

Identity in Gaelic Drama 1900-1949

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Michelle Macleod and Moray Watson have described drama and prose fiction as being 'in the shadow of the bard' in terms of their place in the canon of Gaelic literature. (2007) Analysis and review of the extant drama materials show, however, that the Gaelic playwright Tormod Calum Dòmhnallach (Norman Malcolm MacDonald),¹ was right in saying in 1986 that 'Gaelic theatre [...] has been in existence for longer than many of us suspect'. (MacDonald 1986: 147) It is believed that the first Gaelic play (fully in Gaelic, rather than bilingual English with Gaelic) was performed by the Edinburgh University Celtic Society in 1902 although it is no longer known which play or sketch was performed. (Macleod and Watson 2007: 280) In the first decade of the twentieth century, Còisir Chiùil Lunnainn (London Musical Choir) also performed plays at their annual concert in London.²

This article looks at the first half of the twentieth century, when stage drama in Gaelic was being created, to investigate how Gaelic playwrights represented Scottish Gaels and their culture in this new art form. In terms of their artistic merit, Gaelic plays between 1900 and the Second World War are not generally held in high esteem, having previously been described as 'outstanding neither as to quantity or quality'. (MacLeod 1969: 146) Despite this, there is value in what they reveal about identity and attitudes of the writers, many of whom were prominent figures in the Gaelic movement. An overview of some of the principal themes and tropes of the drama of this period will be presented, considering in particular how the writers negotiate what it meant to be a Gael in the early twentieth century.

This paper will only discuss published texts and not consider any unpublished plays from the period. Neither will this paper cover the staging of the plays under discussion here nor the history of the amateur associations who undertook them. Discussion of performances of Gaelic theatre between 1900 and 1960 can be found in MacLeod 1969 (187-210) and of those between 1900 and 1945 in Butler 1994 (86). An analysis of twelve unpublished Gaelic radio dramas can also be found in Antoinette Butler's survey of Gaelic drama before 1945. (Butler 1994) The analysis in this paper will not include reference to translated works of the period as these are considered by Innes in this same volume, however, they are included in the checklist at the end of the paper.

Drama publication

At least seventy plays between 1901 and 1949 can be identified, although not all were published and not all survive. However, the Scottish Theatre Archive at Glasgow University Library and the same university's Celtic library (MacLean Room) contain a good

archive of published material. Attached to this paper is a preliminary checklist of published materials dating from 1900 to 1949. Periodicals are a common source of published texts: *Guth na Bliadhna* published nine, another seven appeared in An Comunn Gàidhealach's magazines *Deò-Ghrèine* and *An Gaidheal*. The primary publisher of playlets was the Glasgow-based Alexander MacLaren and Sons (A. MacLabhrunn agus a Mhic) with nineteen publications; An Comunn Gàidhealach also published thirteen in Glasgow. A smaller number were published in Inverness by the Northern Chronicle, only one in Paisley by J and R Parlane, and one in Edinburgh by Comunn Litreachas na h-Alba. D. J. MacLeod identifies the musical comedy 'Iseabail na h-Airigh' ('*Ishabel of the Sheiling*') by Malcolm MacInnes as 'the earliest traceable Gaelic dramatic script', published over five consecutive issues of the periodical *Am Bàrd* in 1901, and as a whole in 1933. (MacLeod 1969: 150)

Gaelic stage drama at the start of the twentieth century was amateur and the work of these amateur companies and writers were given an important outlet through An Comunn Gàidhealach (hereafter An Comunn) and the Royal National Mòd. Literary competition for one-act plays have been on the Royal National Mòd syllabus since the early twentieth century, although often without accompanying productions. Paul MacInnis has noted that it was not until 1975 that 'drama productions began to feature for the first time on the syllabus of the National Mod' in competition. (MacInnis in Thomson 1994: 66) Yet there were occasional performances outside of the competition syllabus. Neil Shaw, former president of An Comunn, recalled that *Rèiteach Móraig* [Morag's Engagement] by Iain N. MacLeòid (John N. MacLeod) was the first Gaelic play staged at the Royal National Mòd, performed by the Glasgow Gaelic Choir at the Mòd in Stirling in 1909. (MacGilleSheathanaich 1947: 16)³ The format of the one-act play popular with the amateur groups and the Scottish Community Drama Association (SCDA) was the dominant form. Indeed, as Macleod and Watson note,

The amateur environment within which Gaelic drama evolved has had a lasting impact on the Gaelic play's format: it is generally one-act and not lasting longer than half an hour (2007: 281)

Another feature that Gaelic plays have in common with other Scottish amateur texts is the importance they place on 'amusement' rather than art. Butler has characterised the period by noting, 'It is rare to find a play in Gaelic before 1945 which does not have a happy or humorous ending of one sort or another'. (Butler 1994: 123) A large number of the works are comedies and, in many plays, song and music play an important role, simultaneously offering entertainment and displaying traditional culture on the stage.

The Influence of *Còmhradh*

The influence of the nineteenth-century 'còmhradh' or dialogue that was popular in Gaelic periodicals can also be seen in the early plays. D. J. MacLeod has argued that these dialogues are 'the earliest dramatic form in Gaelic'. (1969: 124; see also Macleod

and Watson 2007: 280) Butler also sees these dialogues, along with dialogue poems and catechisms, as published antecedents to the creation of Gaelic plays; the ensemble forming a Gaelic literary tradition that 'reverberates to the sound of voices in discourse'. (Butler 1994: 41) As well as acting as a forerunner of plays in Gaelic, *còmhraidhean* remained a known form in the inter-war period.⁴ The relationship between *còmhraidhean* and plays requires further elucidation which Sheila Kidd's forthcoming edition of nineteenth-century *còmhraidhean* will greatly aid. (Kidd 2016) The *còmhraidhean* do not have any stage directions or much dramatic action and are typically between two characters only. Their form allowed writers to discuss issues of the day by having one wise or informed character answer the questions of another. In the newer art form of the play, some writers carry over some of this style when making references to current affairs. In Iain Mac an Aba's *Calum is Bantrach Tharmaid* (Calum and Tormod's Widow) (1922), for example, a character comes back from fighting with the army against the 'rebelliousness' in Ireland. Similarly in Eachann MacDhùghaill's *An Gaol a Bheir Buaidh* (The Love that Succeeds) (1912) the postman brings news of the Italo-Turkish War of 1911-1912: 'Tha an Tuirc agus an Eadailt an amhaichean a chéile' ('Turkey and Italy are at each other's throats'). (Mac Dhughail 1912: 7)

Key Aspects of Gaelic Drama

The first half of the twentieth century saw the continuation of economic and social trends following the Industrial Revolution that led to the migration of Gaelic speakers in large numbers from rural to urban areas. The principal playwrights discussed in this paper lived for at least some time in the Lowlands (migrants whom MacLeod describes as 'Gaelic exiles' (1969: 128)); Eachann MacDhùghaill (Hector MacDougal) moved from Coll to Glasgow; Iain N. MacLeòid from Skye lived in Lanarkshire and East Lothian; Dòmhnall Mac-na-Ceàrdaich⁵ (Donald Sinclair) moved from Barra to live in Edinburgh, Liverpool and Manchester; Iain MacCormaig (John MacCormick) moved from Mull to Glasgow; and Gilleasbuig MacCullaich (Archibald MacCulloch) lived in Glasgow. I.M. Moffatt-Pender, Seòrsa Gallda (George Marjoribanks) and Liam MacGill'Ìosa (William Gillies) were all Gaelic learners. Only for Màiri A. Chaimbeul (Mary A. Campbell) is there not enough biographical information available to say.⁶ In the face of this cultural change, and the reduction in Gaelic language use, there were movements which aimed to maintain continuity in both language and culture such as An Comunn Gàidhealach, Ceilidh nan Gaidheal, the Glasgow Tìree Association and many others. Drama, both as 'serious plays' and as vaudeville comedic entertainment, was taken up by these cultural societies.

In Butler's study of the plays of this period, she characterises the plays as ambivalent towards the socio-cultural climate, arguing that contentious, political, questions were laid aside for lightweight romantic ones in theatre. In Butler's view, the societies, with their noble patrons, were cautious about nationalism and 'the Scottish Gaelic Revival at that time was suffering from an internal paralysis caused by conflicting cultural aspirations'.

(Butler 1994: 95) While Butler's observation that the plot of most early plays revolve around betrothal is borne out on reading them, by examining the representation of Gaels and Gaelic identity, the plays display a much wider range of social and political concerns.

A recent definition of the term *cultural memory* interprets it as 'the sum of all processes [...] which are involved in the interplay of past and present within sociocultural contexts'. (Erll 2011: 101) In early Gaelic drama cultural memory is created and maintained by re-enacting histories, social practices, and use of the Gaelic language itself. The definition and maintenance of cultural identity is explicitly to the forefront, often at the expense of dramatic quality. D. J. MacLeod describes early Gaelic plays as 'dramatisations, both of old Highland customs and of Highland history, which were published in this period (1900-1945) as a deliberately mummifying or otherwise nationalistic and educative activity'. (MacLeod 1969: 147) In the first section below, the portrayal of Gaels and Gaelic identity will be examined in the 'Highland customs' genre first, followed by some exemplifications of the Highland historical drama and how Gaelic identity is represented in them. Finally, it is shown that the tendency towards the literary pastoral in the custom-reconstructions is countered by anti-pastoral elements in the works of MacCormaig and Chaimbeul.

1. Custom-reconstructions

D. J. MacLeod classifies as 'custom-reconstructions' the 'self-consciously preservative reconstructions of old and decaying customs' which he considers to be 'scarcely plays at all'. (MacLeod 1969: 147) Butler shows how this impetus can also be seen in the nineteenth century Gaelic dialogues, citing in particular how the Rev. Alexander MacGregor's *còmhraidhean* preserve or 'pickle' traditional Highland customs in print. (Butler 1994: 72) It is not difficult to find comments from this period that praise the plays for their cultural didacticism: their usefulness as teaching aids not only for the language and idiom, but for the ethnography of folklore and customs. Reviews (as adverts) of plays can often be found in the inside covers of other published playlets. In this review, Iain N. MacLeòid's *Pòsadh Móraig* (Morag's Wedding) (1916) is praised for its display of cultural memory:

Then follow all the other 'seann chleachdaidhean choir' (the good old customs) of our forefathers that ought to be perpetuated. We heartily commend this sketch, so true to Highland life and character, to all lovers of Gaelic. - Highland News (MacCormick 1929: back cover)

Some of the earliest writers based whole plays on displaying customs on stage. Eachann MacDhughail (1880-1954) from the Isle of Coll was a prolific Gaelic writer and activist. He wrote stories, history, lectures, plays, and poetry, winning the Bardic Crown at the National Mòd in 1936. He had an English-language column in the *Stornoway Gazette* and a bilingual column in the *Weekly Scotsman*. (MacCalmain 1954) His activism in An Comunn Gàidhealach also led to him being chosen as the third 'Athair' (father) or leader of Clann

an Fhraoich (the Heather Clan), the all-Gaelic circle within An Comunn (MacDougall 1947: 9). MacDhughail's *Coir Samhna air Leannan* (A Hallowe'en Right to a Sweetheart) (1912) won the 1st prize at the Inverness Mòd in 1912 for its depictions of Hallowe'en customs in the Highlands. It was reviewed well, particularly again for its contribution to cultural memory:

The first is built up pretty much on Hallowe'en customs in the Highlands represented in characters of, more or less, every-day life, and the production as a whole is very interesting; while as a record of those customs as they have been known, now for some generations back, the booklet will serve a purpose. (Mac Cormick 1929: inside cover)

The master of this approach, however, was Iain N. MacLeòid (1880-1954), a teacher and writer from Skye. He collected poetry, publishing the well-known *Bàrdachd Leòdhais* [Lewis Poetry] in 1916 and wrote a popular column for the Stornoway Gazette under the pseudonym 'Alasdair Mòr'. He wrote at least seven plays and published three of them as stand-alone pamphlets: *Reiteach Móraig* (1911), *Pòsadh Móraig* (1916) and *Fionnghal a' Phrionnsa* (The Prince's Flora) (1932). His first play, *Reiteach Móraig* (Morag's Betrothal) (1911), was so successful it had at least three editions printed and spawned a sequel, *Pòsadh Móraig* (Morag's Wedding) in 1916. *Reiteach Móraig* was performed at the Mòd in 1909, as previously noted. It deals with an engagement party where the friends of the groom approach the family to discuss whether a good match has been made; *Pòsadh Móraig* with Morag's subsequent wedding on the Isle of Skye. The eponymous heroine and her future husband have minimal roles in the action, instead, the dialogue is dominated by the immediate community and reflects an emphasis on community life over that of the individual. This aspect in Gaelic literature has previously been discussed by Meg Bateman, drawing on Christine Laennec's analysis, in her elucidation of the centrality of 'the story of the general community' in Gaelic autobiographies as opposed to an individual's personal or interior life. (Bateman 2007) The conversations reflect an agricultural community where the worth of a wife is how good a housekeeper she is, where years are measured out by drownings and not everyone is sure of their official age. This is no rural idyll: Morag's mother has had eight children, three of whom have died and she is justifiably worried about how her and her husband will manage without a young person in the house to help them. It is the community portrayal and the naturalistic dialogue that makes the play so interesting. Its sequel, *Pòsadh Móraig*, however, is less of a drama than a list of customs held together by proverbs.⁷

MacLeòid's *Luadh Bantrach Sheòrais* (The Waulking of Widow George) (1916) is also a custom-reconstruction, this time of a waulking of the tweed. It was published over two issues of *An Deò-grèine*, the periodical of *An Comunn Gaidhealach*. The women gather at the home of Bantrach Sheòrais (Widow George), prepare and waulk the cloth and discuss the goings-on in the community. MacLeòid is concerned in these plays with

recording traditional customs that are disappearing. In his 1922 introduction to *Reiteach Mòraig* he worries that the Gaels 'are becoming so Lowland'

Tha sinn uile fàs cho Gallda, tha agartasan an là 's nach 'eil ùine againn
... airson cumail suas ris na dòighean a bha ar sinnsirean a' cleachdadh.
(MacLeòid 1922: Introduction) (*We are all becoming so Lowland, today's
remorse is that we don't have time to maintain the practices of our
ancestors.*)

Although he acknowledges that Gaels need to be as forward-looking as any other people he believes that the old ways should be remembered. He also praises the Irish as a good example of using drama to promote the image and use of the Gaelic language and it is clear he hopes to contribute to the same 'language promotion' in Scotland.⁸ In a letter to *An Gaidheal* in 1948 he calls for a Gaelic drama group to be created, arguing the same point about traditions and traditional language:

Tha ar cànan murrach air son Dràma. Tha i làn de ghnàthasan-cainnte
eirmiseach, agus tha móran de ar seann chleachdaidhean nach biodh idir
duilich a chur an eagair a chum a bhith air am foillseachadh mar
chuspairean Dràma. (MacLeòid 1948: 87)

(*Our language is capable of Drama. It is full of witty idioms, and there are
many of our old ways that wouldn't be hard at all to arrange to be
displayed as Dramatic topics.*)

Drama was also valued as a tool to exploit linguistic aspects of cultural memory as evidenced by MacLeòid's use of it as a repository of proverbs and 'witty idioms'. It could also be a teaching aid: an advert for *Dealbh mo Sheanar* by Seòrsa Gallda (George E. Marjoribanks) praises the play by saying:

Gaelic classes should get hold of this excellent piece of tomfoolery for
their high-jinks hour. The idiom is dead right and it would be good training
in conversational Gaelic. (Brandane 1937: inside cover)

Another standard feature of the portrayal of traditional culture is music and song. The house ceilidh is a common setting which serves the custom-reconstruction function but can be used for a variety of other ends. Although the writing of *Dòmhnall Mac-na-Ceàrdaich* (Donald Sinclair) is much more than custom-reconstruction, subtle comments about the value of tradition are present, e.g. a chat between friends about having words for every tune leads to the approval that "S ann mar sin a bha gach deagh phort o shean" (*That's what all the good tunes were like in the past*). (Mac-na-Ceàrdaich 2014: 178)

Plays with ceilidh settings include Iain N. MacLeòid's *Reiteach Moraig* (1911, 1922),

Pòsadh Móraig (1916), *Luadh Bantrach Sheòrais* (1916), *Cèilidh Tigh Dhòmhnail* (Donald's House Ceilidh) (1918); Eachann Mac Dhughail's *Coir Samhna air Leannan* (1912) and *An Gaol a Bheir Buaidh* (1912); Mairi A. Chaimbeul's *Cuirm Nollaig a' Chlachain Duibh* (The Christmas Feast of the Black Hamlet) (1936); and Aonghas MacMhaoilein's *Tha Iteagan Bòidheach air na h-Eoin Fad Às* (The Faraway Birds have Beautiful Feathers) (1938). The musical aspect of the plays serves to continue a 'ceilidh-house' mix of storytelling and song while also fulfilling the remit of 'entertainment'.

The Gael-Gall Binary

In his essay on a 'Scottish discursive unconscious', Colin McArthur (1996) argues for the existence of a discourse that places Scots, in particular Highlanders, as the natural, spiritual 'other' in opposition to a materialistic modernism. This is also evident in the cultural memory of Gaelic writers even as they write within the role of this Other, normalising the 'natural, spiritual' qualities as inherent to Gaelic identity. The writing patron and publisher of Gaelic periodicals, the Hon. Ruairidh of Marr, who encouraged Iain MacCormaig and Dòmhnall Mac-na-Ceàrdaich amongst others to produce plays, explicitly advocated opposition to materialism:

(...) my belief is that a bright future is in store for Gaelic drama, if our stage keeps clear of "commercialism," and reaches out to the psychological values of life. (Erskine 1927: 219)

In the hands of Gaelic writers, the 'true Gael' is natural and spiritual in opposition to the 'Gall' or Lowlander as the spiritually empty materialist. Writing in the *Scottish Highlander*, Liam MacGill'Ìosa made it clear that, in his view, the activities of the Caledonian Christian Club helped émigré Gaels avoid the moral dangers of the city:

(...) so that London Highlanders may be impregnated by a thoroughly Gaelic national spirit as the Welsh are, and that not only their children but also the many youths and maidens from the north may be rescued from the deadening, enfeebling, indecent if not immoral manners of Cockneydom.'. (quoted in Gillies 1990: 514)

A binary model can be seen in these works which reflects the following:

Gael	Gall (Lowlander)
Gaelic speaking	English/Scots speaking
Rural	Urban
Virtuous: kind, trustworthy, modest	Doubtful morals: lying, greedy, boastful

Spiritual	Materialistic
The 'Folk'	The authorities and establishment

The Gael/Gall discourse is evident in the trope of the Gael who 'forgets' their Gaelic. MacLeod notes that 'ridiculing Highland exiles who pretended to have lost their Gaelic' was a directed theme for An Comunn competitions. (1969: 158) A review of Eachann MacDhugail's *Mar dh'aisigeadh dhi a' Ghaidhlig* (How She Recovered the Gaelic) (c.1929) shows this to have been a common and popular theme in Gaelic literature and popular culture:

We have all known these poor creatures, and Mr MacDougall has a dig at them in this play. The motif has always been a popular one in the Highlands, and it lends itself freely to both sarcasm and humour. (MacCormick 1929: inside cover)

The acquisition of English is not neutral in this trope; it comes with the acquisition of the other negative characteristics of the Gall. Indeed, in Dòmhnall Mac-na-Ceàrdaich's plays in general, Macleod and Watson note that the theme is to 'praise the traditional Gaelic lifestyle's merits whilst portraying Lowland culture's evils'. (2007: 281) That this belief was not simply a product of artistic licence is suggested by the comments of Mrs Burnley Campbell, another president of An Comunn (1907-09), in *An Deò-Ghréine*:

In fact all my neighbours in these far-away islands exemplified the high level of manners, breeding, and pronunciation of English which prevail among the true Gaels, and which are in such marked contrast to the ways and the accent of those who allow their Gaelic to perish, and who too often lose along with it all their fine racial characteristics. (1905: 44)

The perception of the corrupting influence of English is demonstrated in Iain MacCormaig's *Am Fear a Chaill a' Ghàidhlig* (The Man who lost the Gaelic) from 1911. From its opening, when a crofter and his wife discuss how they can use the English newspaper's information to stop the landowner charging them too much for wool, there is suspicion of authority throughout. When Iain, the eponymous *Fear a Chaill a' Ghàidhlig*, the character who has been in the Lowlands appears, he appears to have forgotten all his Gaelic.⁹ More than that though, he has become boastful and flash, especially of his fancy new coat. He is made to look a fool however and much of the comedy comes from this. For example, when his Lowland Boss tell him 'Weel, weel, Jock I never thocht that ye wis sich a gowk as to lose a' your Gaelic in twa years', (MacCormaig 1925b: 10) he considers this a compliment.¹⁰ In the end, when Iain thinks the cow has destroyed his new coat, he manages to recover all his Gaelic and resolves that Gaelic will never die as long as he is alive. It is both a lesson to Gaels in the Lowlands that they will be ridiculed for losing their Gaelic and reinforcement that Lowland influence is negative on both language and character.

Originally from Mull, Iain MacCormaig (John MacCormick, 1860-1937) spent most of his life in Glasgow. His greatest fame today is as the author of the first Gaelic novel *Dùn Aluinn* in 1912 but he was a prolific writer of short stories and plays (see Kidd 2006). MacCormaig's prose work has been said to reflect the nationalistic influence of his Patron, Ruaraidh Erskine of Marr. (MacLeod 1987: 332) His plays have plenty of comedy and the dialogue is not laboured or lecturing. Eight of his plays were published between 1911 and 1931. The Gaelic Society of Inverness library collection also holds two unpublished typescripts by MacCormaig of Shakespeare translations: *MacBheatha* (MacBeth) (1933) and *Tomhas mu choinneamh Tomhais* (Measure for Measure) (1934). Discussion of his MacBeth translation can be found in Innes 2014.

Another example of the materialistic Lowlander trope is found in the comedy *Feasgar Trang 's an Òsd-thigh* (A Busy Night at the Pub) (1949) by R. T. MacDhomhnuill (Ronald C. MacDonald). It is a simple story of the canny rural folk outwitting the supposedly smart city-dwellers. There is Iain the bartender whose simple-mindedness undercuts the pomposity of the Glasgow merchant, and Dòmhnall the ferry man whose expertise on the boat and quick thinking saves them from a gun-wielding fugitive and wins the good opinion of the merchant. The merchant is probably the most interesting character, a Gael who left the Highlands forty years ago to make his fortune in Glasgow he displays all the typical bad qualities of the Lowlander (or perhaps particularly the urban Scot) in the eyes of the Gael. He is brash, boastful of his money, self-opinionated, big-headed, and his response to not getting his own way is to threaten to buy everything. Most of the humour comes from undercutting his inflated pride and showing his ignorance of the land compared to the locals' knowledge. The play depicts Gaels as democratic, unimpressed by riches or power and, in a brief exchange about politics, independent of a Conservative / Socialist political divide.

A Hyper-Traditional Culture on Stage

There is an apparent paradox in the insistence on traditional culture when these writers are choosing a new medium and attempting to integrate it into the culture. This comes partly from a desire to show that Gaelic (and Gaels) need not be parochial; to demonstrate its equality with other languages. The adoption of drama is part of an affirmation of validity in a context where An Comunn and parents were having to fight to make Gaelic education a reality. U. M. MacGilleMhoire makes this clear in his introduction to his translation of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (1911) by asking:

Carson a bhitheadh sinn air deireadh air slugh dhuthchannan eil ann an eolas no oilean 'sam bith? ('*Why should we be behind the people of the other countries in any kind of knowledge or education?*') (MacGilleMhoire 1911: preface)

The desire for parity of esteem along with the desire for cultural continuity can result in holding those cultural practices and norms considered 'traditional' as an ideal model, with not always positive consequences. In their study of language endangerment discourse in general, scholarly and otherwise, Peter Austin and Julia Sallabank note a tendency within language endangerment discourses to,

valorize traditional people and practices in a way that pits them against 'modernity' while 'hypertraditionalizing' them, and, some say, dehumanizing participants in the population concerned. (Austin and Sallabank 2014: 9)

In this hyper-traditionalising discourse, traditions are morally praised, modernity represents corruption and change inevitably means decay. Tradition and modernity cannot be reconciled, but become binary opposites, situated in the Gael/Gall divide described above.

2. Historical Drama

The taste for historical drama found in the Scottish dramatic tradition (from *Douglas* and Sir Walter Scott adaptations to *Jamie the Saxt* and *Mary Queen of Scots got her Head Chopped Off*) can also be seen in the subjects chosen by Gaelic playwrights. If historical drama in Scotland shows 'how heavily the Scottish past bears on the present', (Craig and Stevenson 2001: xii) then situations where the Gael has suffered weigh heaviest on Gaelic playwrights. Macleod and Watson have described these as situations where 'the Gael was always undermined, but somehow struggled through'. (2007: 281) Importantly, as Cairns Craig and Randall Stevenson see elsewhere in Scottish drama, these settings can present periods of Scottish history 'before English became the dominant language in Scottish life and affairs'; (2001: xii) historical settings can have every character using Gaelic without stretching the audience's disbelief. The historical settings can also have what MacLeod (1969) refers to as Gaelic nationalism: a motivation to inspire cultural and linguistic loyalty. Writing in 1918, the Rev. Neil Ross (later President of An Comunn Gàidhealach and editor of *An Gaidheal*) wrote about the potential for 'heritage' drama to save the Gael from losing his identity and from material consumerism by presenting good language and good morals and inspiring Gaelic identity and loyalty:

Ann a bhi beothachadh na cuimhne cinneachail bhithte aig a' cheart àm a' dùsgadh dòchais chinneachail mar an cheudna. ('By enlivening the racial memory it would at the same time also awaken racial hope.') (Ross 1918: 44)

He was particularly interested in the warrior legends of Cù Chulainn and the Fèinn. These 'folk-lore' themes were mainly exploited in the children's plays, i.e. Fr. Allan MacDonald of Eriskay's *An Sithean Ruadh* (The Red Fairy-hill) (1906), Dòmhnall Mac-na-Ceàrdaich's *Long nan Og* (The Ship of Youths) (1927), Katherine Whyte Grant's *Dùsgadh na Fèinne*

(The Awakening of the Fingalians) (1908). Ross's comments also clearly embody the essentialism of the time: 'Tha crìoch nàdurach air a tarraing eadar cinneach is cinneach.' ('There is a natural boundary drawn between one people and another'). (1918: 45)

Iain N. MacLeòid covered two famous historical episodes of Highland history: *Fionnghal a' Phrionnsa* (The Prince's Flora) (1917) telling the story of Flora MacDonald and Bonnie Prince Charlie and *Braighdeanas Strathnabhair* (Strathnaver Bondage) (1918) depicting crofters being evicted by Patrick Sellar. D. J. MacLeod assessed these works as being:

(...) rather stilted straightforward dramatisations of important episodes in Highland history – reproducing the incidents in faithful detail but with little emotional involvement and with no plot or thematic organisation and little vital characterisation. (MacLeod 1969: 158)

There are four plays in this period that are connected with the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745: two of them directly concerned with Flora MacDonald.¹¹ They invariably show the Gaels as being on the side of the Prince. In Moffatt-Pender's *Màiri NicLeòid* (Mary MacLeod), while the piper follows his clan chief, he does so reluctantly out of loyalty to the chief, preferring really to be on the side of the Prince. The Gaels are presented as noble, even in defeat and even knowing they are going to their death.

Captain I. M. Moffatt-Pender was a Gaelic learner from Perthshire. His Gaelic was learnt from the poet Alasdair Camshron, Bàrd Thùrnaig, from Inverasdale. He was very active in An Comunn Gàidhealach and founded the all-Gaelic circle within it called Clann an Fhraoich. As a writer, he is no longer well regarded although he won Mòd prizes in the 1930s. He won first prize at the Dingwall Mòd in 1931 for *Màiri NicLeòid* and first prize in Fort William Mòd in 1932 for *Fionnghal Nic Dhomhnaill* (Flora MacDonald). Both of these are sentimental, focusing on the distress of their eponymous female characters. His next Mòd win however was *Gleann Comhann A.D. 1692* (Glencoe AD 1692) in 1953. By choosing another occasion where the Gaels are victims, there is a risk of sentimentality; however, the play is surprisingly effective. The action takes place in just one house where the family wake up to be attacked by the arriving soldiers. Moffatt-Pender does not shirk from the violence and delivers a real sense of brutality and military oppression. He was an army Captain (Thomson 1994: 202) and as the play was written not long after the end of the Second World War, this is a successful marriage of an historical event to contemporary concerns. It is not so much about the Glencoe massacre, but about how ordinary people suffer due to greater political concerns of which they have little understanding.

The typical feature of these dramas, however, is that they represent the 'ordinary' Gael. The Gaels are rarely the landowners, clan chiefs, kings or authority figures, even when Gaels and Gaelic-speakers could realistically hold these roles in the historical context.¹² The Gael/Gall dichotomy and the hyper-traditionalising discourse, noted earlier, is also apparent in the historical dramas, although the following quote from Thomson shows that this discourse is not limited to drama in Gaelic cultural discourse but to cultural memory more generally:

There is another point worth remembering and emphasising about Gaelic life, viewed either historically or contemporarily, and it is a point often obscured by both the enemies and the friends of Gaelic. Gaelic life had, and has, a range of strands, a series of levels, in it. It was not merely peasant in its social organisation (as many would have us believe), nor merely folkish in its culture; and it will not do to invert the roles of high and low culture, and pretend that folk-culture is the high culture and therefore has no connotations of peasantry. Gaelic culture had, and has, its professional and intellectual as well as its folk-traditional aspects, its Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair as well as its Duncan Bàn Macintyre, its composers of ceòl-mòr as well as of puirt-a-beul; and we neglect these at our peril. Neglecting them would not only distort our own history, but sell the pass to those who would pigeon-hole us, and consequently ignore us. It is unfortunate that often this betrayal of history is done for good motives, e.g. to promote egalitarian theories, though at other times it may proceed from what is only political myopia. (Thomson 1990: 17)

These plays demonstrate an underlying vision of society as the folk versus the establishment. The Gaels are typically presented as the ordinary, hard-working, decent agriculturalists. In contrast, the establishment is seen to be English-speaking, in or from the Lowlands and with negative characteristics of greed and no sense of community responsibility or solidarity. The Gaels are often under pressure from unseen forces, such as the economy or the army, which are seen to be controlled by the establishment. To a great extent however, this establishment is not present on stage but presents itself through references to landowners, Gaels who have worked in the Lowlands or economic or political pressures. Illustrative of this attitude is Iain MacCormaig's shoemaker in *Peigi Bheag* (Little Peggy) (1914) who, when told how well An Comunn Gaidhealach is doing, sarcastically replies:

Nach 'eil uaislean móra na dùthcha a' cur an guallean rithe 'nuair a chunnaic iad cho grunn dar 's cho beirteach 's a tha i. (*'Isn't it funny how the great nobility of the country support it when they see how substantial (?) and wealthy it is.'*) (MacCormaig 1925a: 6)

In a similar anti-authoritarian manner, in Gilleasbuig MacCulloch's *Mairead* (Margaret) (1923), the character of Calum repeats the proverb that there are three things that a Gael is never ashamed of; taking a rod from a wood, taking a deer from the moor or taking a salmon from a pool. (MacCulloch 1923: 20)

3. Real People in a Real Place: the anti-pastoral

The depiction of the Highlands by Lowland writers was common in the inter-war period. (Hutchison 1987: 173, Innes this volume) One of the Scottish National Players' dramatists, John Brandane (pseudonym of Dr. John McIntyre), originally from Bute, set all

of his plays in the Highlands and used the setting as a pastoral resulting in work that:

does not offer any great insight into the nature of the Highland experience, historical or contemporary. His work is set firmly in the tradition of viewing the Highlands as a kind of Arcadia peopled by characters given to strange behaviour and lapses into the Gaelic. (Hutchison 1987: 173)

Despite, or perhaps due to this hypertraditionalising of the Highlands, three of his plays were translated into Gaelic: *Rory Aforesaid* (1926) as *Ruairidh Roimh-Ainmichte* (1937); *The Change House* (1921) as *An Tigh-Osda* (1950); and *The Glen is Mine* (1923) as *'S Leam Fhìn an Gleann* which won its translator Rev. T. S. MacPherson a Mod first prize almost ten years later in 1932. The theme of the Gaelic Highlands as a rural arcadia had strong currency that reinforced the Gael-Gall dichotomy with the Gael as the natural, spiritual Arcadian. As Nicholas Grene has noted in twentieth-century Irish drama:

Literary pastoral has always had its own special language [...]. Pastoral involves a sophisticated and cultivated audience/readership going out to an imagined other place, another language, which its charm dependent on its measured otherness. (Grene 1999: 214)

The literary pastoral of the Highlands was memorably critiqued in the essay by Iain Mac a' Ghobhainn (Iain Crichton Smith) entitled 'Real People in a Real Place':

Many of the books that I have read on the Hebrides, however, make this world appear Edenic and unreal [...]. These books do not take the islander seriously as a real person in a real place (Crichton Smith 1986: 14)

The hypertraditionalising of Gaelic culture that fed into a Gael/Gall dichotomy, and the romanticism of the Celtic Twilight, meant that Gaelic drama was primed to buy into this literary pastoral. The concerns of presenting the 'good Gael' can restrict the depiction of real people in a real place. By the 1930s, however, the Celtic Twilight was under criticism, particularly by the literary heavyweights of Sorley MacLean and George Campbell Hay, (see Byrne 2007: 43) for not considering the actual conditions of the Highlands and denying any political understanding of Highland society and its distortion of the Gaelic literary canon.

Much like the Scottish National Players, rural settings are the norm in early Gaelic drama. At that time, many Gaels, like the majority of Scots, were now living in the cities or Lowlands but, for the majority of plays, a rural location provided a setting where all characters could credibly speak Gaelic, as well as supporting the cultural narrative of the traditional Gael. Of the plays under consideration here, only part of the action of *Beitidh*

(Betty) (1916) is in an urban setting (and the dialogue there is mainly in English).

The 'obsession with the past, with rural life and with the Highlands' that gripped the Scottish National Players and the Curtain Theatre (Hutchison 1987: 176) had a very different interpretation when presented in Gaelic by writers from the rural Highlands. The Gaelic writers often show the difficulties of the changing agricultural world and the harsh realities of agricultural life that were just as 'real' as the urban problems. Characters frequently discuss the difficulty of living off the land and references to the necessity of working in the south or abroad appear more often than not.¹³ In all the 'betrothal' plays that ostensibly deal with men looking for wives, there is a typical conversation about how difficult it is to get their own land to start a family. Iain MacCormaig's *Gaol air a Dhearbhadh* (The Test of Love) (1913) opens with the main character Seumas Bàn, trying to get his own piece of land. In the same author's *Peigi Bheag* (1914), the men joke that they need land to have their own bit of 'Home Rule'. (MacCormaig 1925a: 10) In the same play, the shoemaker has not been able to work for months as everyone is getting cheap shoes sent up from Glasgow. While the dramatists do not offer any radical solutions to the social and economic conditions, the issues that would have been very real to rural communities are covered. In most of the Gaelic plays, the rural setting is not a pastoral Arcadia with which to escape the 'real world' of urban deprivation.

The last playwright to be discussed here is one who largely overcomes the hypertraditional impulse (albeit within short, usually romantic, melodrama). Màiri A. Chaimbeul has the most number of plays for a female writer.¹⁴ Her first play, *Beitidh* (Betty) (1916)¹⁵ differs from many of the norms we have seen up to now. Firstly, her principal character is going to study at the University of Glasgow; the 'establishment' can be an opportunity for a better life rather than simply a destructive influence on the old one. It can also be Gaelic-speaking; Chaimbeul's eponymous *Beitidh* ends up winning a doctor in Glasgow who is also a Gaelic-speaker. This is a rather neat solution that serves also to teach *Beitidh* not to be ashamed of her Gaelic (a reprise of the 'don't forget your Gaelic' trope). This is the main theme of the play which is bilingual: the action is in Gaelic when set in Tiree and in English when in a Kelvinside drawing room. The women in the play are strikingly independent and full of character. *Beitidh*'s mother is quite happy to state that the men would be nothing without their women. (Chaimbeul 1916: 7) Her English-speaking friend Rosie is very quick-witted and likes to shock, principally by smoking. *Beitidh* herself is not just a commodity, not seen as a potentially good wife simply because she'll make a good housekeeper. There are some norms maintained however, mainly through the requisite singing (the play ends with a whole *ceilidh* of songs and dances). *Beitidh* herself is not as wild as Rosie and presents a decent, conscientious Gael.

In another of Chaimbeul's plays, *Ri Guailibh a Cheile* (Shoulder to Shoulder) (c.1930) her modernity more obviously rejects aspects of the traditional society. The

grandfather character is a proud MacDonald but his adherence to history makes him bitter and even violent towards all Campbells. When his granddaughter's Campbell sweetheart wins a VC in the Great War for trying to save a MacDonald's life, however, he sees his error. The title of the play is from a song that was emblematic of the Highland society movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, *Clann nan Gaidheal ri Guailibh a Chèile* ('The children of the Gaels, shoulder to shoulder').

The plays by Màiri A. Chaimbeul considered here all have contemporary settings. The choice of the First World War as a topic is both unique and a riposte to the Stornoway Gazette review that praises her first play *Beitidh* before concluding 'It is probably impossible to-day to show any series of events of Highland life significant enough to dramatise apart from English influence'. (MacCormick 1929: inside cover) It is clear her primary concern is the future and the ways in which women and Gaels will move into it.

As Gaelic theatre continued into the second half of the twentieth century, many norms established in these early works – a rural location; a concern about losing a way of life; the depiction of a male-dominated society; a desire to present (and represent) Highland history and tradition and the use of song and music in theatre – formed the basis that later writers would follow, develop and react against. The study of Gaelic drama forms part of the wider cultural environment of the early twentieth century when the Gaelic imagination redefined what it meant to be a Gael in the twentieth century. Whereas Scottish identity of this period constructs itself in opposition to England, the Gael's identity is in opposition to the establishment, be it Scots or English. There remains a lot to be said about drama's role in shaping and in understanding the identity of the Gael in the modern world, however, Gaelic drama does have a history, despite the fact that, as noted by Tormod Calum Dòmhnallach at the start of this essay, we might not suspect it is there.

A Preliminary Checklist of Gaelic plays 1900-1949

[For further information on plays here which are translations, see the article by Sim Innes in this volume.]

Bartlett, Somhairle. c.1935 *Braid air a' Bhraid: Pearsachan-Iomairt*. Trans. by Anna Niclain (Glasgow: Alex. MacLaren and Sons for An Comunn Gàidhealach)

Brandane, John. 1932. *'S Leam Fhìn an Gleann*. Trans. by Rev. T. S. MacPherson (Glaschu [Glasgow]: An Comunn Gaidhealach)

Brandane, John. 1937. *Ruairidh Roimh-Ainmichte*. Trans. by Aonghas Mac Mhaoilein (Glasgow: Alex. MacLaren and Sons)

Bottomley, Gordon, Catherine Urquhart and David Urquhart. 1944. *Deirdre: The Barra Story in a Play* (Inverness: The Northern Chronicle)

Chaimbeul, Mairi A. (Mary A. MacKinnon). c.1916. *Beitidh* (Glaschu [Glasgow]: Alasdair MacLabhruinn Agus a Mhic [A. MacLaren & Sons]). Republished in 1926

MacKinnon, Mary A. c.1927. *Posadh Seònaid* (Glasgow: Alex. MacLaren and Sons)

MacKinnon, Mary A. (Mrs A. Campbell). c.1930. *Ri Guaillibh a Chéile* (Glasgow: Alex. MacLaren and Sons)

Feachd Thobarmhoire de Chomunn na h-Òigridh. 1937. *Na h-Uibhean Prìseil* (Glaschu [Glasgow]: An Comunn Gaidhealach)

Ferguson, J.A. 19--? *Caimbeulach na Cille Móire: dealbh-chluich an aon sealladh*. Trans. by Dòmhnall MacDhòmhnail (Glasgow: An Comunn Gaidhealach)

Grant, K. Whyte. 1901. 'An Sgoil Bheag agus a' Mhaighdean-Mhara: cluich airson na clansgoile', in *An Sgeulaiche* 2:1, pp. 79-89.

Grant, K. Whyte. 1908. *Dùsgadh na Fèinne* (Paisley: J and R. Parlane)

MacArthur, Bessie. c.1934 *Clann Rìgh Lochlainn*. Trans. by Dòmhnall MacDhòmhnail (Glascho [Glasgow]: Alasdair MacLabhruinn Agus a Mhic [Alex. MacLaren and Sons])

MacCormaig, Iain. 1925a. *Peigi Bheag / Domhnull Mor agus Cailean Taillear* (Glascho [Glasgow]: An Comunn Gàidhealach) [*Peigi Bheag*: Mòd first prize 1914; *Domhnull Mor* is a 'còmhradh' First prize at Glasgow Mòd 1921]

MacCormaig, Iain and Iain Mac an Aba. 1925b. *Am Fear a Chaill a' Ghàidhlig / Calum is Bantrach Tharmaid* (Glascho [Glasgow]: An Comunn Gàidhealach) [Mòd first prize 1911]

MacCormick, John. 1926. *An Ceòl-Sithe* (Glascho [Glasgow]: An Comunn Gàidhealach) [Mòd first prize 1925]

MacCormaig, Iain. c.1929. *Gaol air a Dhearbhadh* (Glascho [Glasgow]: Alasdair MacLabhruinn is a Mhic [Alex. MacLaren and Sons]) [Mòd first prize 1913]

MacCormick, John. 1929. *An Reiteachadh Rathail: Mock Trial by Sheriff and Jury* (Glascho [Glasgow]: Alasdair MacLabhruinn is a Mhic [Alex. MacLaren and Sons])

MacCormaig, Iain. 1931. *An t-Agh Odhar* (Glascho [Glasgow]: Alasdair MacLabhruinn is a

Mhic [Alex. MacLaren and Sons]

MacCullaich, Gilleasbaig. 1923. *Mairead: Dealbh Chluich an Ceithir Earrannan* (Glascho [Glasgow]: An Comunn Gaidhealach)

MacCullaich, Gilleasbaig and Iain MacCormaig. 1924. *Da Dhealbh-Chluich Gaidhealach: "Mairead" "Rath-innis"* (Glasgow: An Comunn Gaidhealach)

MacCullaich, Gilleasbaig. 1947. 'An rud a their a' mhàthair 's e dh'fheumas a bhi dèanta', in *Ceilidh nan Gaidheal 1896-1946* (Glaschu [Glasgow]: MacLabhruinn agus a Mhic [MacLaren and Sons]), pp.29-47. A summary of the play was previously published in *An Deò-Grèine* XIII 1918, p.124.

MacDhòmhnail, Donnchadh. 1930. 'Anna Bhàn an Glascho' in *Trì Comhraidhean* (Glascho [Glasgow]: An Comunn Gaidhealach)

MacDhòmhnail, Donnchadh. 1930. 'Na Foirfich Nodha' in *Trì Comhraidhean* (Glascho [Glasgow]: An Comunn Gaidhealach)

Mac Dhughail, Eachann. 1912. *An Gaol a Bheir Buaidh* (Glascho [Glasgow]: Gilleasbuig Mac na Ceardadh [Archibald Sinclair])

Mac Dhughail, Eachann. c.1924. *Gaelic Plays: Coir Samhna air Leannan and Mar dh'aisigeadh dhi a' Ghaidhlig* (Glaschu [Glasgow]: MacLabhruinn agus a Mhic [MacLaren and Sons])

MacDhomhnail, R.T., 1949. *Feasgar Trang 's an Òsd-thigh* (Stirling: E. Mackay for An Comann Gàidhealach)

MacDonghais, Calum. 1901. 'Iseabail no ri Linn do Sheanar' in *Am Bàrd* I, 13-15, 23-24, 41-2, 57-8 & 73-4.

MacGill'losa, Liam. n.d. *Ceithir Mallachdan nan Gaidheal*

MacGilleMhoire, U. M., 1911. *Iulius Caesar: dan-cluiche Shacspeair* (Dun-Eidean [Edinburgh]: Iain Grannd [John Grant])

MacInnes, Malcolm. 1933. *Iseabail na h-Airigh* (Glasgow: Alex. MacLaren & Sons)

MacLeoid, Iain N. 1911. *Réiteach Móraig* (Glaschu [Glasgow]: Gilleasbuig Macnaceardadh [Archibald Sinclair]) Reprinted in 1922 by (Glaschu [Glasgow]: A. MacLabhruinn agus a Mhic [Alex. MacLaren and Son])

MacLeòid, Iain N. 1916a. *Pòsadh Móraig* (Glaschu [Glasgow]: A. MacLabhruinn [A. MacLaren])

MacLeòid, Iain N. 1916b. 'Luadh Bantrach Sheòrais', *An Deò-Grèine* XI, pp. 93-94 & 101-103.

MacLeòid, Iain N. 1916c. 'Dealbh-Chluich Ghaidhlig: Coinneach Odhar', *An Deò-Grèine* XII, pp. 46-47 & 57-8.

MacLeòid, Iain N. 1917. 'Fionnghal a' Phrionnsa', *An Deò-Grèine* XIII, pp.8-10, 27-9, 44-6, 53-55 & 76-78.

MacLeòid, Iain N. 1918. 'Braithdeanas Strathnabhair', *An Deò-Grèine* XIII, pp. 120-122 & 136-138.

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¹ Most authors have Gaelic and English versions of their names and one or the other may be used in different publications. The Gaelic name is preferred here, followed by the English version in brackets when first mentioned. References use the same name as used in the source. Gaelic quotes are followed by English translation in brackets. The spelling of quotes, titles and names are not modernised.

² The Coisir Chiùil Lunnainn concert took place at the Ladbroke Hall in 1905 where there was a short sketch and a longer play, *An Dugadh*, by Liam MacGill'Iosa. In 1907 they performed MacGill'Iosa's *Gealladh a' Ghaidheil* and Fr. Allan MacDonald's *An Sithean Ruadh* (Gillies 1990: 525-6).

³ 'Bha an ath Mhòd an Sruighlea agus ar leam gur ann aig a' Mhòd sin a thugadh am follais aig cuirm dealbh-chluich Gàidhlig air son na ceud uaire. B'e sin 'Réiteach Móraig' le Iain N. MacLeòid, agus b'iad an luchd-cluiche gillean agus nigheanan á Coisir Chiùil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu.' (*The following Mòd was in Stirling and it was at that Mòd that a Gaelic play was presented at an event for the first time. That was 'Réiteach Móraig' by John N. MacLeod and the players were boys and girls from the Glasgow Gaelic Choir.*) (MacGilleSheathanaich 1947: 16)

⁴ See Kidd (2000) for more discussion on the role of the 'còmhradh' or written dialogue. Also Kidd forthcoming 2016. For a discussion of dramatic performances of dialogues see MacLeod (1969: 130-145).

⁵ Sinclair's name was published as both Mac-na-Ceàrdaich agus Mac-na-Ceardadh. Mac-na-Ceàrdaich is used here following Mac Leòid (2012).

⁶ MacLeod describes her simply as 'A writer of light and popular plays; closely associated with the Glasgow Tíree Association, who, according to Mr. Hugh MacPhee, frequently performed her plays in the years following the First War' (1969: 805).

⁷ MacLeòid was apparently not the only writer to overdo the proverbs: in 1917, Dòmhnall Mac-na-Ceàrdaich wrote to Liam MacGill'Iosa reviewing the latter's *Ceithir Mallachdan nan Gàidheal* and commented that 'Tha na sean-fhacail na gnàth-fhacail tuilleadh is iomadaidh' (*The proverbs or sayings are too frequent*) (quoted in Gillies 1990: 533).

⁸ One of the earliest performances of Gaelic theatre was a translation of *Casadh an tSúgáin* by Douglas Hyde, translated by Kenneth MacLeod and performed at the Celtic Union Mòd in 1904. See Scott 2013: 125-6.

⁹ Iain's dialogue is an interesting mix of Scots vocabulary and Highland syntax and pronunciation: 'See you the big long years Ah was away in the Low Country hearing nossing but English all day. The Gaelic went away out of me and the English come in its place' (MacCormaig 1925b: 5).

¹⁰ The irony of using jokes about mistakes in English in a play to encourage Gaelic speaking is that they rely on the audience's own knowledge of (Scottish) English. Another example; 'Ah was a plooman at last; but at first Ah was a hauflin. Well, sometimes they called me a 'skyte', and sometimes a 'galute', and sometime a 'ned', for Ah could do everything' (MacCormaig 1925b: 7). Again in *Luadh Bantrach Sheòrais*, Seonaid Sheumais, recently returned from Glasgow, says 'I'm so anonymously glad to saw you, Mrs. Macpherson.' (MacLeod 1916b: 93). The lesson may be one of fear: by using English you leave yourself open to ridicule.

¹¹ Iain N. MacLeòid *Fionnghal a' Phrionnsa* (1932); Dòmhnall Mac-na-Ceardadh *Crois-Tara!* (before 1929?); I.M. Moffatt-Pender *Màiri NicLeòid* (1931); I.M. Moffatt-Pender *Fionnghal Nic Dhomhnaill* (1932).

¹² An exception to this is Seòras Gallda's *Màiri Bhàn Ghlinn Freoin* (1937), a clan drama set early in the seventeenth century.

¹³ e.g. in *Mairead* (MacCulloch 1923: 23)

¹⁴ Some publications use her maiden name, Màiri A. NicFhionghuin (Mary A. MacKinnon) (see advert on inside cover *An Reiteachadh Rathail* where the connection of "Mrs Mary A. Campbell (nee MacKinnon)" is explained.

¹⁵ One of the copies of *Beitidh* in the MacLean Room at the University of Glasgow is stamped with 'MacDonald's Music Store, Antigonish, N.S.' implying that at least this play had enough appeal for it to be exported to the Gaelic community in Nova Scotia, Canada.