

*Crockett, Barrie and the call of the Kailyard.*

*One question people frequently ask me is what got me interested in Crockett in the first place. There are lots of answers. Here's something I pulled from the archives of my hard drive- it was a chapter in the PhD I was working on in 1998. For a variety of reasons the academic route became less attractive to me as a means of working through my thoughts on Crockett, Barrie and 'Kailyard' not least because it seemed (and still seems) to me that academic 'privileging' of some 'literature' over others was part of the problem. It was a situation I was aware of in English Literature (which I studied as an undergraduate and taught for some seven years as tutor) but I had hoped that the Scottish approach to literature would be as divergent from the English as our legal systems are. Sadly not. There are surface differences but I fear it's still the same old story of the academic privileging of 'great' literature. The concept of 'The Scottish Renaissance' excited me. The reality of discovering that it (to my mind) was as like a Renaissance as Mao's Cultural Revolution was a real cultural revolution, finally led to me abandoning my doctorate.*

*The thesis was abandoned, but the interest has never waned. I still believe that there is much more to Scottish writing (I now eschew to break it into 'literature' and 'fiction' categories) than we are being told is 'good.'*

*And nearly twenty years on, I found myself in a position to give the time and money that otherwise would have been spent finishing an academic thesis, to the task of bringing Crockett's work back into the public consciousness, I did so with enthusiasm. My 'big' task which you see before you as *The Galloway Collection* and *The Galloway Raiders*, was intended to achieve what I could not achieve in academia. I am not sorry I made that choice.*

*But it's always worth looking back. And so, here is a draft of the chapter I submitted in 1998. I have left it substantially unaltered and have kept the footnotes as they are. It may not make for the easiest reading but here it is – one day I'll polish it up and use it somewhere else – but it's good to see things 'warts and all' sometimes. I have two versions of this 'chapter' – this is the pre-revision one. I find, on reading it nearly 20 years on, that it more substantially represents what I still want to say on the subject than the version that was subject to supervisorial scrutiny and 'revised'. Throughout, I have highlighted in bold type fundamental thoughts which still hold true for me. This is where I came from. And it's still substantially what I believe.*

*Cally Phillips (May 2014)*

**THE SELF-CONSCIOUS NARRATOR IN KAILYARD ROMANCE:- a comparative study of J.M.Barrie's "The Little Minister" with S.R.Crockett's "The Lilac Sunbonnet".**

There are few schools of Scottish literature so widely reviled as the so-called "kailyard" school,<sup>1</sup> yet perhaps it is time to take a fresh, a more objective or at least a more distanced approach to this phenomena of which J.M. Barrie (1860-1937) and S.R.Crockett (1859-1914) were chief proponents (or culprits - depending upon your viewpoint). As with much of Scottish

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<sup>1</sup> The term "kailyard" was first coined by J.H.Millar in his article "The literature of the Kailyard" in *New Review*, vol 12 Jan-June 1895 pp384-5.

literature, there is more to these two writers than first meets the eye, and I intend, through a comparative study of two of their finest early works, to prove this, or at least show enough merit in the work to raise them above the uncalled for criticism which has been widespread since their first flush of success in the late nineteenth century.

Gillian Shepherd<sup>2</sup> reviews much of the criticism, from the young John Buchan, through to George Blake,<sup>3</sup> whose own vitriolic study on kailyard is perhaps the zenith of misunderstanding. Even Gifford<sup>4</sup> makes the mistake of dismissing Crockett's work as "the sickly and coy 'The Lilac Sunbonnet'", as well as accusing the writer of "*artifice*"<sup>5</sup> in construction. Even critics who purport to see some good in the works such as F.R.Hart<sup>6</sup> and who gives some credit to Crockett describing it as a "deliberate idyll", ultimately dismisses him as "superficially elegaic"<sup>7</sup>. He deals more harshly still with Barrie: "*The Little Minister*" is perhaps the least defensible of Barrie's major books"<sup>8</sup> little more than "*pathetic romantic melodrama*". Shepherd herself dismisses Crockett and Barrie's work as "*more accurately described as collections of anecdotes... slight enough and similar enough to merit little close critical attention while accepting some critics have discovered in them evidence of literary craft and narrative skill.*"<sup>9</sup>

I appreciate therefore, that I am engaged in a somewhat uphill struggle against some very august opposition, yet I hope to show by close comparative study of the works, that there is much more to both Barrie and Crockett than criticism to date has given them credit for. Shepherd realises the importance of Kailyard as an ongoing debate, but I am more concerned with liberating Crockett and Barrie from such constraints and looking at their work in a wider context, of literary merit as potential examples of romance writing in Scottish literature.

Apart from the obvious factor of both being born contemporaneously, the comparatively swift rise to success is one of the most striking similarities between Barrie and Crockett. "The Little Minister" published in 1891 was Barrie's third novel<sup>10</sup> and was "hailed as a Book of Genius"<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>"The Kailyard" in *The History of Scottish Literature Volume 3 (ed Gifford)* 1988 pp309-321.

<sup>3</sup> Barrie and the Kailyard School (London 1951)

<sup>4</sup> Douglas Gifford "Myth, Parody and Dissociation" in *The History of Scottish Literature Volume 3 (ed Gifford)* p234

<sup>5</sup>op cit p233

<sup>6</sup> "The Liberals in the Kailyard " in F.R.Hart "The Scottish Novel" (London 1978)

<sup>7</sup>op cit pp118.119.

<sup>8</sup>op cit p129

<sup>9</sup>Shepherd op cit p309

<sup>10</sup>Fourth if you discount the ill fated self publication *Better Dead* (1888)

<sup>11</sup>J.M.Barrie and the Lost Boys. Andrew Birkin (MacDonald Futura, London 1980) p28

in a front page review by the National Observer." Barrie was by this time an accomplished and well-respected journalist and "The Little Minister" made him an International bestseller with a worldwide readership, favoured by such a Scottish literary great as R.L.Stevenson, with whom he carried on a protracted correspondence although the two men never met.<sup>12</sup> "The Little Minister" went on to become a successful stage-play in 1897, though perhaps the modern critic is more aware of the Hollywood movie version of the 1950's, which is certainly open to the charges of being sickly, coy and sentimental.

Crockett's "The Lilac Sunbonnet" published in 1894<sup>13</sup> was an even more runaway success than "The Little Minister." The first issue of 10,000 copies sold out on the day of publication and Crockett also enjoyed international appeal. While one hesitates to employ the irony to be found often in the works of these two writers and suggest the analogy that 10,000 lemmings can't be wrong; surely at least the jury must go out on the villification of men who were considered great writers in their day. Perhaps some of the criticism of Crockett was due to the fact that "The Lilac Sunbonnet" was not an obvious follow up to the more robust "The Raiders." However, this eclecticism was to be a pattern for Crockett who cleverly played publishers off against each other and whose skill, at least in this matter, ensured that he published on average two novels a year throughout his career which spanned approximately twenty years and, like Dickens, was only curtailed by his death.

Parallels may be drawn between Crockett and Scott in the determined vigour with which he pursued his "career" as writer, determined to write what he wanted and not to be hidebound by conventional expectations. Both men had a wide and varied readership. Parallels with Dickens are also clear to see - these three men Scott, Crockett and Dickens<sup>14</sup> contributed greatly both in volume and in quality to the literature of the day. But whereas Scott has been reclaimed as a major writer in the Scottish canon, having often previously considered a "minor" English novelist, no such courtesy is extended to Crockett who is in many ways a far more "Scottish" writer. Barrie of course suffers greatly from what I shall call the "glass ceiling" effect of Scottishness, which is a condition which has never fully left us<sup>15</sup>. Much of Barrie's work *is* mawkishly sentimental, and overly theatrical - he was perpetually at odds with his dramatic and novellistic style, (and these were the popular styles of the day) but I contend that his ready wit, which occasioned the remark

*There are few more impressive sights in the world than a Scotsman on the make*<sup>16</sup>.  
has as surely turned Scots against him till the critics of his work in fact are criticising his perceived lack of patriotism than lack of writing skill. Crockett and Barrie wrote "popular"

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<sup>12</sup>ibid pp28-29

<sup>13</sup>The same year as "The Raiders" the only one of Crockett's novels which is not universally villified, and one suspects the only one many critics have actually read.

<sup>14</sup>For I do intend to assert that Crockett holds a place as valid in 19th century literature as either of these other "giants".

<sup>15</sup>My argument is that enterprising Scots are generally encouraged to "emigrate" in order to make something of themselves and then are villified when they do. Barrie is a prime example of this.

<sup>16</sup>Barrie "What Every Woman Wants" [page ref]

literature and surely as Scott and Dickens did. What is less clear, in pure literary terms, is why they have been so ignored by subsequent generations.<sup>17</sup>

While I am not particularly interested at this point in going into depth about the societal conditions which might make popular men who wrote what is often considered sentimental<sup>18</sup> or even "trashy" novelists - preferring to look once again at the primary sources to see what can be gleaned from them - there is a point to be made regarding this. **The whole notion of the literary and social value of "popular culture" is, I believe, a key one in Scottish literature and we will not free ourselves from the yoke of an English perception (and consequent evaluation) of Scottish literature, until it is well and truly addressed.** My present task, however, is to re-evaluate the works under question, pointing out areas which may have been missed or ignored by others with different agendas. I do not want to get bogged down into problems of genre theory, literary value or comparative theoretical discussions, though I acknowledge their value. Instead I want to take a primary source approach to my literary criticism, carefully to weigh up the strengths of these two works as exemplum of these writers' early skill (bearing in mind they both went on to write many more substantial works) I will not dwell on the weaknesses, enough has been said about them, but focus on the strengths -and this may furnish us with some welcome surprises and perhaps pull us someway along the footpath towards an understanding of kailyard in its truest sense.

"The Little Minister" and "The Lilac Sunbonnet", are both third novels, written by men in their thirties, but men with seemingly quite different life experience. Barrie was a sophisticated London journalist, who one might say hankered for, one might say could not exorcise, the simplicity of his childhood life. Crockett by contrast was a minister, with a wife and four children to support. One might say a disaffected minister - a man who took the job in his youth as the only way he knew to support the woman he wanted to marry - and who realised, as we surely all do when we leave our twenties behind, not just that you are a long time dead, but that you are a long time alive and so you might as well get on with what you really want to do. And Crockett had a passion for writing; a passion which could not be contained in the sermon box. Both men certainly had in common the fact that they lived to write as much as they wrote to live. They were both serious in their endeavours- a fact often overlooked by critics.

We should not overstate Barrie's psychological problems, attributing the sentimentality of his works to a regressive desire for a mythic childhood he never in fact lived. Barrie has been haunted by the success of "Peter Pan" and subject to the worst excesses of Freudian psychology. In literary terms it is clear Barrie had a wicked sense of irony at least as sharp as Jane Austen, and a wit which would not have put Oscar Wilde to shame. The level to which his personal problems impinged upon his writing style are no more relevant than they are to any writer and I do not intend to focus on them here. In literary terms, Barrie has been accused of

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<sup>17</sup>My point would be that Dickens is lauded because "English". Scott has just been reclaimed as the Scottish Dickens (but perhaps is more British) Barrie is seen by most as a traitor to Scotland and Crockett has been totally overlooked because he didn't have the social connections of Scott That there is a snobbery against popular culture which denigrates these writers and should be investigated..

<sup>18</sup>in a value-laden sense

being a master of emotional manipulation<sup>19</sup> and I certainly hope to show that his use of narrative sophistication in "The Little Minister" is one of the marks of his literary greatness. Perhaps he is after all a true "kailyard" writer, but if so, we need to radically reassess our attitude towards kailyard literature.

As for Crockett, he also shows remarkable skill in narrative construction, as well as a keen sense of irony (often mistakenly dismissed as sentimentality) and an almost unsurpassed skill in poeticising nature. It would be understating the case to say that he is a Scottish Thomas Hardy in this area, he is uniquely and genuinely brilliant. There certainly are touches of Hardy and of Emily Bronte evident in his work and at his best, Crockett is a poet as well as a novelist. He is certainly, if given the chance, an excitingly different and original writer in many respects. And his popular style of writing is much more accessible today than Scott's.

I contend that it is primarily as romances, and more specifically as love stories, that we should consider both "The Little Minister" and "The Lilac Sunbonnet", although this is not the usual approach. Barrie, Crockett and the "kailyard" school have so long been associated with the poor quality tales of domestic sentimentality and little relevance that they have been ignored as romanticists. Initially perhaps the fact that romance was fading from fashion can be given as justification, but latterly I see no such reason for ignoring one of the main facets of their work

The primary critic, biographer and supporter of Crockett is Islay Donaldson<sup>20</sup> who suggests that "The Lilac Sunbonnet" is primarily to do with religion, and more specifically with Crockett's personal dichotomy regarding his position at that stage in his life.<sup>21</sup> I think here that Donaldson does Crockett a disservice, allowing the biographer to swamp the literary critic, and I hope to show that if we take a different view of the novel, we can see even more literary skill than she allows him. And we can begin to draw him back into the canon of Scots literature from whence he should never have been flung out.

The love story in "The Little Minister" is an intriguing and complex one. It is almost incredible that the man who cobbled together "Auld Licht Idylls"<sup>22</sup> could employ the same characters to such sophisticated effect in "The Little Minister." From the very outset of the novel, which opens like a sophisticated fairy tale and which is entitled "The Love- Light"<sup>23</sup>, there is a sense that the real story of interest is the one which is *not* being told. While the natural description of the setting in Thrums and the life of the central character Gavin Dishart (the "little" minister) may seem pedestrian, the novel is compelling from the opening paragraph as we wonder what role the narrator has in the whole affair. From his comments we can see the novel is openly as much a retrospective love story of his own as it is a record of the love story of the young Gavin Dishart. There is a sense of choice, of moral dilemma, which runs through the entire novel. *"The life of every man is a diary in which he means to write one story, and writes another; and*

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<sup>19</sup> You said this in conversation - have you said it in print anywhere?

<sup>20</sup> Donaldson - The life and work of Samuel Rutherford Crockett (1989)

<sup>21</sup> op cit Chapter 5 "The Lilac Sunbonnet"

<sup>22</sup> which may be many things but is not a great novel.

<sup>23</sup> a motif that runs through the entire novel and is not totally clear till the end.

*his humblest hour is when he compares the volume as it is with what he would make it.*"<sup>24</sup>

There is a universality of appeal here which is compelling. The parallel between Gavin and the narrator is skilfully drawn this early on, with the narrator being far the more interesting character for the early part (if not for all) of the novel. The fact that we become increasingly aware that the narrator is in fact Gavin's father only adds credence to the skilful construction of the novel.

We are aware from the very opening that the narrator has a past link with Gavin's mother  
*"Margaret was an old woman, and she was only forty three: and I am the man who made her old."*<sup>25</sup>

And the inevitability of the tragedy is clearly laid out even in this first chapter, where the narrator states that he kept away from Gavin and his mother through their first winter in Thrums.

*"It was all that I could do for them."* <sup>26</sup>

The overall sense of nostalgia for a lost life and a lost love is strong in this first chapter and, I would contend, is sincerely meant. Barrie is certainly at his sophisticated best in this chapter, fully in control of his novel and I think it is as easy to argue that this first chapter is one of the greatest openings to a Scottish novel as it is to dismiss it as sentimental claptrap. Barrie sets out his stall, creates his realistic, naturalistic world at the same time drawing the reader into the story which is at once "little" and epic, spanning generations and yet contained wholly in the grieving heart of one lover.

*"Love is the one form of idolatory that is not quite ignoble. It is the joining of two souls on their way to God."*<sup>27</sup>

If we give can give the first sentence the respect it deserves we should not balk at the second sentence - reminiscent as it is of writers as well respected as Victor Hugo. **We should not let the second order prejudice that kailyard is second-rate rantings about parochial religion distract us from the quality of the writing that we actually read.**

Certainly Barrie is manipulative,

*"These two figures on the hill are more real to me than things that happened yesterday, but I do not know that I can make them live to others"*<sup>28</sup>

But is this statement any less acceptable coming from Barrie's pen than it is when found (as it often is) within literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The self-conscious narrator is not a universally vilified form after all. Whatever one thinks of Barrie in general, I purport that it is hard, if one dispenses with one's prejudices, to read the first chapter of "The Little Minister" and *not* recognise it as the opening of a potentially great novel. Like "Wuthering Heights" there is a sense of the impact of generations on the individual, and like Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" there is the sense of an inevitably doomed love. Not bad company for a

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<sup>24</sup>The Little Minsiter [page ref]

<sup>25</sup>ibid [page ref]

<sup>26</sup>ibid [page ref]

<sup>27</sup>ibid [page ref]

<sup>28</sup>ibid [page ref]

man who was both novelist and dramatist.

By contrast, the opening chapter of "The Lilac Sunbonnet" is likely to be disappointing. The prologue starts in media res with an introduction to Ralph Peden as he meets Jess Kisson. There is more sophistication to this than at first meets the eye. One should also remember that "The Lilac Sunbonnet" was originally written, as many of Dickens novels were, in serial form. Most critics today would accept the various weaknesses of form and narrative thrust which are to be found in Dickens due to this constraint, and we should give Crockett no less consideration. The serial form raises problems regarding the construction of a beautifully balanced novel and Crockett gets into his stride as he progresses through the work. However, the careful and clever interconnection of his characters is something I shall look at later, and is, I contend at least as great in this novel, if not greater, than many of Dickens' comparative achievements. Certainly Crockett's characterisation, particularly of women, is far superior to Scott's early works.

Despite the fact that Crockett's opening chapter does not display the obvious skill of Barrie's opening, nevertheless, it does set up the story well. We see the hero Ralph coming to Galloway from the city and he is immediately subject to the narrator's irony *"the young man was sufficient of a hero. And not too much."*<sup>29</sup>

This is a comment surely worthy of Scott, or that mistress of irony Jane Austen, with whom increasing parallels can be found the further on one reads in the novel. Immediately however, we can see that Crockett's approach to his hero is similar to that of Scott's in "Waverley". We see a young man ripe for changing. Ralph, unlike Edward Waverley, is not at once revealed as a romantic, rather the opposite, he appears to have no heart. He is unaware of the truth which is natural beauty and he is lost in a world which we are bound to laugh at from the very outset. A world where young men think about religion rather than about love. A world where young men do not really *live*. Crockett sets the scene - the apparently innocent attraction to Winsome's lilac sunbonnet, which is destined to be the most potent sexual symbol in the novel –

*"this he did not resent, because it is always safe to admire colour."*<sup>30</sup>

And in the second chapter we swiftly see just how much change Ralph must undergo. He attempts to put the sighting of the aptly named Winsome out of his mind, but finds he can think of nothing else. He attempts to rationalise

*"Women might possibly, after all, be less purely gratuitous than he had supposed"*<sup>31</sup>

Crockett leaves us in no doubt whatsoever as regards the way we should view his "hero".

From the very beginning of both novels therefore, we see the status of the supposed hero. For Barrie, the repeated pejorative use of the word "little" describes both Gavin Dishart and the narrator and is in fact the familial aspect which draws them symbolically together, although at the end Gavin rises above this stature while the narrator does not. This should not, of course, surprise us given the retrospective stance of the narrator at the opening of the novel. It does, nonetheless, leave us with a sense of loss. However happy the ending is for Gavin Dishart, we have also invested a lot of emotion in the character of the narrator and his own "littleness" remains a thorn in both his and our side. The duality of this ending and the emotion it brings

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<sup>29</sup>The Lilac Sunbonnet [page ref]

<sup>30</sup> ibid [page ref]

<sup>31</sup> ibid [page ref]

forward, is a clever construction, surely as clever as Dickens' own duality at the end of 'Great Expectations.' The introduction to Ralph, by Crockett, is enough to engage us and encourages us to invest an ironic interest, like that of the narrator, in seeing the young man taught a good lesson in love.

Although an evidence of different style and approach is already clear from the discussion of the opening chapters of the two novels, a comparison of the central characters in Barrie and Crockett's novels is nevertheless apposite. We have a fairly traditional romantic construction in each case. In Barrie we have the minister Gavin and the object of his affection "Babbie" - a woman of dubious repute who turns out to be a woman of high class to match her feisty spirit. We sense that this is just what such a "little" man needs - a woman who will draw the heroic out of him as surely as Elizabeth does for John Thornton in Mrs Gaskell's "North and South". For in Barrie's tale the hero must take risks, must be tested against a notion of "right" which is in fact really just "cosiness". The success of the heroic endeavour will come when Gavin, unlike his narrator father, stands up against all comers and risks all in order to marry the woman he loves. Although the narrator continues to give us the feeling that this is possible because times have changed, we cannot fail to sense that ultimately Gavin succeeds in heroic endeavour while his father, the narrator, fails.

For Crockett's hero Ralph to come into his own, he must also struggle against the problems of the previous generation, exposing the hypocrisy of both church and individuals to make a match which although it may not on the surface of it be acceptable, is nonetheless truly a match made in heaven. Both heroes are faced with traditional religion as a barrier to their true destiny<sup>32</sup> Both Barrie and Crockett are openly critical of religion and its control over the individual - especially the individual as lover. The two novels both fulfil a basic romantic archetype of "boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy wins girl" and though Gavin and Ralph are not carbon copies of each other, it is perhaps in a study of the heroines where we can see most variation and interest in this love theme.

Both novels bring the heroine into the picture in the first chapter, showing that the women will play a key role in the unfolding narratives. The description of Babbie by Barrie is given us by the narrator and instantly shows him in thrall to his character

*"Babbie, what shall I say of you who make me write these things?...You were the daughter of a summer night, born where all the birds are free and the moon christened you with her soft light to dazzle the eyes of man"*<sup>33</sup>

This careful description shows us Babbie's sensual power, her position as a free child of nature along with a sense of her belonging to a deeper, older religion.

*To look upon you was to rejoice that so fair a thing could be; to think of you is still to be young. Even those who called you a little devil, of whom I have been one, admitted that in the end you had a soul, though not that you had been born with one. They said you stole it, and so made a woman of yourself.*<sup>34</sup>

While this tells us at least as much about the character of the narrator as that of the heroine (and

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<sup>32</sup>an interesting point to note in comparison to the usual view that kailyarders are staunch supporters of a twee version of country religion.

<sup>33</sup>The Little Minister p4

<sup>34</sup>Ibid p4

as such is a perfect example of how Barrie interweaves the past and present "hero" in his story) we can clearly see through the intensity of description, the depth of character. We are drawn, as Gavin is, to this mysterious woman, known mysteriously as "The Egyptian."

The introduction to Winsome (properly Winifred) Charteris is, though stylistically different, equally compelling. The story has opened with a false trail - Ralph meeting Jess Kissock<sup>35</sup> in the Prologue, and in Chapter One the narrator introduces Winsome after a lengthy description of Ralph as a city boy, unaccustomed to nature. He loses himself in his surroundings when

*Suddenly there emerged from the indigo shade where the blue spruce firs overarched the bridge, a girl carrying two shining pails of water. Her arms were bare, her sleeves rolled high above her elbow; and her figure, tall and shapely, swayed gracefully to the movement of the pails. Ralph did not know before that there is an art to carrying water.*<sup>36</sup>

From this first moment we see Winsome, like Babbie, as a child of nature, an object of innocent desire. But here, in contrast to Babbie, we see Winsome as fully human, down to earth - a woman who works for a living. She might be any country girl. We also are immediately subjected to the narrator's ironic stance - directed at this point against the foolish hero. But Winsome herself is not free from such irony in the detailed physical description of her which follows. We are thrown into an Austenesque level of irony, where the insults just keep flowing and yet are beautifully controlled within the purported praise.

*For this is Winifred, better known as Winsome Charteris, is a very important young person indeed, to whose beauty and wit the poets of three parishes did vain reverence; and what she might well value more, whose butter was the best (and commanded the highest price) of any that went into Dumfries market on Wednesdays*<sup>37</sup>

To view such a statement as an example of "sickly", "coy" or even "sentimental" writing is to miss the central irony. This owes more to Austen or Pope's "Rape of the Lock" than to low grade sentiment. Crockett displays a mastery at swinging from hyperbole to the depths of frank realism and in the process providing wicked irony which underpins the entire novel, and from which none of his characters escape.

*The subject of her mouth, though a tempting one, we refuse to touch. It has already wrecked three promising reputations. But withal Winsome Charteris set her pails as frankly and plumply on the ground as though she were plain as a pike-staff, and bent prosaically over to look into the gypsy-pot which swung on its birchen triangle.*<sup>38</sup>

As has already been mentioned, though Crockett can be criticised, like Dickens before him, for lacking some cohesion of narrative structure due to the constraints of serial writing, here, very early in the novel we see clear signs of his skilful use of both language and imagery, with hints towards the main thematic concerns and irony of the novel. Crockett's descriptions of love throughout will stay true to this aim - to show love both as natural and the subject of irony - depending on the perspective of the person.

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<sup>35</sup>Though this seemingly innocent deception in fact becomes one of the focal points of the love story - Jess's "prior claim" to Ralph being tied up to this first meeting.

<sup>36</sup>The Lilac Sunbonnet pp17-18

<sup>37</sup> ibid p18

<sup>38</sup>ibid b19.

While Winsome is described in great detail throughout the novel, and we increasingly feel has in many ways as strong a part to play as the hero Ralph; Barrie's heroine has a more ethereal feel to her. She is a woman in disguise for most of the novel (though the reader becomes aware of her duality long before Gavin) and this disguise brings her revulsion from the "locals" who view her as something to fear, witchlike and threatening to their traditional views of religion - in their view she provides a temptation from the devil. This is despite the fact that she alerts them to the coming of the soldiers and helps Nanny when no one else will. For the small-minded people of Thrums it is enough that she is an "Egyptian", an outsider; to condemn her. Certainly Barrie sets her up as a temptation to Gavin - represented in chapter 18 as the fight between Reason and Desire<sup>39</sup>. Thus Gavin's personal struggle is seen in context of the greater argument - and he takes a more modern view than that advocated by the backward looking traditional church of the day. While the intervention of Rob Dow who sees Babbie as the devil incarnate, offers a real challenge to Gavin's ministry - we are all the time aware that Rob Dow is a greater sinner than most. In Chapter 16 Gavin is forced to contemplate Babbie - he can think of nothing else *-he had not yet decided which of two women she was*<sup>40</sup> and realises something about himself into the bargain - that he is both preacher and sinner. This is an interesting example of Barrie's employment of that classic Scottish romantic element, duality. Gavin's struggle continues

*Now Gavin made an heroic attempt to look upon both these women at once*<sup>41</sup>

And we have become so used to Barrie's caustic irony that we cannot avoid seeing it here, so that when he manages to "resist temptation" at this stage, we are aware that he is wrong. Barrie effectively highlights his main point, that love is not subject to the trivialities of an hypocritical religion. This message is rammed home in the next chapter to the very man who needs to learn the lesson most, Rob Dow.

*Had God let Rob Dow say they were a gypsy's love-token and not slain him?*<sup>42</sup>

We are drawn cleverly through the reason versus desire debate by Barrie in his customary humourous style.

*"you should see" Gavin replied awkwardly "that there is a-a difference between a minister and a gypsy"*

*"But if I am willing to overlook it?" asked Babbie impertinently*<sup>43</sup>

Barrie manages to make the religious, philosophical and personal points succinctly in one - and with humour. Surely the sign of a skilled writer? And of course we, as reader are aware that Babbie is in disguise, that the temptation is not completely the one Gavin thinks he faces. We know long before she tells him *"this dress is but a disguise"*<sup>44</sup> Throughout we see Babbie as a feisty heroine, more than a match for our hero and when Gavin stands up in Chapter 20 and declares *"She is a woman of whom any minister might be proud"* we are bound to agree with

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<sup>39</sup>A central concern of the Scottish philosopher David Hume in his "A Treatise of Human Nature" 1739.

<sup>40</sup>The Little Minister [page ref]

<sup>41</sup>The Little Minister [page ref]

<sup>42</sup>ibid [page ref]

<sup>43</sup>ibid pp147-8

<sup>44</sup>ibid p151

him and disagree with the immediate retort of the doctor *"she is a woman" the doctor retorted "that no congregation would stand."*<sup>45</sup>

Barrie leaves us in no doubt that Gavin has done the right thing in standing by the woman he loves, despite the personal fallout that may be occasioned by his action. And we are forced then to agree with Barrie's ironic take on the farcical comment by a Thrums man

*"In Thrums" replied MacQueen "a ministers business is everybody's business."*<sup>46</sup>

Far from retreating into rural domestic trivia, "The Little Minister" is an exercise in opening minds, exposing hypocrisies and challenging the traditional order.

Between declaration and happy ending there is much trouble to be gone through and Barrie does not shirk giving us the full value of the "boy loses girl, boy wins girl back" story. There are twists and turns, we fully believe that Babbie is to be married to Lord Rintoul, that Gavin is dead, before he finally rescues her, Lochivar style, from a fate worse than death - a loveless marriage. But one should not dismiss the later chapters of the novel as the weaving of an intricate but ultimately mawkishly sentimental love story. Within these chapters is contained discussion regarding how one man's actions affect others, the relationship between power - both that of the church and the landed gentry - and the commoners over whom power is wielded. Underneath all this discussion however we see a belief that true love should be allowed to conquer all and having been shown the various sides of the discussion we are inclined to agree. Gavin's mother states *"if two people love each other, neither has any right to give the other up."*<sup>47</sup>

This comment has bearing not only on the relationship between Gavin and Babbie, but more poignantly on the underlying relationship, which the novel does not resolve, that between Margaret and the narrator. So even with a happy ending, Barrie leaves us with a tragedy as well.

If possible, the heroine in Crockett's novel, has an even more central position in the narrative. While both his main characters are subjected to his cutting irony, Winsome is more grounded than Ralph and there are times when the story seems more about her than him. We are treated to a partial history of Winsome's family which significantly draws her grandparents on different sides of the Jacobite rebellion, this is but a taster for that which is to come. We see Winsome as a child of nature, yet in practical control of day to day matters

*all the reins of government about this tiny lairdship of one farm were in the strong and capable hands of a girl of twenty.*<sup>48</sup>

Thus we see a practicality in Winsome which Crockett repeatedly shows us is lacking in his hero employing irony to secure his point. But for all this, Winsome is not immune to the call of love. There is the underlying sexual passion symbolised in the sunbonnet, which Donaldson describes in detail<sup>49</sup> and which I shall look at myself when considering symbolism in the

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<sup>45</sup> ibid [page ref]

<sup>46</sup> ibid [page ref]

<sup>47</sup> ibid [page ref]

<sup>48</sup> ibid [p ref] His comment on Ralph is equally telling *"The universe is fragile at twenty one" p263*

<sup>49</sup> Donaldson op cit. ch5 pp79-82

novels, but there is also the sense of natural purity and innocence of first love

*It was a strange thing for Ralph Peden, as indeed it is for every true man, to come for the first time within the scope of the unconscious charm of a good girl. There is, indeed, no better solvent of a cold nature, no better antidote to a narrow education, no better bulwark of defence against frittering away the strength and solemnity of first love, than a sudden, strong plunge into its deep waters.*<sup>50</sup>

Crockett continues in the following paragraph to extend the natural imagery in a way that makes us aware that here he is not evoking irony, but looking seriously at the nature of love. He is determined in his description of the growth of love between Winsome and Ralph, both to show love as a good and natural thing "*the grasshoppers made love by millions in the couch grass*"<sup>51</sup> and to make clear that humans subject to love may also make great fools of themselves. "*In her hand Winsome held Ralph Peden's poem, and in spite of her determination not to read it, she sat waiting till dawn should come. It might be something of great importance*"<sup>52</sup>

Crockett does not only expose his main characters to the dangerous effects of love. In fact one of the greatest of his strengths is the manner in which he weaves the lives of his minor and major characters. At times it feels like he almost employs a medieval interlace structure and close study repeatedly reveals how the most insignificant act by one character has a profound effect on another. But we also see the variety of love through the variety of minor characters. We see not only Meg, Jess, Ebie but also Andra - and each of these characters experience of love makes a valid contribution to the overall serious discussion of love contained within the novel.

The minor characters in Crockett's novel are important not only as they impinge upon the central themes, but also as examples of a controlled, intelligent structuring and creation which I would argue is worthy of Dickens. For at least as much as Crockett is guilty of the same weaknesses as Dickens, due to serialisation, he should be praised for his ability to weave the lives of the minor characters into the central narrative. Andra is a particularly interesting character in this respect. He is, on the surface of it, just a Galloway peasant boy. But Andra holds "*a romantic attachment of the most desperate and picturesque kind for Winsome*"<sup>53</sup> which has a significance not only in that his actions therefore influence events, potentially terminally, but because we get a clear picture that anyone can be a romantic hero in their own minds. Chapter 11 is where we see Andra for the first time in all his glory. The portrayal is both comic and realistic, every bit as good as Dickens portrayal of the Artful Dodger in *Oliver Twist*. Andra, as Leo in "*The Go-Between*"<sup>54</sup> is entrusted with the job of messenger by the woman he holds in esteem. And we are immediately aware of the outcome of this choice. Andra promises to deliver the letter but "*He never objected to promising; that was very easy.*"<sup>55</sup> At the same time that Crockett is weaving Andra into the central narrative, he takes time out to

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<sup>50</sup> The Lilac Sunbonnet p51

<sup>51</sup> *ibid* p 53

<sup>52</sup> *ibid* p88

<sup>53</sup> The Lilac Sunbonnet p 195

<sup>54</sup> L.P.Hartley "*The Go-Between*"

<sup>55</sup> The Lilac Sunbonnet p99

discourse on the nature of small boys. The language is heightened, but once again in a manner reminiscent of Pope or Fielding.

*"Now we must take the trouble to follow in some detail the course of this small boy going to school, for though a thing of no interest in itself save as a study in the science of procrastination, a good deal of our history depends upon it."*<sup>56</sup>

There follows what is in fact a very interesting detailed account of Andra's actions, where he is increasingly cast in the romantic mould he sees for himself. Crockett's diction allows Andra to grow in stature *"Andra shut out from his view facts so commonplace and ignominious as home and school"*<sup>57</sup> The employment of words which would be alien to a boy such as Andra is deliberate to show us that despite his seeming youth and low status, he too can be as great a romantic hero as ever lived, as capable of love as the greatest lover. The climax of this passage is where Andra meets his companion Dick Little - the world is transformed into that where the message falls into the clutches of *"The Avenger of Blood"* and the bargain is *"soda scone or his life"*<sup>58</sup> The pair may be armed with but wooden swords but the words *"traitor", "champions"* and the whole overblown description help us to see not only that

*"Mighty is the power of make-believe"*<sup>59</sup>

This is surely one of Crockett's main themes in the novel. However, he also manages to use this sequence to show a deep irony - that it is precisely in his romantic fantasising that Andra lets down the object of those fantasies. This might also be seen as a key feature of romance in general. And all this is couched in the naturalistic world of a child, where games are ended by the irate face of the minister - note the minister - significant again as it shows the relation of the church to romance. There are multiple examples within the text which bear up to this level of scrutiny and help my claim that Crockett is a much maligned and erroneously ignored Scottish novelist of stature.

The romance of Ebie Farrish has many similarly interesting twists and turns in it, as does the more central role of Jess Kissock, who, in tricking Ralph into kissing her not only puts him in danger, but actually puts Winsome in grave danger of rapine. There are numerous examples throughout the text, and it should be noted that Crockett seems to become more and more adept as he progresses in this respect, of clever interlace or underscoring of plot events, making the lives of the main and minor characters inextricably intertwined. In Chapter 30, as Winsome goes out to her tryst, she notices that Jess has left the gate open. The symbolism here is clear.

And perhaps the cleverest of these many subtle touches comes when *"Winsome went into the next room and lifted some stray flowers that Jess Kissock had dropped when she sped out, and threw them from the window with an air of disdain."*<sup>60</sup>

Crockett reveals that even the lives of the insignificant common folk contain sophisticated

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<sup>56</sup> ibid p99

<sup>57</sup> ibid p100

<sup>58</sup> ibid p102 - note that Crockett still allows his ironic touch scope.

<sup>59</sup> ibid p101

<sup>60</sup> ibid p182

complexity. One of the main criticisms levelled against kailyard literature is that it deals with domestic people in what are essentially seen as trivial and therefore uninteresting lives. Crockett shows that this is the wrong way to view people, that class or status has no necessary bearing on people and that there is interest in even the most plebian of lives.

Jess, for example is a very complex character and incredibly well drawn for a minor character. Her influence throughout the novel is key both in terms of plot and theme. *"I saw him first, an he spak to me first"*<sup>61</sup> She prophecies that she will kiss Ralph first and her prophecy comes true by her own determined guile. Crockett compares this common milkmaid to both Napoleon and Cleopatra, and his comment *"For Cleopatra is not history; she is type."*<sup>62</sup> reveals his underlying point most succinctly. Ebie Farrish is also given the honour rarely granted to minor characters, of a deep and complex description. While Chapter 21 initially reveals him as what might seem to be little more than a stock "rude mechanical" *"Galloway ploughmen are the most general of lovers"*, and *"he had no regrets and few aspirations"*<sup>63</sup> we are subsequently treated to a description of him which makes us realise that just such an "ordinary" man can be a child of Nature and as such can be lifted to the stature of romantic hero. As he approaches the bridge, Crockett employs symbolism to make his position quite clear, showing him as a man effectively "made" from Nature. The conflict between this and formalised religion is shown in the comment

*It was the nearest thing to worship he had ever known. Such moments come to the most material and are their theology. Far off a solitary bird whooped and whinnied. It sounded mysterious and unknown, the cry of a lost soul. Ebie Farrish wondered where he would go when he died.*<sup>64</sup>

The minor characters in "The Little Minister" are perhaps less real than those in "The Lilac Sunbonnet", in many ways simply representing the herd instinct of the weavers of Thrums. But characters such as Rob Dow have a significant and complex role to play in the ensuing drama. In trying to protect Gavin, Rob only helps to isolate him from the community and Chapter 24, where Babbie is confronted by Rob's son Micah is one of the pivotal chapters of the novel. This chapter commences with the familiar intrusion of the narrator, who comments on the nature of love. At this point Babbie has accepted her love of Gavin but sees no way clear to her ultimate goal. The "oldness" of love is symbolically shown by the venue of the meeting at the Standing Stones, and the significance of meeting a crying child who reveals to her the full details of the impact on the community of her liason with Gavin, is almost primeval. Babbie reaches the decision that she will leave, in a beautifully underplayed sequence. It is an interesting adjustment of pace which sees one of the more significant events in the novel handled with such lack of the usual hyperbole, irony or heightened dialogue. One interpretation might be that Barrie here wants to show the error of the traditional ways - Babbie is wrong in leaving and Micah is wrong in begging her, as surely as Rob is wrong in being distrustful that she will stand by her word

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<sup>61</sup> ibid p 161

<sup>62</sup> ibid p 164

<sup>63</sup> ibid p 165?

<sup>64</sup> ibid p167

Rob Dow presents himself to Gavin as a soul wanting to be saved, but ultimately he is little more than a leech and Barrie's incisive portrayal of him serves to illustrate a wider comment on the small-mindedness of the religious bigots who populate Thrums. Barrie also uses minor character to good effect in the fighting between the pipers' which breaks out at Rintoul's wedding and ends in the "death" of Gavin.<sup>65</sup> Even if one senses some archness of construction here, it can be excused because it presages a change of focus which brings the hitherto underplayed "between the lines" love story between the narrator and Margaret to the fore. For the first time the narrator becomes true actor, rising to the challenge;

*'it seemed to me that the hour had come when I must disclose myself to Margaret'*<sup>66</sup>

The sense of pathos that only with the death of his son, the embodiment of the love between them, can the narrator approach her, is almost unbearable

*'I saw her raise her face, and look upon me for the first time in eighteen years. She did not scream at the sight of me, for the body of her son lay between us, and bridged the gap that Adam Dishart had made.'*<sup>67</sup>

However, we are ultimately to be disappointed by this as the narrator starkly continues

*'But it was not to be. Never since that night at Harvie have I spoken to Margaret.'*<sup>68</sup>

With the discovery that Gavin is alive, the narrator's fantasy of reunion with his loved one, becomes once more just that. This highlights the theme of sacrifice which is dwelt upon in the next chapter in context of the main love story.

*She was hiding from the man for whom her soul longed. She was sacrificing herself for him.*<sup>69</sup>

Barrie forces us to see the error of sacrificing oneself by denying love, through his parallelling of the situation of Babbie and the narrator - leading us to the inevitable conclusion that Gavin is ultimately more the romantic hero than his narrator father - a man prepared to sacrifice all for the success of love, rather than wallow in self-pity from a false sacrifice. It is clear by the end of the novel that had the narrator made himself known to Margaret and her son sooner, a happy ending could have been achieved for all. The safe option is also often the wrong option. This theme is seen again in the option given to Babbie - she can marry Rintoul and have a life that will be materially secure and give her a social status unthinkable to one of her class. But it will be a loveless marriage. While the parallel with Margaret's own marriage to Adam Dishart is not complete, Barrie is more concerned in opening up questions than in comfortably resolving them. He challenges rather than preaches - and this elevates him above criticism, at least in this novel, as being a cheap manipulator of emotion for effect.

The role of narrator in both novels has already been discussed, but it is worth taking a further look at the centrality of the narrative stance in the construction of both novels. It seems to me that a criticism of kailyard literature is that it is unacceptably didactic, and on the surface,

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<sup>65</sup>Though perhaps the business with the pipers stretches credibility just too far.

<sup>66</sup>The Little Minister [page ref]

<sup>67</sup> ibid p210.

<sup>68</sup> ibid p210

<sup>69</sup> ibid [page ref]

novels which have narrators who exhibit as much self-consciousness as the two under discussion, could be open to this kind of criticism. However, Barrie's narrator is self-conscious for a purpose far greater than that of didacticism. His role is more akin to that of the narrator in pseudo autobiographical novels such as Robinson Crusoe or the picaresque tradition of the eighteenth century. The employment of a narrator who appears to reveal all, comment on all and yet fails to see his own failings has some interest as a precursor to the absurdist tradition in theatre - and Barrie is nothing if not theatrical even in his novels. The constant intrusion of the narrator in "The Little Minister" is one thing which raises the novel from being a purely sentimental love story (which is perhaps one reason why the film version is so comparatively poor) The sophistication inherent in Barrie's choice of narrative stance is a point worthy of note and helps us to understand the complexity of the word "little" in the novel's title. There is also an element of romantic manipulation in presenting us with a story from a subjective viewpoint - even though this is not the viewpoint of the "hero." But then it is worth considering who the central protagonist in this novel is. The story seems at least as much the narrator's as it does Gavin's, and I believe this is intentional.

In "The Lilac Sunbonnet" Crockett is more conventional in his use of narrator, providing us with a more traditional, yet searingly ironic narrative stance. There is always a sense of distance between character and narrator, which is his own way of encouraging the reader to universalise the experiences read about in the particular love story of Ralph and Winsome. This more distanced narrative stance also enables Crockett to employ a narrative technique more usually found in the works of D.H. Lawrence, where we are drawn into each characters inner thoughts in turn and then taken from this intense internalising to a broad universalising stance. Whereas Crockett is not as overtly sexual in his content as Lawrence, Donaldson shows many parallels in style and content between the two.<sup>70</sup> It is exciting to view Crockett as a fore-runner to Lawrence and there is much useful work that could be done regarding this comparison.

A final area worthy of comparison between these two novels is in the area of imagery and symbolism. Natural imagery is central to both novels, but not, as is often mistakenly said, in order to promote some cosy kailyard image. The imagery is far too powerful for this and reeks in both cases of a tribute to Romanticism in a particularly Scottish sense. The symbolic use of colour in "The Lilac Sunbonnet" and the particular attention paid to seasonality and time of day is reminiscent in many ways of the complex imagery employed in "Wuthering Heights". All the characters confront Nature, and particularly frequent is the imagery associated with dawn and twilight. From Chapter 12 when we are told *Dawn is the testing time of the universe.*<sup>71</sup> This time of day becomes a recurrent motif both for Ralph and Winsome and is shown as one of the elemental ways in which they are joined together.

Though love brings its own confusion to the natural order

*Thus it was, at the stile which helps the paths between the Dullarg and Craig Ronald to overleap the high hill dyke, Ralph met Winsome. As they looked into one another's eyes they saw Nature suddenly dissolve into confused meaningless.*<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Donaldson op cit Chapter 5. There is a full essay's worth of comparison between Crockett and Lawrence's sexual imagery - but again, no time for it here.

<sup>71</sup> The Lilac Sunbonnet p105

<sup>72</sup> ibid p109

There is a deeper order beneath this confusion

*It was the new day, and if the new world had not come with it, of a surety it was well on its way.*<sup>73</sup>

One difference between Ralph and Winsome as lovers compared to, say Cathy and Heathcliff, is their ability to express their mutual emotions. When Ralph questions

*Have you ever stood on a hill-top as though you were suspended in the air, when you seem to feel the earth whirling away from beneath you, rushing swiftly eastward towards the sunrise?*

*"I have heard it" said Winsome unexpectedly.*<sup>74</sup>

There is a freedom of discourse here which is lacking in 'Wuthering Heights', while the depth of emotion and the intensity of the relationship is equally great.

In the central section which comprises the prolonged parting of the lovers, the setting is ten o'clock on a July night in Galloway. The scene changes from a light twilight to pitch darkness as the storm clouds symbolically gather. There is a romantic approach to darkness in the passage

*So, in the blissful dark, which makes lovers brave, he opened his arms to receive her.*<sup>75</sup>

Of course the fact that the woman Ralph is receiving is Jess, not as he believes Winsome, adds to the complexity of the relationship between Nature and man which is explored in some great depth throughout the novel.

Through his natural imagery and recurrent symbolism, Crockett elevates his story to quite compelling levels. The Solway tides and water are evoked repeatedly, touching on characters as diverse as Ralph, Ebie Farrish, Winsome and Jess Kissock - showing that all are subject to the laws of Nature which are more elemental and more powerful than the man-made laws of religion. As Ralph finally turns his back on the ministry to pursue a life of poetry, a life within the natural order, we find the real closure of the novel. What may appear a trite happy ending, tacked onto the novel to finish it, is in fact not nearly as important as the shift in focus from the ties of religion to the freedom of nature which occurs in the span of the novel. Donaldson for one finds the re-emergence of the sunbonnet at the end of the novel unsatisfactory<sup>76</sup> but I suggest that she does so because she mistakes the symbolic interpretation of the sunbonnet. The fact that it is lilac in colour, a colour of nature, helps us to see that it is not just a symbol of passionate or sexual love as Donaldson suggests, but of a much deeper, more embracing and unifying love which has Nature at its centre.

Weather imagery, embracing thunder, storms and rain is quite the stock in trade of romantic novels and there is plenty of this to be found within the pages of "The Lilac Sunbonnet". There is also repeated reference to birds, flora and fauna. One of the most impressive of these in context is in Chapter 35 when the parting of Ralph and Winsome finally takes place.

*We transplant badly, we plants of the hill. You must come back to me"*<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>ibid p109

<sup>74</sup>ibid p114

<sup>75</sup>ibid p238

<sup>76</sup> Donaldson. op.cit p82

<sup>77</sup> The Lilac Sunbonnet [page ref]

Perhaps some of the contemporary misunderstanding of Crockett's novel may come down to this very fact - readers and critics start from the wrong point and continue in the wrong direction. Rural life may be anathema to the modern urban critic, but if one approaches Crockett from the right perspective, one will be rewarded with far greater riches than he is currently considered to possess. Anyone who can employ the level of symbolism Crockett does in Chapter 18 where he underpins the domestic description and dialogue of milking with metaphysical concepts such as "*original sin*", "*connoisseur of the sex*" and "*the theory of beauty*"<sup>78</sup> tied up within the conversation between such lowly, seemingly insignificant characters as Jess and Ebie, is a writer worthy of serious consideration.

Barrie's use of natural imagery and symbolism is also to the forefront of his novel, though the differences between the semi-urban weavers town of Thrums in North East Scotland and the rural Galloway countryside of South West Scotland portrayed by Crockett, is to the fore in this aspect of the novel. Barrie's hills, summer, birds, drought and storm are in some ways more pedestrian. There is a sense that they underpin a more essential philosophical debate rather than, as Crockett, being part of the *raison d'être* of the novel. Barrie is more sophisticated in manipulating his imagery and symbolism to push on his plot, to add to the twists and turns of his narrative and to add colour rather than substance to his work. He is more concerned with concepts such as "soul", "reason" "cowardice" and "sacrifice" than more traditional romantic natural imagery. But where he does employ them, he does so efficiently and effectively. The central chapter for such imagery is 33, where Rob Dow is symbolically (and literally) struck down by lightning. The forest catches fire and the drought is ended by the falling of rain. This chapter is almost set out like scenes from a stageplay, which makes for a frenetic pace quite in keeping with the action contained therein. The chapter ends with a stark paragraph, presaging the pursuit which is to run through the ensuing chapters

*Lord Rintoul had kidnapped Babbie. Gavin had no other thought as he ran after the dog-cart from which the cry had come. The earl's dog followed him, snapping at his heels. The rain began.*<sup>79</sup>

This great rain which follows the impending storm (both symbolic and literal) in the town of Thrums provides us with the classic romance pursuit scenario. By the end of the following chapter, Gavin and the dog are forced to shelter together, man and beast exhausted by the struggle of that long night. They are united as the grey day breaks, nestles to him.

*Thus they lay, and the rain beat upon them.*<sup>80</sup>

The cataclysmic weather is used to add depth to the spiritual struggle Gavin undertakes in these chapters. As Gavin is reconciled with the dog, so the ultimate achievement of this section of the novel is the reconciliation between Gavin and the narrator - where Gavin finds out that the narrator is his father. When the narrator comes across Gavin and the dog, lying as if dead he comments

*If tears rolled down my cheeks, they were not for him.*<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> *ibid* pp150-151

<sup>79</sup> *ibid* p253

<sup>80</sup> *ibid* p257

<sup>81</sup> *ibid* p261

The narrator, who admits his cowardice in this chapter, tries to talk Gavin out of following Babbie - and we see the parallel with his own story. Gavin, however, is altogether more heroic and refuses to be diverted from his path. With a poignant touch the connection between past and present comes through the dog - Gavin remembers a dog he had as a child. It is perhaps a small matter, but the inclusion of such a detail shows Barrie's careful construction from the outset of the novel.

As with "The Lilac Sunbonnet", there is a happy ending to the tale (at least to the story of Gavin and Babbie) with the innocent playing of children. The narrator's granddaughter asks him to tell her stories of the past. There is a sense of life going on, but still regret at the end as the narrator states

*Margaret never knew of the dominie in the glen. They wanted to tell her of me, but I would not have it.*<sup>82</sup>

Thus Barrie leaves us with the sense that a man who sacrifices himself for the wrong cause will end up unfulfilled, whereas a man who sacrifices himself for a just cause will live happily. Perhaps thus baldly put it does not seem a very consequential ending, but the strength of Barrie's work lies in the body of the novel rather than in its ending.

I hope that through this study I have shown that whereas Barrie and Crockett have been accused of over-construction, self-conscious sophistication which leads to the perceived excesses of kailyard melodrama, there is much more substance to their work. The themes they deal with are not slight, but significant; not hiding from reality, but considering society and sexual politics in an interesting and intelligent manner. If I have at least been able to show that they are often condemned without being given due consideration, and encouraged critics to look at them afresh, then I have achieved my primary goal. The debate about the nature of kailyard will continue, as there is much work to be done in defining and refining our concept of this most misunderstood school of Scottish literature.

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<sup>82</sup>ibid p340