Regiment (an odd choice, since it was not a regular line regiment at all), and by what route

he ended up in the 78th is not certain. The family of Lieutenant Matthew Moreton, tenth son of the Gloucestershire peer, the third Earl of Ducie, and hence the 78th's one genuine aristocrat, initially preferred the 60th King's Royal Rifles, one of the most fashionable of the non-Guards regiments, but this could not be arranged. Despite the fact that Moreton's secondary wishes lay with a number of other English regiments, he eventually was commissioned in the 78th. Lieutenant Henry Frederick Rowley of Norfolk, son of a captain and grandson of an admiral in the Royal Navy, also initially preferred the 60th but was given the 79th Camerons instead. He transferred to the 78th after becoming ill while serving with the Camerons in India and being invalided home.³¹ The father of Lieutenant George Budgen, on the other hand, who was a retired major general of the Royal Engineers, specified only that his son be appointed to a single battalion regiment, "anyone between 25 and 100."³² And while the Dublin-born Lieutenant Edward Pakenham Stewart, whose father listed himself as a land agent, initially preferred the 78th, this was only because two of its officers were near relations.³³

Nonetheless, the 78th had a number of English and Irish-born officers of prominent families who had been interested in serving in Highland regiments from the beginning and who had no known previous connections to Scotland. Thus the senior major, Oswald Barton Feilden, the fifth son of Joseph Feilden, proprietor of the large and wealthy estate of Witton Park in Lancashire,

chose to begin his military career in 1850 with the 72nd Duke of Albany's Highlanders, transferring to the 78th in 1858.³⁴ The second most senior ensign, Edward John Knight, the third son of Edward Knight, owner of the substantial Chawton estate in Hampshire (at which earlier in the century Edward John's great aunt, Jane Austen, had written most of her novels) opted firstly for the 72nd Duke of Albany's also, but when this did not work out, went to the 78th, with which he remained for a military career that spanned nineteen years.³⁵ And the thoroughgoing Irishman, Lieutenant Gilbert O'Grady was, according to a letter to the Horse Guards from a family friend, "although a Hibernian...very anxious to wear the kilt - in that his first desire is to be appointed to the 42nd regiment." (A Horse Guards official had appended a note indicating that although the 42nd was not possible, "the 78th was a kilted regiment").³⁶ Gilbert was the son of Thomas O'Grady, of the estate of Landscape in County Clare, and the grandson through his mother of Gerald Courcy O'Grady, of Killballyowen, County Limerick, who, termed 'the O'Grady', was the chief of the family of that name.³⁷ That men with such backgrounds chose to join a Highland regiment, apparently entering into its national/cultural environment with enthusiasm, is doubtless a testimony to the appeal that these units had begun to exercise throughout British society, and not just in Scotland itself.

Thus it does seem that when their motives are examined closely the national factor was of consider-

able, if not paramount, importance in determining the choice of the Scottish-born officers to serve out their careers in a Highland regiment, if not specifically in the 78th. Furthermore there was little or no distinction between Highland and Lowland-born officers in this regard. While amongst the non-Scottish officers there were doubtless some who were in the regiment for career reasons as much as anything, even amongst this group there were a number for whom the Highland factor had exercised a considerable appeal.

What then can be said about the social as distinct from the national backgrounds of these officers. Analyses of the social make-up of the officer corps of the Victorian army have not been lacking before now, the more noteworthy probably being those undertaken by P. E. Razzel in the *British Journal of Sociology* in 1963, by C.B. Otley in the *Sociological Review* in 1970, and by Edward Spiers in his book *The Army and Society* in 1980.³⁸ Certainly the findings of these studies that the officers corps of the army in the Victorian era was heavily dominated by members of the country's landed interest is beyond dispute. Yet these studies do have their disadvantages. Otley's figures, for example, are based upon data taken from the entrance registers at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, and the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. The weakness of this for the Victorian period, particularly for the infantry, is that only a small number of serving officers actually attended these institutions - fourteen out of forty-six in the case of the 78th, for example. Razzel and Spiers perhaps

more legitimately base their figures on officers actually on the active list - but they restrict their analyses to the military leadership, or those who had become general officers or colonels.

This, of course, presumes that those who had opted for a long-term military career and had risen to the top, were representative of the officers corps of the army as a whole. Yet the truth was that the majority of officers never made it above the rank of captain, if for no other reason than the fact that the numbers required in any one regiment dropped from a total of ten for the position of captain to two for the succeeding position of major. Thus when the full careers of the forty-six officers who served with the 78th in Halifax are examined, it can be seen that a total of twenty-six, or more than half obtained no higher a rank than that of captain, and only five of the remainder ended up as colonels or above. Thus while the makeup of the higher ranks of the army may well have been representative of the officer corps' broader membership, it does seem that one is taking something of a leap of faith in assuming this without undertaking more complete studies that include within their purview junior as well as senior officers.

Such a study would indeed be a formidable undertaking, and probably the most 'cost effective' approach would be to focus on a number of different regiments at different times in the century. Certainly with the studies referred to one misses a sense of what the particular mix would have been within individual units, and perhaps most notably ones of a special type,

whether Guards, Highland or Lowland Scottish, Irish, Welsh, or whatever. The following then represents a very small initial step towards filling this lacuna in the case of Highland units.

By way of prelude, it should be noted that in this period land still constituted Britain's greatest source of wealth, with ownership of land and the income that this generated still yielding the greatest form of social status and prestige. The topmost level of British society was, of course the aristocracy, composed of the titled peers of the realm, who as a general rule of thumb, according to F.M.L. Thompson in his study of the nineteenth century landed classes, possessed estates that were larger than 10,000 acres and the incomes that they generated usually larger than £10,000³⁹. Just below them in the social hierarchy was the landed gentry, landowning families that (except for the topmost level, the baronetage) did not possess titles, and whose estates were generally smaller than 10,000 acres and their yearly incomes less than £10,000. The leading historian of the gentry, G.E. Mingay, divides this social stratum into three main sub-sections: first, those with incomes from landed property of between £3,000 and £10,000 a year, which he defines as greater gentry; second, those with incomes of £1,000 to £3,000, which he defines as lesser gentry (also often called 'squires'); and third, those with incomes rising from £200 to £1,000 per annum, which he terms 'country gentlemen'.⁴⁰

By today's standards, these incomes do not seem high at all, and even by the standards of the Victorian

era they were small compared to some of the fortunes earned by aristocratic families - the Scottish Duke of Buccleuch, for example, took in £216,126 a year from his landed properties alone; the Duke of Argyll, £50,842.⁴¹ Still, relative to most incomes of the era, the gentry was very well off indeed. A survey of personal income in Great Britain carried out in 1867 found that only 7,500 people in the land had incomes greater than £5,000 a year, and only 49,000 earned more than £1,000 yearly.⁴² Privates in the army, admittedly one of the most poorly paid occupations, earned a total of £18 and some pence a year. On the other hand, some of the most highly skilled artisans in the country, such as scientific instrument workers, and watch and jewelry makers, earned on average only about £90 a year. A comfortable 'upper middle class' income was considered to be about £500 a year.⁴³ By these standards £1,000 a year represents a very substantial income, and a sum of £5,000 or more a fortune.

Diana Henderson in her valuable and in many ways masterful social history of the Highland regiments, *Highland Soldier* published in 1989, states that in 1875 the social composition of the officer corps of Highland regiments was eighteen per cent aristocracy, thirty-two per cent landed gentry, and fifty per cent middle class. She does not, however, state where these figures come from, and hence they must remain questionable.⁴⁴ Indeed, Henderson is somewhat dismissive of the whole question of social class and background in discussing the officers, observing that it has too often become a

form of value judgement respecting their professional competence. Thus she writes:

It is important to try to set aside modern misconceptions of class and to attempt to see these men for what they were in their own time, without immediately prejudging them incompetent simply because they fell into a category of 'landed gentry', or alternatively noble and good because they rose from the ranks or had humble beginnings.⁴⁵

Certainly one would not want in any way to confirm the stereotypes that she justifiably attacks. Nonetheless, one would not want to go to the opposite extreme and say that the term gentry has no legitimate application when discussing army officers. The time of which we write was one of pronounced social stratification, as social historians such as F.M.L. Thompson, W.L. Burn, and Geoffrey Best, have been at pains to point out.⁴⁶ The gentry was the second most eminent of social strata behind the aristocracy, and while membership in it certainly did not qualify one as an 'upper class twit' (surely the history of the British army is enough to guarantee that), it did, with its considerable social status and relative financial independence, entail quite defined standards as to manners, taste, deportment, and lifestyle. Naturally the officers were soldiers and were strongly influenced by the regimental and the military experience; but they were nonetheless also products of

broader social circumstances and conditioning that the military certainly did not see itself in any way in the business of attempting to eliminate. Admittedly we are hampered somewhat by the fact that we do not yet have any analysis of the nineteenth century Scottish landed classes to compare with those of Thompson and Mingay for the English, and doubtless, as Henderson implies, there were certain differences between them. But there were also many parallels and similarities, and many of the same categorizations can be applied to both.

With her rather 'insiders' approach to her treatment of Highland officers Henderson also suggests that they were not all that well off financially.⁴⁷ One must realise, of course, that this did tend to be something of a favourite conceit amongst the officers of the Victorian army themselves, i.e. they rather liked to conceive of themselves, despite their reputation for the opposite, as in fact quite poorly-off and hard done-by.⁴⁸ Indeed, what professional group when confronted by the daily difficulties and challenges of their world of work - and the lives of the officers of the Victorian army were certainly not without these - likes to conceive of itself as starting from a position of wealth and privilege? What then does our examination of the officer corps of the 78th reveal concerning its members real situation in this regard?

In all, the social backgrounds and circumstances of thirty-five of the forty-six 78th officers of these years (76%) is known for certain. Of these a total of twenty (43%) can be identified as coming from the landholding

portion of British society, a determination which is based upon whether an officer's name or that of his family appeared in one or other of the era's guides to the landholding interest, such as the Parliamentary Paper, "Return of Owners of Land" of 1874 and 1876 (together constituting the so-called 'New Domesday' Survey), or one of the published guides to the landholding interest, such as Burke's *Landed Gentry*.

Adopting Thompson's and Mingay's distinctions referred to above, only two of its officers, Lieutenant Matthew Moreton and Captain George Lecky, can in any way be deemed aristocracy. And only Moreton can be considered of aristocratic background in the fullest sense of the term - i.e. his father was an earl with a seat in the House of Lords, and with properties that yielded an income of more than £10,000 a year. Matthew was the earl's tenth son, however, and thus well down in the family's order of precedence (although they were careful to point out that he had "sufficient fortune to enable him to live as an officer".⁴⁹) Lecky was the step son of the Scottish Earl of Carnwath, who did not sit in the House of Lords, and whose estate of Glenae House in Dumfries-shire, consisting of 1,243 acres and yielding an income of £943 a year, was closer in size to those of the lesser gentry or even country gentleman class of landowner than the aristocracy.⁵⁰ On the other hand, a total of Eighteen officers (39%) were identifiably of landed gentry background: seven (15%) from the greater gentry - Feilden, Muir-Mackenzie, Knight, Fordyce, and Callander; three (6½%) from the lesser

gentry - Finlay, Alexander, and a Lieutenant Allin, whose family owned property in Berkshire; and eight (17%) from the 'country gentleman' class of landowner - Captain Thomas Mackenzie, Lieutenants Pakenham Stewart, Rowley, Pitt-Taylor, and O'Grady, and Ensigns Cameron, Sandeman, and Ewart.

While the aristocratic representation amongst this group of officers is below that of the army as a whole according to Edward Spiers' figures (four as opposed to about fifteen percent), the figure for the gentry is higher (thirty-nine as opposed to twenty-seven percent). And it was the full range of gentry society that was represented, not just its lower reaches. Indeed, at fifteen percent of the total number of officers, and thirty-five per cent of those with landholding backgrounds, the greater gentry was probably over-represented in the 78th in terms of that group's total representation in society. It is interesting to note that five out of the seven greater gentry, and two of the three lesser gentry officers were Scottish. It is not known what the comparable figures were for other regiments, but it is probably fair to speculate that the phenomenon was attributable to a preference on the Scottish gentry's part for service in national (i.e. Highland) regiments, causing them to concentrate in larger numbers than average in the relatively few regiments that fell into this category. This suggests, of course, that in Highland regiments at any rate, the national factor was of some significance in determining social composition.

The group with the next highest representation

within the 78th's officer corps was the military itself, with a total membership of six (13% of the total number of officers). These were all products of the military elite, in that three were the sons of generals and three of colonels. Two others (4% - Major Augustus Warren and Ensign William Macdougall, both from Ireland) came from legal families of some eminence; another (Captain Colin Mackenzie) from a banking family; another (Lieutenant Massy Stacpoole, again from Ireland) the clergy; and yet another (Ensign Charles Carfrae, from London) a family of so-called "independent position"⁵¹. Only two officers (Captain George Gower, whose father was a soap manufacturer and merchant in Ipswich, Suffolk; and Lieutenant Charles Roberts, whose father started out as a "hatter, tailor, and woolen draper" in Nottinghamshire) came from families that in any way can be defined as 'trade', and they seem to have been ones who had done quite well at it. The paymaster, Charles Skrine of Bath, England, and the quartermaster, Alexander Weir, of Kilkenny, in Ireland, were, of course, from working-class backgrounds and had risen from the ranks, as was customary with these positions throughout the army.

The backgrounds of eleven of the officers (24%) have not been ascertained with certainty. It should be noted, however, that a total of five of these were born in India, which strongly suggests families with backgrounds in either the British or East India Company armies, or else the Indian Civil Service.

W.L. Burn has written that the mid-Victorian era had

a class structure that was “both simpler and more rigid” than our own, with concomitantly well defined notions as to what constituted respectability, or the lack thereof. The greatest respectability, he points out, attached to members of the landed interest, and especially those who did not have to work for a living, which was closely intertwined with the concept of gentility. “Before occupational precedence”, he writes, “ranked the prestige attaching to a fact and a concept, the fact of ownership of land and the concept of gentility.” Outside this pale, true respectability was accorded to only a limited number of occupations in which one earned one’s living by working. According to Burn: “What sociologists call occupational prestige attached in the highest measure to a smaller number of occupations [than today]; particularly to the Church, the Bar, the highest ranks of the Civil Service (particularly the Diplomatic Service) and the armed forces.”⁵² F.M.L. Thompson casts the net a bit wider to include such non-landed groups as “country bankers, merchants, and career officers and servants of the East India Company.”⁵³

These were, of course, all groups with which the gentry interacted and formed connections at many levels. Indeed they were ones from which members of the gentry had frequently ascended, or to which they had returned, owing to the system of primogeniture, by which family properties were always left to the oldest son. Thus, while Henderson is doubtless correct in suggesting that the term ‘gentry’ may be loaded with a certain amount of unintended descriptive baggage, so in

another sense is the term 'middle-class' when it is used to refer to all officers who derived from non-landed backgrounds.⁵⁴ In the case of the 78th, for example, significant elements of what are normally considered to have composed this social stratum are missing entirely, with only a small number not coming from groups that fell within landed society's hierarchical notions of true social and occupational respectability.

With regards to income, the seven members of the so-called greater gentry were from sunstantially well-off backgrounds. Thus the family estate of Major Oswald Feilden, Witton Park in Lancashire, was worth £7,314 a year. The family income of Major George Forbes from estates in Aberdeenshire and Banffshire was £4,170 a year; the Delvine estate of Captain Muir-Mackenzie in Perthshire was worth £6,419 a year; the Gelston Castle property of Lieutenant William Maitland-Kirwan in Kirkcudbrightshire, earned £5,000 a year. The properties of Ensign George Callander in Stirlingshire and Argyllshire, earned a total of £7,511 a year, and those of Arthur Dingwall Fordyce's family in Aberdeenshire and Kincardineshire, a total of £14,058, which, as seen, somewhat exceeded customary gentry levels.⁵⁵ Such earnings would have meant the possession of a country estate with mansion, extensive properties, sizable household staffs, and access to the best in terms of material goods and education. Furthermore, four of these seven were the first born of the family, which meant they stood to inherit the lot; and indeed two, Captain Muir-Mackenzie and Ensign Callander, were

already the proprietors of their estates. Callander in fact came into legal possession of his properties soon after the 78th arrived in Halifax, and he threw a celebrated party on McNab's Island to mark the event.⁵⁶

As for the families of the three officers from lesser gentry backgrounds, that of Captain John Finlay, received £1,922 a year from the Deanston House estate in Deanston, Perthshire; that of Lieutenant Edward Alexander £1,102 a year from the Westerton estate in Stirlingshire; and lastly, that of Lieutenant John William Allin, £1,410 a year from the Downs House estate in Berkshire. Again, both Alexander and Allin were the first born of their families. A measure of the living standards that such incomes allowed can be gauged by the fact that the family of Lieutenant Allin, which had been principal landowners in the village of East Hendred, Berkshire, for generations, and had prospered during the period of growth during the Crimean war, were able from their yearly income of £1,410 to live in a "fine modern" mansion, to maintain a deer park of ninety acres, and maintain a household staff of seven, housed in special cottages on the estate.⁵⁷ And these figures, it should be noted, refer only to income from land, and not from other sources such as investments or other ventures. Thus the income that the family of Captain Finlay received from its Deanston House property would have been substantially supplemented by revenues stemming from its involvement in the Scottish cotton industry. In fact Captain Finlay's grandfather, Kirkennan, had "acquired control of a

major part” of this industry earlier in the century, and Deanston was in fact a mill town mostly owned by the Finlays⁵⁸. It is interesting to note that later in the century Captain Finlay was to inherit the entire family fortune, after the deaths of a number of other family members with prior claims.⁵⁹

The so-called ‘county gentlemen’ would have been less well off. But as Mingay writes, although “Individually [their] estates were small, often no larger than a good sized house and paddock with perhaps one or two farms, ... they frequently had other sources of income from investments in stocks and shares or urban property, for example, and collectively they owned as much land as the great proprietors.”⁶⁰ Thus, it is known that the families of three members of this group in the 78th had income apart from their land. The father of Lieutenant Edward Pakenham Stewart, for example, who owned 802 acres in county Longford in Ireland worth £470 a year, was also employed as an estate agent, which occupation was generally very well paid.⁶¹ Ensign Allan Cameron’s father, of the Clunes estate in Inverness-shire worth £606, had carried away a fortune from the Australian gold rush, and was described by one of his son’s referees for a first commission as “a man of great wealth.”⁶² And the father of Ensign James Henry Ewart, who earned £302 from his estate of Hoole Bank in Cheshire, was also heavily involved in East India commerce out of Liverpool.⁶³

As for the non-landed officers, it is more difficult to determine their levels of income, as there are no handy

guides, such as those to the landholding class, to tell us. Certainly Major Warren, whose father, Serjeant Warren, was recorded in a *Times* obituary column in 1848 as “receiving perhaps the largest income ever gained at the Irish bar”, came from a background of some wealth.⁶⁴ This was probably also the case with Ensign William Brewster Macdougall, whose father was Clerk of the Writs and Seals of the Superior Court of Ireland, and whose grandfather was an Irish Lord Chancellor.⁶⁵ Captain Colin Mackenzie’s father, Treasurer of the Bank of Scotland, and the son of a landowner in Peebleshire, probably was fairly well-to-do. And Ensign Charles Carfrae’s father, who referred to himself as a “gentleman” and of “independent condition” probably had some means. The father of Lieutenant Massy Stacpoole was a clergyman, certainly not one of the era’s better paid positions, but he did rise to become Dean of Kingston in Ireland, and he is recalled by one of his sons (who became a best selling novelist) as having had “a good income”, and employing a fair sized household staff that included a coachman, a cook, a “sort of” butler, and maid servants.⁶⁶ Captain Gower and Lieutenant Roberts were, as noted, the only officers to derive from families involved in trade, a pursuit which, according to Thompson, was well outside truly respectable occupations⁶⁷. Nonetheless, Gower’s family did have some connections with landowners in Essex, and the families of both seem to have done quite well for themselves.⁶⁸ It is possible that the sons, if not amongst the most socially respectable of the officers, were not amongst the poorest either.

Of the remaining officers (eleven in all), whose family backgrounds were either military or unknown, one can only speculate. Although as noted earlier the fathers of the officers from military backgrounds were from senior positions, their retirement pensions were not vast, although they may have had means from other sources. The father of the senior ensign, Gilbert Waugh, for example was a former major general in the Bengal and in the Royal Engineers, and was at the time of his son's service in Canada, retired and living in London. He was a deputy lieutenant of the city, a member of the Athenaeum club, and maintained an involvement in his former profession of surveying through membership of the Royal Geographical Society, and geographical societies on the continent. This suggests a life of some comfort for himself, although whether there would have been much left to support anything in the way of luxury for his son is impossible to say.⁶⁹ As for the remainder, we only have Captain Andrew Murray's testimony to the fact that his means were "very limited". It is possible that amongst this group there was a leaven of officers whose means were relatively circumscribed, and who perhaps more than the others were dependent on their army pay alone as their chief means of livelihood. Certainly this group had more than its share of military workhorses, whose careers were long, under frequently gruelling circumstances. No less than four of its members were to die of disease at remote postings. In addition, it is interesting to note that the three 78th officers who married Halifax

women - all from well-to-do backgrounds - were also from this group.

What then does this close-up study of the officer corps of the 78th tell us that is different from the demographic studies published so far. First, is the fact that although the percentage of officers from the landed interest generally is about the same (roughly between forty and fifty percent), the balance in the 78th is radically different, with a relative lack of officers from the aristocracy and the virtual domination of this group by members of the landed gentry. It is not known how the 78th compared with other regiments on colonial service in this respect, but the aristocracy was fairly well known for selling out or for arranging transfers to other regiments when such service threatened. Furthermore, when the 78th officers who had long term military careers are compared with those who served a relatively short period of time, it is clear that the percentage of officers with a gentry background was much higher in the second group than in the former (sixty compared with thirty-eight per cent). Does this perhaps suggest a higher over-all percentage of gentry involvement in the army's officer corps than other studies have suggested? Is this a phenomenon especially associated with Highland regiments? Probably only similar studies of other regiments will show for certain. Also, our survey of the non-landed officers shows that with only a few exceptions they came from the most socially prestigious occupational groups of Victorian society, ones which traditionally had close professional and

familial relations with the landed and particularly the gentry interest - a group to which such an undifferentiated term as 'middle class', as used in some other studies, does not seem precisely applicable. Was the 78th representative? Again only other studies of other units will tell us.

With regards to family income, and this is the first study to attempt any precision in this matter, certainly no 78th officer was from the extravagantly wealthy circumstances of some of the great aristocratic families; nonetheless a sizable number do seem to have been from very well-off backgrounds. Of course, the percentage of the landed incomes that would have been eaten up by estate charges, provisions in wills for relatives, etc. is not known; but the figures cited are those for income from landed property alone and not from other sources such as investments. Also, the extent to which any of these incomes percolated down to the members of the family actually serving is not known. The only 78th officer visibly to flaunt his wealth while in Halifax was Ensign Callander (he ran a race horse, owned a yacht, and held a number of spectacular parties), but he was the only one to serve any length of time in the city who was the actual proprietor of his estate and thus the major recipient of its revenues. Nonetheless, although the impression that emerges from the officer corps as a whole during its years in Halifax is one of solid, if not extravagant comfort, it would be difficult for the majority of the officers to argue that they were from especially impoverished backgrounds. Apart from these

considerations, however, as for the most part members of the landed gentry stratum of British society, or else of groups that were closely affiliated with it, the officers do seem by any standards to have been for the most part members of a privileged elite, although of society's penultimate, not ultimate rank.

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ENDNOTES

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⁵¹ PRO WO 31/1446, Thomas Carfrae to Mil. Sec., [?] 1868.

⁵² Burn, Age of Equipoise, p. 254.

⁵³ Thomson, English Landed Society, p. 20-21.

⁵⁴ The worst offenders in this respect are perhaps Razzel, "Social Origins of Officers in the Indian and British Home Army", pp 248-260 and Henderson, Highland Soldier, p. 92.

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⁶⁸ Information supplied to the author by the Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich, January 1990, and by the Nottinghamshire County Library, Stephen Best to the Author, 18 April 1990.

⁶⁹ See the entry in Stephen & Lee eds., Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. XX, p. 988.


REVIEWS

CHARLES I.

Christopher Durston
London: Routledge, 1998 pp ix-71

CELTIC DIMENSIONS OF THE BRITISH CIVIL WARS

John R. Young, (ed.)
Edinburgh: John Donald, 1997 pp v-232. £16.

he number and range of books addressing the early Stuart period of British history continues to grow each year, and this is only good news for casual readers and serious students of the period, alike. It is now possible to obtain short, succinct treatments of the lives of key figures such as Charles I, alongside longer, more arcane examinations of a variety of subjects surrounding the turbulent seventeenth century. The reader, therefore, is presented with a growing variety of interesting choices and themes which will take him or her far beyond the boundaries imposed by what used to be known as “standard works.”

Typical of the options available are the two volumes reviewed herein. Christopher Durston's *Charles I* is the latest offering from the Lancaster Pamphlet Series, which is being compiled to provide students with an introduction to major historical figures and topics. As the editors of the series stress on the back cover of all their editions, each pamphlet is intended to "provide a concise and up-to-date analysis" of given topics, by featuring "central themes, incorporating traditional and revisionist approaches, and using the most recent research to stimulate critical thought and interpretation." Overall, the formula works very well. Durston's treatment of Charles contains a healthy mixture of biographical information coupled with a clear presentation of the events and issues which dominated his life and reign, especially in England. Indeed, the work reads much like a series of lectures, in which Durston takes his audience through Charles' life step-by-step, always introducing issues, presenting a variety of possible explanations, then offering his own interpretation.

The result is a balanced, though somewhat wooden portrait of Charles, as a prisoner to his own stubbornness. In reaching this conclusion, Durston makes liberal references to many recent studies of Charles' reign, and indicates how serious readers might approach these works to obtain additional information and perspectives. Of particular interest is his discussion of the "Personal Rule" of the 1630s, during which Charles refused to call an English Parliament. Here, he offers a judicious précis of Kevin Sharpe's *The Personal*

Rule of Charles I (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992), which portrays the period as one of peace and prosperity for England. Durston clearly disagrees with Sharpe's analysis, but offers the reader an insight into this important work nonetheless. The capacity to introduce key historiographical debates into such a short work is thus one of Durston's true strengths.

As with any short work, there are bound to be gaps, unanswered questions, and outstanding issues which might have been addressed. Durston, for example, provides only scant treatment of Scottish and Irish issues, and there is almost nothing about these two kingdoms prior to the outbreak of the Bishops' Wars in 1639. One might also have wished for a clearer analysis of those who supported and opposed the king throughout his kingdoms during the War of the Three Kingdoms. On quite a different level, I found the referencing style featured in this book to be highly inadequate. As mentioned, Durston makes many references to other works, but does not provide these via scholarly citations. Instead, he opts for giving authors' names and book titles alone. Perhaps I am old-fashioned, but a publication aimed at entry-level history university students ought to feature footnotes or endnotes, and provide full page and publication information. While the decision to employ this style may have come from the editorial board, it nevertheless deprives the pamphlet of an opportunity to set a high scholarly example for its readers. In the spirit of the series, however, I have little hesitation in recommending

this work to those who wish to be introduced to Charles I.

The Celtic Dimensions of the British Civil Wars is drawn from the proceedings of the Second Conference of the Research Centre in Scottish History at the University of Strathclyde, 5 April 1995. I was fortunate enough to attend that conference and can only echo the comments of John Morrill, who, in his introductory essay, notes that the essays featured in the volume more than reflect energy and insights which developed during the original sessions. Morrill makes another important point when he states that these essays by six Scottish and four Irish scholars are not so much about the “Celtic” dimensions of the British Civil Wars, as about the “non-English” dimensions of the British Civil Wars. These are, of course, two different things, although the distinction tends to become lost within this volume’s title. That said, these are ten challenging and original essays. Readers who wish to study the fall of the Stuart monarchy as something more than English issues writ-large will find plenty to consider within these pages. John Scally and William Kelly, for example, probe the ways in which two leading subjects, the Marquis of Hamilton and the Earl of Ormond, attempt to maintain their loyalty to their sovereign, Charles I, as he blunders into a three-kingdom catastrophe. Sharon Adams offers a highly detailed regional study of the growth of radicalism in the Scottish South-West during Charles’ reign, while Pádraig Lenihan debunks the notion that the mode of fighting employed by the Irish Confederates had become outdated. The essays by Ronnie Lee on


the Restoration Parliaments in Scotland, and Clare Jackson on Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh's notions of political virtue, are especially poignant, as they challenge the reader to consider what the Covenanting Revolution in Scotland actually stood for, and what it accomplished.

It is sometimes difficult for young scholars to gain their first publications. For that reason, John Donald is to be complimented for publishing this bold and refreshing collection. If nothing else, these essays present the reader with a wide-ranging discussion of the non-English aspects of the British Civil Wars, and pose a timely reminder of the complexity of the British Multiple Kingdoms in the seventeenth century.

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LOVE AND LIBERTY

Robert Burns: a bicentenary celebration.
Kenneth Simpson, (ed.). Tuckwell Press, East Linton,
Scotland 1997. pp x-368. £16.99.

 These are the papers which were read at the international bi-centenary Burns conference at the University of Strathclyde in 1996. There are thirty-two pieces on a comprehensive selection of subjects. The volume looks at the poet in the many different contexts in which he lived and suggests reciprocal relations between those contexts and his creations. The important result of this activity is an enriching of our understanding not only of the complex personality of the poet but also of the wide-ranging implications of the poems and songs. If you come to this book with a love of Burns based on a handful of his poems, you will find an abundance of instruction and amusement.

There is much to amuse here. At the simple level, for instance, there is a report of the recent invention of the aphrodisiac haggis complete with a testimonial to its effectiveness. A more complex amusement is given by the evidence of an expert in hand-writing that Burns' signature shows that he "was emotionally reserved, had a mundane personality and was mean with money." Both these jewels occur in David Hutchison's

“Burns, the Elastic Symbol: Press Treatment of Burns’ Anniversary, 1995 and 1996” (pp 79-86).

The most original contribution to this book is a series of imagined addresses to Burns by five famous people from the late 18th to the 21st century composed by Edwin Morgan (“The Five Pointed Star”: pp 13-17). In the first of these addresses Catherine (the Great) proposes that Robbie come visit her in Russia in order to enjoy a comfortable sleigh-ride together through the snow (and whatever might develop from this imperial intimacy);

What could he miss? He’ll be at home with us.
Cold blasts? An unmistakable plus.
Strong drink? We’ll toast him under the table.
Superstitions? We’ve reams of myth and fable.
They say he’s rather hard on royalty.
Well well, but that was France, we’ll see, we’ll see.

Most instructive, I think, are the papers on the contemporary translation of Burns into Gaelic (by Roderick Macdonald, pp 248-255) and Japanese (by J. Derrick McClure, pp 87-104). McClure’s paper culminates with a literal interlineal translation into English of Japanese versions of four Burns poems (including two attempts at translating “My Luvie is like a Red, Red Rose” by different poets with distinctive styles). This close analysis and recreation of Burns’ text certainly possesses its own exquisite delight.

Macdonald has now translated all Burns’ poems and

songs into Gaelic and in the course of his piece here he provides a more satisfactory translation of the “lawless leg” passage in “Holy Willie’s Prayer” (pp 43-48) than he had previously published:

Is aithne dhuit le Meg a raoir -
Mathanas iarram ort gun fhoill -
'S na biodh e nar phlaigh, mar thoill,
'Thoirt dhomh eas-onair!
Is sliasaid neohlaine a chaoidh
Cha tog mi oirre.

Rather than reporting briefly on each piece in the volume however, I will focus instead on those papers which deal most directly with the second topic included in the book’s title: liberty. The consistency of Burns’ life and writing in regard to this subject is explored from a number of perspectives in many of the papers. Generally this examination makes it clear that if we keep in mind the different audience for which different poems were intended, and indeed the different characterisation of a poem’s speaker, we can explain the expression of opposite view-points in different poems without recourse to the theory of the incoherence of the poet.

Liberty, in its most contemporary political manifestation, is for Burns freedom from monarchy. He expressed his satisfaction with this ideal many times, openly or through satire; in *Elegy on the Year 1788*, for instance, he wrote:

Lords or Kings I dinna mourn,
E'en let them die - for that they're born....

And in *A Dream* under the guise of offering George III humble birthday wishes the poet advises him in the art of ruling and criticises the heir apparent, the “young Potentate of Wales”. In this regard it is no surprise to learn that Burns supported both the American and the French revolutions. The meaning of liberty in the Scottish tradition is concisely expounded by R.J. Fechner in “Burns and American Liberty” (pp 274-288). The contribution of the Kirk to Burns’ conception of liberty is explored in Liam McIlvanney’s “‘Sacred Freedom’: Presbyterian Radicalism and the Politics of Robert Burns” (pp 168-182).

Liberty for Scotland from the domination of England is also a constant theme in Burns as he writes to vilify the Union of 1707 or to praise the great leaders of the past who successfully resisted aggression “from the south”. In the heroic, independent past Scotland was free from England, though not from monarchs; glory is given unstintingly to Bruce and the Stuart line. The significance of the contrast between this Jacobitism (in support of the restoration of the native kings) and the revolutionary ideal of the kingless state (supported by Burns and from the contemporary French context known as Jacobinism) is assessed in various ways in a number of papers.

P.H. Scott in “Robert Burns, Patriot” (pp 266-273) considers that the poet had a good appreciation of

historical change and felt no need to criticise the institutions of the past, especially when these had served Scotland well. Moreover the Scottish kings are presented by Burns as the executors of law and justice, and are therefore free of the charge of despotism. Nevertheless Scott suggests that Burns prefers to praise Wallace than Bruce (“no doubt because of his humbler origin, uncompromising patriotism and dreadful end”) and that in any case he praises “the injured Stewart line” not as kings but as Scots.

In strong disagreement with the attempt to harmonise these contrasting views of monarchy in Burns’ work with his contemporary radicalism, C.A. Whatley in “Burns and the Union of 1707” (pp 183-197) deplors the lack of realism in Burns’ portrayal of Scotland’s past in the service of an impoverished nationalism, classing it as a contribution to “the ‘we wuz robbed’ or inferiorist school of Scottish history”. In a contrast which is not to be elided, Burns’ pragmatic radicalism, according to Whatley, was British rather than exclusively Scottish.

If you feel that this view of Scottish nationalist history discounts the power inherent in the archetype of “the hero who lost”, you can turn for a satisfactory synthesis to M.G.H. Pittock “Burns and the Jacobite Song” (pp 308-314). All references to and reminiscences of the Stuart cause, he argues, have the connotation of rebellion. Now that the Hanoverian succession is unshakeable, Stuart kingship is removed from the world of the practicable and set free to serve as the emblem

and symbol of revolt, even against monarchy. “Jacobite language is made a contemporary vehicle for radical value... in an egalitarian, proletarian vision... of the ‘pride o’ worth’....”

The only monarchy which should survive, in Burns’ view, is symbolic and individual: “the majesty of woman” and “the royalty of man”, that is of the independent man of moral integrity:

The honest man, tho’ e’er sae poor,
is King o’ men for a’ that.

While good morals may make a king, the individual however needs to beware of turning tyrant, especially against non-human nature. Donald Low in “Nature’s Social Union and Man’s Dominion: Burns the Poet after Two Hundred Years” (pp 105-110) conveys the scope and depth of the poet’s care for the animal and vegetable beings around us, as he deplores not alone the intentional killing of hares and birds in hunting but even the accidental destruction of a mouse’s nest or the stalk of a mountain daisy. Repeatedly the pejorative language of political domination is used to characterise such abuses of individual human power, as in these lines from *On scaring some Water-fowl in Loch Turit*:

Man, your proud, usurping foe
Would be lord of all below;
Plumes himself in Freedom’s pride,
Tyrant stern to all beside.

Thirty years on Shelley in *Prometheus Unbound* takes up this theme of the oppression which may be practiced by those who have themselves just gained freedom, elaborating it even in regard to inanimate atoms in these same political terms. It is not unlikely that Burns on this point contributed to the English poet's conscientious radicalism.

The poet set forth his moral aims; but he also regularly confessed to lapses from his ideal behaviour. He took the liberty of dissolution, turning into "rantin' rovin' Robin", like his inebriated, wamefou hero Tam o' Shanter:

Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

Whatever of his reputation as a drinker, Burns' record in love affairs tarnished his reputation in his own time and has continued to do so in most of his biographies. In "Sexual Poetics or the Poetry of Desire" (pp 289-298) M. Palmer McCulloch discusses the exceptional biographical novel on Burns' life by Catherine Carswell which defuses the charges of the poet's sexual opportunism by emphasising the consensual nature of the unions. McCulloch connects the genesis of Burns' best love poems with the renewed stimulation of his sexual desire. It may indeed be so. It is very surprising however that although love is the leading topic in the book's title there is only a single paper on the poet's love affairs. There must be other trenchant and illuminating views on this subject.

Writing at the age of twenty-four in the First Commonplace Book Burns describes himself as “a man of some sense, a great deal of honesty, and unbounded good will to every creature, rational and irrational”. In other words he aims at being a “King o’ men” in terms of his honesty and benevolence. This went unrecognised however by the aristocratic polite society, upon whose patronage he in some respects depended. His balancing-act in this delicate situation is examined by D. Daiches, “Robert Burns: the Tightrope Walker” and V. Bold, “Inmate of the Hamlet: Burns as Peasant Poet”. He casts himself as the unlettered rustic (and so inferior to his polite patrons) who owes his poetry to inspiration from Nature or Heaven (whose precedence even polite patrons will accept).

His prose writings (whether the Commonplace Books or his prolific correspondence) show that Burns is widely-read and, more importantly, that he has taken deep thought about the issues he has read about. It is evident then that his knowledge comes to some extent from his own study rather than simply from a direct inspiration. His conversational powers were widely regarded as brilliant (so much so that some thought him a better thinker even than poet). His ability to express himself manifested itself then, not as deriving from a natural or celestial source, but simply within an ordinary Scottish social setting.

The “Heaven-taught Ploughman”, in other words, was well instructed in the ideas of the 18th century and so was, to this extent, unrepresentative of the

ploughman commonalty. He cultivated the cool rational satire of Voltaire, while at least equally embracing the naturalism of Rousseau, according to I.S. Ross, "Burns and the Siècle des Lumières" (pp 217-228). E.J. Cowan, "Burns and Superstition" (pp 229-238) agrees that Burns was a wholehearted supporter of the Scottish enlightenment but shows that at the same time he was willing to represent himself as being "naturally of a superstitious cast". Cowan holds these divergent qualities of the poet together in suggesting that Burns was, "perhaps, a superstitious skeptic".

Another interesting feature in this collection is the demonstration of various ways in which the text of Burns could be used to promote causes which he himself would scarcely espouse. See in the first instance C. MacDougall, "Rabbitising Reality" (pp 32-42). For example, his praise of sobriety in poems like *The Cotter's Saturday Night* has been used to promote Temperance and Abstinence from alcoholic drink (the celebration of the joys of drinking in other poems is taken as evidence of the poet's fall from his own best light and so discounted). Socialists can quote lines about the corrupting effect of gold; nationalists lines against England, and so forth. This claim on Burns by radically opposed groups is possible only because of the variety of his writings. But such versatile utilisation of the poems may be seen as the penalty of his popularity.

I have made no mention of the four papers on Burns and folksong, of papers on the poet in the literary and critical traditions of Scotland and Britain

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as well as on his role in the establishment of Scottish identity. But perhaps enough has been said to indicate the richness of this book's contents. In sum, I would say that this is a volume worthy as few are to stand beside the collected works of Burns - than which there is no greater honour - and like them to be read and, aye, reread.

Padraig O'Cleirigh
University of Guelph

CARLYLE AND SCOTTISH THOUGHT

Ralph Jessop

McMillan Ltd. London: 1997. 266 pp.

 Literary/critical treatments of Thomas Carlyle and his works have traditionally tended to focus on his German intellectual inheritance, especially the writings of Goethe and Kant and virtually ignore the formative influence of the Scottish cultural milieu in which he was raised. It is the purpose of the above volume to redress this balance.

Developing an innovative interdisciplinary approach to Carlyle's writings, one that recontextualizes Carlyle within a distinctive Scottish philosophical discourse, Jessop successfully illuminates a subtle yet complex strand in Carlyle's evolution as historian, writer and thinker. Specifically, he explores the complex philosophic tradition, compounded of Humean skepticism and Reid's theory of ideas, that dominated intellectual debate in Scotland throughout the period 1780-1830 and remained in the forefront during Carlyle's formative years. Deftly blending narrative and analysis, Jessop demonstrates clearly how Carlyle's early links with Reid's progressive philosophy of "common sense" extended through his readings of Dougal Stewart, the works of Thomas Brown, and ultimately to his friend,

the philosopher, Sir William Hamilton who was disseminating Reidian metaphysics in Scotland, about the time Carlyle was contributing important essays to *The Edinburgh Review* and preparing *Sartor Resartus* for publication. Jessop firmly substantiates his interpretation in five informative, richly documented chapters, exploring Carlyle's friendship with Hamilton, his adoption of Hamilton's doctrine of nescience (Chapters V and IX) and the presence of Scottish philosophical ideas in Carlyle's essays for *Blackwood's Magazine*, as well as in his "Sign of the Times" and more substantially, in *Sartor Resartus* reinterpreted in the final section of the book. Indeed, this reappraisal (Chapter IX) - a model of imaginative scholarship - serves to unify the volume as a whole by showing that the philosophic tenets woven throughout *Sartor Resartus* owed less to German idealism than to the mind/body dualism of Reid as modified by Hamilton. This solid grounding in Scottish enlightenment thought, Jessop shows convincingly, preceded and accompanied Carlyle's study of German writers and, if anything, actually shaped his views of those writers (p. 190). The apparent agreement between the Cambridge Platonists, Reid and Kant made such later philosophers as Hamilton predisposed to Kantian philosophy as it also made Carlyle who "himself noted resonances between the Scottish and German schools" (p. 198). In each case, the growing influence of German idealism in both England and Scotland in the early 19th century, contributed to a decline in the Scottish philosophy of common sense and in turn, obscured

the connection between this philosophy and Carlyle's style and thought.

It is ultimately Jessop's expertise in both English literature and philosophy that makes his methodology, combining these disciplines, so effective. It allows him to approach Carlyle the literary artist via the latter's philosophical presuppositions and formulation. In the process, he not only recovers a neglected dimension of Carlyle's work, but provides a re-interpretation of Scottish post-enlightenment philosophy used as "an informing discourse which assists towards new readings of Carlyle's texts" (p. xiii). The resulting product represents a major contribution to Carlyle's studies and a worthy supplement to Charles F. Harrold's, *Carlyle and German Thought* (1934) and Elizabeth Vide's more recent, *Romantic Affinities: German Authors and Carlyle* (1993).

K.W. Schweizer

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The winner of the 1997 *Frank Watson Prize in Scottish History* was Allan MacInnes for his publication *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart 1603 to 1788*. Tuckwell Press.

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