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Changing Scotland:

A Social History of Love in the Life and Work of Edwin Morgan

Philippa Osmond-Williams
M.A. (Hons), M.Phil.

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Arts)

Department of Scottish Literature
School of Critical Studies
College of Arts
University of Glasgow
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Abstract

Examining love in the life and work of Edwin Morgan (1920-2010), this thesis argues that Morgan's literary and artistic demonstrations of love inherently respond to the legal, political, and social changes of Scotland in the twentieth and twenty-first century. By mapping Morgan's biographical contexts within Scotland's wider social history and culture, the impact of the nation and its shifting attitudes on Morgan's collected works is delineated. An examination of material only available to researchers, including Morgan's correspondence and scrapbooks held in Archives and Special Collections at Glasgow University Library, supplements this comprehensive exploration of the significance of love in Morgan's life and work. Different themes in Morgan's literature surface at different periods of his life, often significantly responding to specific biographical or socio-historical contexts. This thesis, therefore, is organised chronologically in relation to Morgan's biography rather than to his publications, although these two timelines do often overlap. Each chapter covers three decades of Morgan's life.

Chapter One explores Morgan's interaction with love in the context of war. Morgan's early defining relationships and the iconography of love and war in his scrapbooks are examined, followed by an interrogation of the homosocial emphasis in Morgan's translation of *Beowulf* (1952). A reappraisal of the 'subterranean' structure of 'The New Divan' (1977) is performed through a thematic examination of love and sex.

Chapter Two analyses the homosexual subtexts that arise in Morgan's later scrapbooks, focusing particularly on literary figures and British public trials. The love sequence from *The Second Life* (1968) is examined in relation to the major romantic relationship of Morgan's life that inspired these poems, followed by an exploration of personal and universal grief in 'The Moons of Jupiter' (1979).

Chapter Three considers transformation, exploring Scotland's social attitudes following the decriminalisation of homosexuality and the impact this had on Morgan's writing and his role as a public figure. Highlighting Morgan's emphasis on particular themes that respond to personal contexts and Scotland's socio-political shifts, transformation through translation and adaptation is examined through four key texts: *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1992), *Phaedra* (2000), *A.D.: A Trilogy of Plays on the Life of Jesus Christ* (2000) and *The Play of Gilgamesh* (2005). The 'Demon' (1999) sequence is the final text analysed, serving to highlight the crucial connection that Morgan establishes between love, creation, and energy.

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I dedicate this thesis in memory of my late mother, Jane. She is, and always will be, in every word I write about love.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature: Philippa Osmond-Williams

Abbreviations

Texts and publications

ABL: *A Book of Lives*

BTLD: *Beyond the Last Dragon*

C: *Cathures*

CP: *Collected Poems*

CT: *Collected Translations*

DON: *Dreams and Other Nightmares*

E: *Essays*

HHAA: *Hold Hands Among the Atoms*

LL: *Love and a Life*

TML: *The Midnight Letterbox*

NNGM: *Nothing Not Giving Messages*

SOD: *Sweeping Out the Dark*

TPoG: *The Play of Gilgamesh*

VOR: *Virtual and Other Realities*

Introduction

i. General Introduction

It seems this is a world of change, where we,
observing, can scarcely fix the observed
and are unfixed ourselves. This solid hill
even as I speak is half transparent,
white walls and floor show through, we sink, the stars
are roof-lights in a large computer room.
The air is clear, the light even, the hall
vibrant as a heart.¹

It is commonplace to describe Edwin Morgan as a poet of change, his apothegm ‘Change Rules is the supreme graffito’² characterising his work as a whole. This thesis seeks to investigate the interconnection between change and what George Reid describes as Morgan’s commitment ‘to a process of transformation that was both national and personal’.³ The nexus of that interconnection between transformation and commitment in Morgan’s life and writing is love.

Scotland, as with its surrounding world, underwent significant political and social change during the twentieth century, by which Morgan was directly affected. As a gay man born in Glasgow in 1920, sixty years before Scotland’s partial decriminalisation of homosexuality, Morgan witnessed the gradual transformation of religious, medical and social perceptions of his sexual identity, transitioning from uncompromising intolerance into an outspoken acceptance, albeit still with barriers to overcome. This thesis plots Morgan’s artistic demonstrations of love against the changing political, legal, cultural, and socio-historical frameworks of Scotland in his lifetime. Morgan’s exploration of love is a key aspect of his creative output, but my research argues that his depiction of love inherently responds to the twentieth- and twenty-first-century transformation of Scotland, particularly in relation to wider

¹ Edwin Morgan, ‘Memories of Earth: Tape 2: The Earth’, *Collected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1990), 387, ll. 282-9.

² Edwin Morgan, *Essays* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1974), vii

³ George Reid, ‘Edwin Morgan: A Eulogy’ (26 August 2010) <https://asls.arts.gla.ac.uk/Morgan-eulogy.html> [accessed 01.03.2019].

perceptions of homosexuality. Morgan's belief in the universality of love is essential and thus different facets of love are considered throughout this work, which in turn will be used to construct my closing theory on Morgan's perception of love as a form of energy. The major focus of the thesis, however, is Morgan's personal and literary response to his sexuality and its place within Scottish political, cultural, and legal contexts.

In his analysis of Hugh MacDiarmid's poetry, Morgan writes that 'the beautiful and terrible bonds that are not geological but between individual persons, bonds of love or friendship, of desire, misery, doubt, or forgiveness [...] are strikingly absent' (*E*, 220). Morgan's observation captures his own celebration of the intricacies of human connection, fundamental to his *oeuvre*. Arguably, what separates Morgan from his contemporaries most evidently is his inherent celebration of these bonds and of humankind from which these bonds are created. As part of this, Morgan frequently returns to the city in his work, distinct from the rural concerns of Iain Crichton Smith, Sorley MacLean or George Mackay Brown. Morgan lived in Glasgow throughout his life but his appreciation of urban environments extends further than that of his birthplace, indicated by his statement that, 'cities I love in any case, all cities'.⁴ What seems evident throughout Morgan's work is his attraction to the populace of a city, his intraurban focus offering to his writing a breadth of human experience and connection. Of course, Morgan's poetry does not dwell solely in the city, but as in the urban world, each movement through land, sea and space is particularised by its inhabiting, or surrounding, humanity. His galactic travels or invocations are not abstract discussions on space and time, but instead develop 'shards of contemporary experience and pain'⁵ regarding the human journey to which we, as readers, are made witness. Morgan's 'urgent humanism'⁶ develops through these bonds, which are themselves proclamations or distortions of love. Love itself does not separate Morgan from his poetic generation, or indeed any generation of writers, but arguably in no other literary output of a twentieth-century Scottish writer is love depicted so inherently as the centrifugal force through which the world exists.

⁴ Edwin Morgan, *The Midnight Letterbox: Selected Correspondence, 1950-2010*, eds. James McGonigal, John Coyle (Manchester: Carcanet, 2015), 266.

⁵ Roderick Watson, 'Edwin Morgan: Messages and Transformations', *British Poetry from the 1950s to the 1990s: Politics and Art*, eds. Gary Day, Brian Docherty (Basingstoke: MacMillan Press, 1997), 170-92, 182.

⁶ Rodney Stenning Edgecombe, *Aspects of Form and Genre in the Poetry of Edwin Morgan*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2003), 3.

The plurality of love enforces its ambiguity as a subject. As Irving Singer suggests in *The Nature of Love* (2009), ‘the concept of love is difficult for all of us because it touches on so much of human nature and implicates so many lines of investigation’.⁷ Singer identifies three subsections of love: love of people, ideals, and things.⁸ However, these concepts are similarly pluralistic. Love of things, for example, may encompass not just objects but also acts, sensations, or feelings; the love of a person may be rooted in the platonic, familial, or libidinal. Love similarly informs numerous further strands of feeling. Desire, jealousy, or rapture may be rooted in romantic love, just as the love of a parent for their child may impel subsequent feelings of fear, compassion, or the need to protect. Love is, as Morgan writes, ‘the most mysterious of the winds that blow’.⁹

Because of the expansive possibilities of its definition, the lines of enquiry regarding love in this thesis must be specified. The popular appeal of love, particularly in the arts, is centred on its interpersonal, and principally romantic, element. Indeed, a study of love in the life and work of a poet probably implies an interpersonal focus, but it would be reductive to dismiss the love of particular things or ideals when considering Morgan’s *oeuvre*. An understanding of Morgan’s interpersonal connections is crucial for the comprehension of his creative output, but his love of certain objects, places and ideas further informs the structures of his work. Love, in both of these forms, encompasses a human experience, specific to Morgan but one that is rooted in its universality. In terms of interpersonal love, the major lines of enquiry integrated within this thesis are homosociality, platonic relationships, and the interconnection or separation of enduring emotional connection (*pragma*) and romantic desire (*eros*). Regarding love outwith interpersonal connection, this thesis prioritises the love of nation and the love of energy.

The socio-historical focus of this thesis further impels a consideration of love in relation to the wider structures that inform it. As Mary Evans suggests, ‘love matters, not just to us as individuals but to society and the social world in general because it is the language, the

⁷ Irving Singer, *The Nature of Love: the Modern World* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009), 369.

⁸ Irvine Singer, *The Pursuit of Love* (Baltimore; London: John Hopkins University Press, 1995), 31.

⁹ Edwin Morgan, *Love and a Life* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2003), l. 1.

understanding and the behaviour through which we organise our sexuality and our personal lives'.¹⁰ Morgan, as a homosexual man living in Glasgow through the twentieth and early twenty-first century, experienced love through the shifting politics, culture, and attitudes of Scotland, by which his work is duly affected and informed. By mapping Morgan's biographical contexts within the wider social history of Scotland, the impact of national history on love in Morgan's collected works can be explored.

ii. Methodology

Although the object of this study, Edwin Morgan's life and works, directs the lines of enquiry undertaken, the primary focus of this research is to investigate the ways in which Morgan's demonstrations of love exemplify shifting socio-political attitudes in Scotland regarding homosexuality in the twentieth and early twenty-first century. Because of this, the study of life writing underpins the methodological approach undertaken in this thesis. Life writing employs the knowledge garnered in the study of the individual 'in support of sociological structures and patterns',¹¹ the value of a person's 'microhistory' lying 'not in its uniqueness, but in its exemplariness, in how that individual's life serves as an allegory for broader issues affecting the culture as a whole'.¹² Life writing is, however, a term 'used to designate biographical research in the broadest sense of the word'.¹³ Biographical research incorporates a range of terms, including but not limited to auto/ethnography, auto/biography, oral history, and life story/history, and this poses an issue regarding definition. Within the context of this thesis, life writing is taken to mean a combination of life story and life history.

To clarify what is meant by life story and life history, I have used the definitions applied to the terms by Brian Roberts in his text, *Biographical Research* (2002). He defines life story as the 'narrated story by the author',¹⁴ the author meaning here the object of study whose 'story' is developed through autobiographical writing and reflection as found in interviews, essays, and

¹⁰ Mary Evans, *Love: An Unromantic Discussion* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 2003), 2.

¹¹ Hans Renders, Binne de Haan, 'Introduction: The Challenges of Biographical Study' in *Theoretical Discussions of Biography: Approaches from History, Microhistory, and Life Writing*, eds. Hans Renders, Binne de Haan (Leiden; Boston: Berlin, 2014), 1-8, 2.

¹² Jill Lepore, 'Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography' in *The Journal of American History* vol. 88, no. 1 (2001), 129-44, 133.

¹³ Renders, de Haan, 2.

¹⁴ Brian Roberts, *Biographical Research* (Buckingham; Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2002), 3.

correspondence. The term life history infers the ‘interpretative, presentational work’ of the researcher in which the past experiences of the individual are constructed from various sources, such as the collected creative works of the author.¹⁵ While a life story may encompass the full chronological timeline of an individual’s life, often it is specified by way of subject matter or comprehensiveness. This thesis works chronologically through Morgan’s life from childhood to his final years, but the research is focused by its subject matter: love. While an understanding of Morgan’s life story is necessary to contextualise him within his wider socio-historical structures, emphasis is placed on the examination of his creative demonstrations of love which opens areas for enquiry regarding private experience and public memory. The interpretative framework of the life history is, therefore, prioritised, with Morgan’s life story presented in ‘an interspersed abridged fashion in conjunction with editorial comment and analysis’.¹⁶

Although the interpretative nature of this research emphasises my role as the reader and responder of texts (including artistic ‘texts’ such as scrapbooks), my findings are balanced throughout by a recognition of Morgan’s own intentions regarding his work. Sean Burke warns against the simplification of literary criticism into two antithetical modes in which ‘either the text is fully governed by an immanent authorial intention, or by the immanent meaning that absent intention uncovers’.¹⁷ While the first restricts the interpretative freedom of the reader and risks reducing the text to biographical themes, the second neglects the human action behind the creation of a text and the various contexts that drive that action. The limitations of these two antithetical stances impose upon the ‘healthy pluralism of scholarly interests’¹⁸ and as such a balanced consideration of the two viewpoints is required. Burke suggests that, while ‘intention is to be recognised, and respected’, there must also be recognition that ‘its structures will not be fully and ideally homogenous with what is said or written’ or ubiquitously adequate ‘to the communicative act’.¹⁹ As John Farrell further states on this matter, while authorial intention is essential to understanding the communicative content of a work, it is ‘informative

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 47.

¹⁷ Sean Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992; 1998), 139.

¹⁸ John Farrell, *The Varieties of Authorial Intention: Literary Theory Beyond the Intentional Fallacy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 16.

¹⁹ Burke, 140.

but by no means definitive'²⁰ when attempting to understand a work's artistic achievement. Meaning is, as Farrell suggests, 'a joint affair' that 'does not lie entirely in the power of authors or of readers'.²¹ As such, the critical analysis undertaken in this research is one of mutual process, in which meaning is derived from both author and reader.

The nature of the subject matter of this thesis necessitates a receptivity to Morgan's authorial intentions and the contexts of history, biography and psychology that shape his literary and artistic demonstrations of love. Morgan expresses his own belief that 'the poetry is a man's life',²² made further evident by the specific references he makes to his subjective and personal experiences throughout his writing. However, although the majority of Morgan's creations arguably contain within them fragments of the self, either overtly or covertly, and therefore highlight the relevance of his various intentions, this does not negate the necessity for reader-response. In texts such as 'The New Divan' or, indeed, the scrapbooks, the deliberate ambiguity of coded material enforces the reader to construct the different paths to follow, through which meaning can be informed by biographical contexts but not necessarily defined. This thesis seeks to appreciate, as Farrell suggests literary criticism should,

the work as a human performance, one that either displays the imagination of the author in a way that rewards the reader's attention from an external perspective or invests it in an internal world whose illusory power testifies to the author's hidden presence.²³

Max Saunders defines life writing as 'fundamentally intertextual',²⁴ evidenced in this thesis by the incorporation and examination of a wide variety of primary and secondary sources that exist either as published works or collected in the University of Glasgow's Archives and Special Collections (ASC) department. For the most part, Morgan's life story is constructed through personal memoir, interviews and correspondence, further supplemented by material from James McGonigal's biography of Morgan, *Beyond the Last Dragon* (2010; 2012). An

²⁰ Farrell, 233.

²¹ Ibid., 241.

²² Edwin Morgan, *Nothing Not Giving Messages* (London: Faber & Faber, 1982), 138.

²³ Farrell, 233.

²⁴ Max Saunders, *Self-Impression: Life Writing, Autobiografiction, and the Forms of Modern Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 5.

analysis of Morgan's collected works, including poems, plays, adaptations, essays and scrapbooks, also assists with the construction of life story but is further used to explore Morgan's creative demonstrations of love, highlighting the ways in which he responds to his surrounding socio-historical frameworks. The examination of Scotland's social history is supported throughout the thesis by research data, parliamentary acts and media reports, as well as material collected by Morgan and arranged in subject files. Jeffrey Meek's text *Queer Voices in Post-War Scotland* (2015) is duly significant, its development of oral histories and archival research informing the examination of a specifically Scottish, rather than British, response to homosexuality.

The thesis is organised into three chapters, with each chapter further divided into subsections. It is structured chronologically in relation to Morgan's biography rather than to his publications, although these timelines do often overlap, with each chapter covering three decades of Morgan's life. As a sequence such as *Love and a Life* (2003) demonstrates, Morgan's shift towards a more overtly autobiographical writing only truly occurs in the final decades of his life, reflecting in part Scotland's shifting social attitudes that enabled Morgan to be more candid about his sexuality and relationships. Understanding how Morgan's work and openness is affected by social contexts is crucial, but so, too, is the contextualisation of specific relationships or events. To use *Love and a Life* as an example, the sequence depicts relationships that occurred over a span of seventy years. The individual poems within the sequence help to form an understanding of the different loves by which Morgan was affected. It makes sense, therefore, to incorporate poems from *Love and a Life* when contextualising the relationships to which they refer, rather than performing a stand-alone examination of the sequence. As a final point on the structure of the thesis, the impact of Scotland's socio-historical contexts on Morgan's writing is key to understanding his work. By structuring the thesis chronologically and plotting Morgan's life story against the political, social, and cultural changes of Scotland as they occurred, a more comprehensive understanding of Morgan's life and his dialogue with love is achieved.

The first chapter, 'Morgan and Love in War', investigates Morgan's interaction with love in the context of war. With a focus on religious and social attitudes, perceptions of homosexuality in interwar Scotland are analysed in relation to Morgan's own understanding of

his sexuality as an adolescent. With consideration of the socio-historical and biographical contexts affecting Morgan in the 1930s and 1940s, a selected examination of Morgan's scrapbooks and his personal correspondence is performed. Through analysis of the scrapbooks' coded presentations of sexuality and the iconography of love and war, I argue that the scrapbooks are Morgan's first artistic response to not only his homosexuality but also to the overlapping experience of forbidden desire and the necessity of concealment. The correspondence received by Morgan during the Second World War from a selected group of close friends is analysed alongside poems written about these individuals. Together they form personal responses, plotted within their socio-historical contexts, to Morgan's sexuality. The paradoxical homosexual freedom experienced by Morgan while serving in the Royal Army Medical Corps during the Second World War is contextualised within a discussion of homosexuality in the military. The homosociality of war is also explored, both in terms of Morgan's personal experience and in his 1952 translation of *Beowulf*. Examining the cultural relativism of his translation alongside poems in which he intertextually refers to *Beowulf*, I argue that Morgan emphasises the homosociality of the original Old English poem, reflecting the fraternal kinship Morgan experienced during the Second World War. The final major text to be examined in this chapter is 'The New Divan' (1977). Performing a reappraisal of the sequence's 'subterranean' structure, a thematic examination of love and sex underpins my identification of 'The New Divan' with a journey of human experience, both personal and universal and built on biographical and Middle Eastern contexts.

Chapter Two, 'Love and Desire in the Fifties, Sixties, and Seventies', begins with a two-part response to the scrapbooks from the 1950s and 1960s. Firstly, Morgan's empathy for and affinity with individual literary figures referenced throughout the scrapbooks is considered. Hart Crane, Jean Genet, Marcel Proust, and Compton MacKenzie are examined in relation to their writing regarding homosexuality and the impression they made on Morgan, whose own writing about this subject in the post-war era remained ambiguous. Secondly, the public trials regarding homosexuality in the 1950s as documented in Morgan's collages are examined. The trials of Sir John Gielgud and Lord Montagu provide a backdrop to the social and legal response to homosexuality in mid-twentieth century Britain, through which the differences between England and Scotland regarding homosexual law reform are highlighted. Following this, the love sequence from *The Second Life* (1968) is analysed with reference to the major

romantic relationship of Morgan's life, which began in 1962. An examination of the sequence in relation to love's absence, both temporary and permanent, provides a basis for the chapter's final section which explores personal and universal grief in 'Moons of Jupiter' (1979), a sequence written one year after the death of Morgan's partner. I argue that the two poem-sequences assure the worthwhile triumph of love despite the challenge and devastation of loss.

In the final chapter, 'Translation, Adaptation, and Transformation', the effects of the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1980 on Scotland's socio-political landscape are examined. I argue that Morgan's love poetry from this period reflects the changing attitudes of the nation towards homosexuality. Its clandestine nature at the start of the decade reveals an apprehension regarding Scotland's political values and attitudes before the gradual incorporation of a specifically homosexual element, which is examined in a selection of poems from *Themes on a Variation* (1988). The poetic revelation of his homosexuality anticipates his 'coming out' in 1990, and Morgan's public role as a gay figure is examined in relation to the wider cultural representation of homosexuality in Scotland. Demonstrating Morgan's literary shift from the private to the public, Morgan's translations of *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1992) and *Phaedra* (2000) are analysed with focus on the gay subtexts that arise in the translations through the themes of shame, guilt, desire and suppression. I suggest that, when in dialogue with one another, the two texts emphasise a fundamental narrative in which moral, political, and social change is propelled by the power of truth. Through an examination of Morgan's personal correspondence, a depiction of the final significant relationship of Morgan's life and its revitalising impact on him following his cancer diagnosis in 1999 is formed. Concerning the final decade of Morgan's life, I argue that Morgan's response to his own mortality is underpinned by the crucial connection he highlights between love, creation, and energy. This is further demonstrated through an analysis of *A.D.: A Trilogy of Plays on the Life of Jesus Christ* (2000), *The Play of Gilgamesh* (2005) and 'Demon' (1999).

Chapter One: Morgan and Love in War

1.1. Introduction

In Edwin Morgan's 'Epilogue: Seven Decades', the retrospective composition that concludes his *Collected Poems* (1990), the poet navigates through seventy years of his life, pausing briefly upon significant and personal developments of each decade. His initial stanza describes how 'At ten I read Mayakovsky had died, / learned my first word of Russian, *lyublyu*' (*CP*, 594, ll. 1-2). It is telling of the poet's ever-questioning academic character that Morgan, at a young age, recognised the significance of the Soviet poet's death, but also noteworthy is the first Russian word he learnt, which translates into English as 'love'. The remainder of the stanza is suitably childlike in its repetitive frustration directed at his unnamed English teacher, 'So he was right? So I hated him!' (*CP*, 594, l. 7), and yet those first lines and their reference to love, the great elusive theme that runs throughout Morgan's work, are pertinent. Not until his forties did Morgan fully experience 'the lightning of love / [that] can strike / and strike / again' (*CP*, 146, ll. 72-5). Nevertheless, particular events and encounters that occurred in Morgan's adolescence prompted the stirrings of infatuation and adoration, invariably tied up with questions about his own sexuality.

This chapter, 'Morgan and Love in War', will contextualise the social and historical backdrop of early twentieth-century Scotland in relation to Morgan's adolescence, and the effects of family, religion and society on his own understanding of his sexuality. Following this, Morgan's place as a non-combatant soldier in the Royal Army Medical Corps in the Second World War will be examined. The poems written about this period, and the letters he received during this time, will help to form a depiction of Morgan as a young man experiencing his first relationships and as a soldier encountering the masculine territory of the Army in which homosexuality was an illegal practice. *Beowulf*, Morgan's 1952 translation of the Anglo-Saxon text that he considered to be 'in a sense my unwritten war poem',²⁵ will be analysed regarding its portrayal of homosociality in armed conflict. It will also be considered in relation to its suggested role as 'a palliative against the loneliness of having to live a secret life as a

²⁵ Edwin Morgan, *Beowulf* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2002), ix.

gay man in Glasgow in the late 1940s'.²⁶ While translating *Beowulf* acted as a substitute for original composition when Morgan was suffering from war-induced writer's block, 'The New Divan' (1977) transforms Morgan's wartime experience into a 100-poem sequence 'through a process of memory and recreation' (*NNGM*, 98). As David Kinloch acknowledges, the war that is present in the sequence is 'a gay man's war, one that cannot be articulated in the same manner as his heterosexual compatriots'.²⁷ 'The New Divan' will be the final major text analysed in this section, with focus on the sequence's depiction of love's poignancy and the visceral nature of sex amidst Morgan's abstract reflections on the histories and landscapes of war and violence.

1.2. Early Life

As described in James McGonigal's biography of Morgan, *Beyond the Last Dragon* (2010; 2012), in the same decade that he learnt of Mayakovsky's death and *lyublyu*, Morgan found himself 'more fascinated by the sexual exhibitionism of some of his male classmates than by the developing sexual appearance of the girls'.²⁸ Morgan, born in 1920, grew up in a society that considered homosexuality to be a psychiatric disorder, a culture of 'rigid gender typing' and 'rigorously enforced notions of masculinity and femininity'.²⁹ As Richard Finlay writes, 'the Scottish language of child-rearing was remarkably rich in its complexity and reveals the society's attitude to children - especially boys'.³⁰ Terms such as 'Sissy' or 'Nancy' accumulated meanings of effeminacy or homosexual inclination, and his father's response to the young poet's piano teacher made Morgan particularly aware of this. The teacher, Lex Allan, could well be regarded as Morgan's first known interaction with a man who was, 'in a sense' (*NNGM*, 152), out as a non-heterosexual. The 'very intelligent and widely read' (*NNGM*, 151) man introduced Morgan to writers such as Federico García Lorca, the gay poet and playwright whom Morgan would go on to translate in his collection *Rites of Passage*

²⁶ Chris Jones, 'While Crowding Memories Came: Edwin Morgan, Old English and Nostalgia', *Scottish Literary Review*, 4/2 (2012), 123-44, 124.

²⁷ David Kinloch, 'The Case of the Missing War: Edwin Morgan's "The New Divan"' in *Scottish Literary Review*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2012), 85-104, 101.

²⁸ James McGonigal, *Beyond the Last Dragon: A Life of Edwin Morgan* (Ross-shire: Sandstone Press Ltd, 2010; 2012), 46.

²⁹ Richard J. Finlay, *Modern Scotland 1914-2000* (London: Profile Books Ltd, 2005), 119.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 119-20.

(1976). Morgan recalls his father describing Allan as “‘all right, but he’s a bit of a jessy’”.³¹ Morgan suggests that ‘[my father] didn’t mean it in a very negative way’, explaining that a ‘jessy’ was deemed ‘slightly okay: a “pansy” was over the top, just too much. A “jessy” might be saved’.³² This comment on the necessity of ‘saving’ the effeminate man typifies interwar attitudes. Ambiguous gender identity was considered troubling, and Morgan’s homosexuality was not disclosed to those around him when he came to terms with it in his later teenage years. Morgan only declared his sexual orientation openly in a 1988 interview with Christopher Whyte, published two years later in *Nothing Not Giving Messages* (1990), despite friends and associates being made aware of it throughout his life.

The homosexual epithets described by Morgan in the anecdote about his father are similar to those explored in Jeffrey Meek’s text, *Queer Voices in Post-War Scotland* (2015), an examination of the socio-historical contexts surrounding homosexuality in Scotland. Meek analyses the ‘experiences of non-heterosexual men who lived, and loved, during a period when homosexuality attracted considerable disapproval’.³³ Although the oral history interviews included in *Queer Voices* depict experiences of men often a decade or two younger than Morgan, their narratives describe adolescence in ways similar to Morgan. One interviewee recalls the popular post-war representation of the homosexual as ‘talk[ing] in a funny voice [...] probably dressed as a woman [...] the whole effeminate thing’.³⁴ The flamboyant stereotype was embellished alongside other more pejorative representations, such as the ‘predatory paedophile’ and ‘the criminal’,³⁵ suggesting the apparent sexual deviancy of homosexuals. Another of Meek’s interviewees describes tabloid newspapers having a ‘kind of sensational, dirty, perverted kinda take on [homosexuality], so it reinforced your own self-disgust in many respects’.³⁶ Same-sex desire was, for the most part, an alienating concept,

³¹ Edwin Morgan, ‘Gay Writing in Scotland: An Interview with Edwin Morgan’, interviewed by James McGonigal for *Ethically Speaking: Voice and Values in Modern Scottish Writing*, eds. James McGonigal, Kirsten Stirling (New York: Rodopi, 2006), 139-54, 143.

³² Ibid.

³³ Jeffrey Meek, *Queer Voices in Post-War Scotland: Male Homosexuality, Religion and Society* (Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 5.

³⁴ Ibid., 59.

³⁵ Ibid., 62.

³⁶ Ibid., 72.

with Meek suggesting that the ‘absence of queer cultural references north of the border led to intense isolation for many’.³⁷

For Morgan, the frivolities of adolescent experimentation in his all-boys school were ‘joked about [...] it wasn’t taken all that seriously’ (*NNGM*, 147), just as Meek remarks that sexual contact within a peer group ‘appears not to have carried any significant stigma among the teenagers themselves’.³⁸ Morgan remarks that he doesn’t think he ‘consciously tried to’ (*NNGM*, 151) explain his sexuality to correspond with the wider context, but it did begin to cause personal anguish. Morgan recalls that ‘when I got to the end of the school years [...] I was aware that my interest was very strongly focused on boys, not girls, and it *did* begin to worry me’ (*NNGM*, 147). The ‘puritanical period’ he describes, in which he attempted to convince himself that his attraction to males was merely a phase, suggests a religious dimension underlying his feelings of ‘very strong guilt’ (*NNGM*, 147). Although Morgan had eschewed the Protestant faith through which he was raised by the age of sixteen (*BTL*, 49), his exposure to the Church and its conservative position from an early age would have most likely been absorbed, both consciously and subconsciously. Religious attitudes towards nonheterosexuality were clear, with Meek suggesting that, even in the post-war decades, the Protestant Church’s declarations on the immorality of homosexuality ‘would have offered non-heterosexual men of faith little hope that a sea change of opinion from Scotland’s religious orders might be forthcoming’.³⁹

Morgan writes infrequently about his early life, although his sequence ‘Pieces of Me’ (2002) focuses on childhood moments. He chronicles his mother’s troubling advice to ‘always take / what a drunk man gives you’⁴⁰, and characterises ‘my well-named bully / Harry Maule’ who ‘followed, waylaid me, / punched me punched me / never said why’ (*DON*, 33, l. 19-23). In his final poetry collection, *Dreams and Other Nightmares* (2010), in which ‘Pieces of Me’ is published, the poet revisits a series of recurring dreams that troubled him later in life, with one

³⁷ Ibid., 4.

³⁸ Ibid., 78.

³⁹ Ibid., 137.

⁴⁰ Edwin Morgan, ‘Pieces of Me’, *Dreams and Other Nightmares: New and Uncollected Poems 1954-2009* (Glasgow: Mariscat Press, 2010), 33-8, l. 10-1.

of them making a sombre reference to his childhood. The four-poem sequence, 'Dreams and Other Nightmares', has a disquieting nature, opening with the hallucinatory nightmare of 'Horsemen' before further depicting Morgan's own sense of old-age vulnerability, characterised by memory loss in 'Norwegian' and the fear of being unprepared in 'Heckler'. In 'Arran', Morgan returns to his adolescence and the isolating nature of his sexuality, recalling a scene that is unsettling in a manner separate from the other poems.

Each of the dreams were described to James McGonigal in 2007. Morgan, who was by this point in a care home, found it difficult to 'concentrate long and sharply enough to complete a poem' (*BTLD*, 9) due to his medication. As such, McGonigal drafted Morgan's dream-narratives for later amendment. Compared to the accounts which formed 'Horsemen', 'Heckler', and 'Norwegian', McGonigal writes that Morgan's initial narrative for 'Arran' appeared 'self-censored, too personal or perhaps based on an actual childhood event' (*BTLD*, 7). Whether or not the poem is based on reality, Morgan having been 'unforthcoming' (*BTLD*, 7) when questioned, 'Arran' draws upon homosexuality in adolescence and the underlying impressions of solitude, concealment, and guilt. The poem's narrative, of the young Morgan 'on holiday with my parents again' (*DON*, 12, l. 1) formulates a setting of familial safety before describing Morgan 'meeting someone quite casually and going for a walk round the island' (*DON*, 12, l. 3). While the events that occur are oblique, affirming to an extent McGonigal's comment on the poem's self-censorship, it is revealed that Morgan and the man 'stopping / to rest in the shade [...] did not remain a pleasant affair' (*DON*, 12, ll. 4-5). The encounter is compared to 'a Jocelyn Brooke novel' (*DON*, 12, l. 6), a gay writer whose first novel, *The Scapegoat* (1948), focuses on the homoerotic relationship between an uncle and nephew. Indeed, there is something covertly sexual about 'Arran': something unspoken is occurring between a young boy and the man who is 'close to the earth', wearing trousers that are 'hot / and red' (*DON*, 12, ll. 7-8).

The presence of Morgan's family further creates an underlying tension, the final lines revealing them to be 'elsewhere, in the background' (*DON*, 12, l. 9). The parents' physical detachment from their son can be interpreted in several ways. While it may symbolise the adolescent desire to separate personal growth from the protective glare of one's family, it could alternatively imply a certain blame directed by Morgan at his parents. The parental

protection naturally assumed by a child is compromised in 'Arran'. Morgan is left to 'rest in the shade' with the 'dark and heavy set' stranger (*DON*, 12, ll. 5-7). His parents appear unconcerned by this, demonstrated by their choice to remain physically separate. However, when considering Morgan's early inclination to conceal his homosexuality, the detached parents may represent Morgan's attempt to hide from them his interaction with the older man and the associated emotions that potentially developed from this encounter. The emotional composure that Morgan's mother commonly displayed is commented on in 'The Coals' (1990) in which the rarity of her 'tears shocked / me like a blow' (*CP*, 421, ll. 6-7). The poem continues, describing her belief in an immersive self-discipline that helped 'you [keep] the waste and darkness back, / by acts and acts and acts and acts and acts' (*CP*, 421, ll. 10-1). Regarding one's feelings, this necessity for self-control illustrates the emotional impassivity that spilled over from the Victorian period into early twentieth-century Britain. The reserved society in which Morgan grew up would have potentially affected how he came to terms with his sexuality and his lifelong decision to conceal it from his parents. Morgan believed that his family were never aware of his homosexuality, although McGonigal suggests 'he may have mistaken their reticence for ignorance' (*BTLTD*, 47). While reticence suggests a quiet acceptance in a way that ignorance does not, implying a desire simply to leave the matter alone, the emotional restraint and 'developed resilience' (*BTLTD*, 207) of Morgan's parents leads to an understanding that the poet 'learned both love and joy in a hard school' (*CP*, 421, l. 17). Fear, guilt and confusion underpin the poem, and yet according to McGonigal, Morgan was left with the notion that 'emotion [...] was what other people indulged in - the Morgans [...] were expected to cope without tears or complaint' (*BTLTD*, 207). The mother and the father 'in the background' thus symbolise the emotional barrier between parents and son. Friction caused by personal secrets kept from family would later be echoed in Morgan's poem 'Glasgow Green' (1967), in which 'family love' is paired with 'loneliness' (*CP*, 168, ll. 41-2).

1.3. Scrapbooks I

James McGonigal suggests that:

[Morgan's] early life, which was trammelled, lonely and in many ways frustrating, also tells us much about the limitations of the culture he lived in, and how he strove to explore through words, verses, fantastic fictions

and a questioning of everything - ideas, codes, cultures, identities - the worth of his own inner life of poetic intuition.

(*BTLD*, 13).

Although his stories and essays were being commended at this time (*BTLD*, 53), Morgan's exploration and questioning of the world was not limited exclusively to his writing. Between the years 1931 and 1966, he compiled and expanded upon sixteen scrapbooks, now kept in Archives and Special Collections at the University of Glasgow and each carefully labelled with their start and rearrangement dates. The scrapbooks collectively stretch across three and a half thousand pages, with Morgan developing a bricolage of prints, drawings, handwritten extracts of prose and verse, personal photographs, and clippings from articles, novels, and poetry. He creates a sense of controlled chaos, carefully juxtaposing the diverse range of his collected material across the double page arrangements. Morgan states that, in the period before and after the Second World War, 'Surrealism excited me' (*NNGM*, 54), and the scrapbooks clearly demonstrate Morgan's appreciation of the avant-garde movement. Surrealism promotes a fascination with 'language's ability to transcend itself, to communicate what [is] essentially incommunicable', as well as 'the image's ability to transcend physical reality, to portray what [is] essentially unimaginable'.⁴¹ The necessity for an experimental revelation of thought through art and literature appears throughout the scrapbook collection.

In some respects, the scrapbooks bear similarity with Morgan's *Newspoems* (1987). His description of the poems, 'a sort of collage poetry' arranged 'in such a way that a message not intended in the original context suddenly appears' (*NNGM*, 52), parallels the scrapbooks' overall effect. Morgan's supplementing notes for *Newspoems* align the collection with 'found art' (*NNGM*, 262), described by Ian Wallace as 'a literal translation from the French *objet trouvé*, meaning objects or products with non-art functions that are placed into an art context and made part of an artwork'.⁴² A connection certainly exists between found art and Morgan's scrapbook arrangements, despite the artistic term typically referring to three-

⁴¹ Willard Bohn, *The Rise of Surrealism: Cubism, Dada, and the Pursuit of the Marvelous* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 142.

⁴² Ian Wallace, 'The History of the Found Object in Art' in *ArtSpace* (20 April 2014) http://www.artspace.com/magazine/art_101/art_market/the-history-of-the-found-object-in-art-52224 [accessed 05.02.2016].

dimensional objects such as Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917). Morgan's scrapbooks explore the 'graphic space' (*NNGM*, 262) of found art. The meanings that appear in his arrangement of abstract material connect him with the Surrealists' exploration of the concept and their belief 'in the efficacy of powerful subconscious associations with objects', which in turn create 'an added level of theoretical obfuscation'.⁴³ Morgan's connection with the Surrealist movement further captures his intent to unite imagination with information. The scrapbooks contain an extensive collection of ephemeral media alongside discourse dedicated to science, invention and technology, emphasising Morgan's awareness of the world developing around him and his belief that 'man must react, as man, to his whole environment' (E, 14).

The scrapbooks can be admired on a purely aesthetic basis but, like Morgan's *Newspoems*, there are seemingly endless associations to be made in his assemblages, his pages creating an 'oblique imagistic commentary on the moral complexities of modernity'.⁴⁴ Morgan writes that, 'the poet is the man who traditionally finds links and resemblances, dissolves rather than erects barriers, moves among the various worlds of his time' (E, 17), and his scrapbooks show his earliest demonstration of this, albeit as visual artist rather than as poet. The multifarious form captures Morgan's poetic desire to confront the 'various worlds' with one another 'in such a way as to throw some light on both' (E, 17). Alongside their unification of different spheres of knowledge, the scrapbooks weave together public and private dimensions of the self. As Katherine Ott et. al determine in 'An Introduction to the History of Scrapbooks', scrapbooks often function as a 'supplement to individual identity',⁴⁵ seeking to 'manipulate meaning through rupture and the reconstruction that follows'⁴⁶ as the reader explores the individual meanings and connecting narratives of the items on each page. Ott. et al suggest that, although a reader of a scrapbook can 'temporarily impose a logical pattern on a scrapbook's contents', without input from the scrapbook maker 'any interpretation is bound to be as inconstant and

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ James McGonigal, Sarah Hepworth, 'Ana Morgana, Morgiana: A Poet's Scrapbooks as Emblems of Identity', *Scottish Literary Review*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2012), 1-24, 12.

⁴⁵ Katherine Ott, Susan Tucker, Patricia P. Buckler, 'An Introduction to the History of Scrapbooks', *The Scrapbook in American Life*, eds. Susan Tucker, Katherine Ott, Patricia P. Buckler (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 1-25, 3.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 16.

ephemeral as the scrapbooks themselves'.⁴⁷ This is, however, not necessarily a negative factor of the scrapbook form. The restructuring of context and meaning offers freedom to the reader to explore subtle revelations of the scrapbook maker, the 'mass assembling of individual examples'⁴⁸ perhaps eventually revealing hidden parts of the self.

The fluid individualism of scrapbooks could be what makes them 'one of the most enduring yet simultaneously changing cultural forms of the last two centuries', in which 'the task and function remain constant, while the form and structure alter under the influence of aesthetics and new materials'.⁴⁹ The gendered perception of scrapbooks in the nineteenth century as a trifling feminine craft means that the form has suffered from critical disparagement,⁵⁰ not least because of the overriding rejection that women's experiences could provide valuable evidence for contemporary life. While Amy Mecklenburg-Faenger suggests that these attitudes 'still shape perceptions of scrapbooking practices',⁵¹ the cultural value of scrapbooking has found recognition in modern scholarship. Although lack of discernible context often makes them difficult sources from which to work, what scrapbooks often reveal is their maker responding to his or her cultural moment and placing themselves 'in meaningful relationship with the rest of the world'.⁵² Furthermore, although scrapbooking is rarely a form of straightforward autobiographical practice, the careful constructions of chosen ephemera can be read as 'substitutes for expressions of the self not allowed elsewhere'.⁵³ By deliberately composing and making sense of one's life through ephemera and other material, the scrapbook maker concocts an impression of mastery over the world despite any vulnerability felt in their day to day life.

In the scrapbooks of those who were, in some way, marginalised by the society through which they lived, this sense of command in the face of vulnerability is most evident. Such scrapbooks contribute to the uncovering of hidden histories left undocumented in authoritative records,

⁴⁷ Ibid., 24-5.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 1-2.

⁵⁰ See: Amy Mecklenburg-Faenger, 'Trifles, Abominations, and Literary Gossip: Gendered Rhetoric and Nineteenth-Century Scrapbooks', *Genders*, vol. 55 (March 2012), <https://www.colorado.edu/gendersarchive1998-2013/2012/02/01/trifles-abominations-and-literary-gossip-gendered-rhetoric-and-nineteenth-century> [accessed 01.09.2019].

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ott et. al, 1.

⁵³ Ott et. al, 3.

highlighted in *The Scrapbook in American Life* (2006) by examinations of scrapbooks compiled by a nineteenth-century prostitute, Monte Glover, and two African Americans, Fletcher Henderson and Juanita Page Johnson, who both lived in early twentieth-century America. In these examples, social segregation of race and class is revealed through the individuals' attempt to either identify with groups from which they were barred, as with Glover,⁵⁴ or 'hid[e] the world from which they were excluded',⁵⁵ as with Henderson and Johnson.

Other studies have explored queer narratives in scrapbooks, examining the lives of those whose private desires were publicly restricted by law. In 'Speculating on Scrapbooks, Sex and Desire: Issues in Lesbian History', Ruth Ford examines the scrapbooks of Monte Punshon, an Australian teacher born in 1882 who came out publicly at the age of 103. Ford suggests that Punshon's compositions reveal 'the ways in which a woman with same-sex desires affirmed a sense of self through available representations'⁵⁶ during the twentieth century. Displaying pictures of androgynous women favouring a masculine style and newspaper clippings that 'rejected traditional feminine activities',⁵⁷ the scrapbooks invite discussion on the ways in which 'meanings of modernity' were being 'renegotiated and redefined by women such as Monte in the context of their lesbian/same-sex desires'.⁵⁸

In "'Boy Crazy": Carl Van Vechten's Queer Collection', Jonathan Weinberg explores queer narratives in Carl Van Vechten's scrapbook volumes, the compositions notably differing to those found in Punshon's scrapbooks. Punshon defined her same-sex desires through the 'older language of female passionate friendship and romantic love',⁵⁹ and her 'unease about taking on a sexual label'⁶⁰ resonates in her scrapbooks in which women are elevated through their independent role in the modern world rather than being eroticised. In comparison, Van Vechten, an American writer and photographer associated with the Harlem Renaissance,

⁵⁴ Carol Bowers, 'The Secret Scrapbook of a "Soiled Dove"' in *The Scrapbook in American Life* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 155-73.

⁵⁵ Susan Tucker, 'Telling Particular Stories: Two African American Memory Books' in *The Scrapbook in American Life* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 220-234, 234.

⁵⁶ Ruth Ford, 'Speculating on Scrapbooks, Sex and Desire: Issues in Lesbian History', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 22, iss. 106 (1996), 111-26, 118.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 120.

incorporated private male erotica in his scrapbooks, alongside collages of queer ephemera and newspaper articles documenting homosexual assault. Captions from newspapers and magazines are ‘spliced in a such a way as to allow a lewd or homosexual reference to appear out of the most seemingly innocuous texts’.⁶¹ The cultural historian James Polchin suggests that, ‘while the campy collages in the scrapbooks show [...] a playful and ironic sensibility about his homosexuality, the queer true crime newspaper clippings of assault, strangulation, and mutilation reflect a darker and insensitive reality’.⁶² While Punshon’s scrapbooks at times suggest ‘the sense of isolation and intense loneliness in which women’s same-sex love often resulted’,⁶³ Van Vechten’s compilations blur the lines of ‘personal desires and public life’,⁶⁴ with both works helping to create ‘a collective history of queer experience and a documentation of suffering that needs to be preserved’.⁶⁵

It is with these surrounding contexts in mind that Morgan’s own scrapbooks can be read. Unlike Van Vechten, whose scrapbook subject is definitively determined by Weinberg to be ‘homosexuality’,⁶⁶ Morgan’s extensive collection does not overtly prioritise a queer narrative, but it is a recurring, prevalent theme. Like ‘The New Divan’, Morgan’s long poem described as ‘a complex whole that lack[s] adequate signposting for readers’,⁶⁷ the scrapbooks are underpinned by what Morgan terms ‘an emotional structure’ (NNGM, 136), at times recognisable but only with a knowledge or understanding of the specific life of the maker, or poet, himself. Just as David Kinloch suggests that ‘it is the specific character of the gay affairs detailed in “The New Divan” that sheds light on what some have recognised as the shifting imprecise, enigmatic qualities of the individual poems’,⁶⁸ so, too, does biographical context help to unpack the coded material of the scrapbooks. By tracing the subjects of love, desire and war and their subsequent amalgamation alongside the biographical and socio-historical

⁶¹ Jonathan Weinberg, ‘“Boy Crazy”: Carl Van Vechten’s Queer Collection’, *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, vol. 7, iss. 2 (1994), 25-49, 32.

⁶² James Polchin, qtd. in ‘Before Stonewall: Secret scrapbooks uncover how gay people were criminalised’, *The Irish Times* (27 June 2019).

⁶³ Ford, 120.

⁶⁴ Polchin, (27 June 2019).

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Weinberg, 29.

⁶⁷ James McGonigal, ‘Recovering the Divan: Structure in Edwin Morgan’s Long Poem’, *PN Review*, vol. 36, no. 6 (July/August 2010), 54-58, 57.

⁶⁸ Kinloch, 99.

contexts that help to inform Morgan's scrapbooks, certain narratives developed in the volumes can be better understood.

McGonigal and Hepworth suggest that for Morgan the 1930s were not 'a fraught decade [of] economic and political crises' but instead a 'time of exciting technological, scientific and artistic change'.⁶⁹ This is highlighted in the first scrapbook. Headlines such as 'Discovery of Amazonian Tribe', 'Bringing the Atom Together', and 'Science Seeks the Elixir of Youth'⁷⁰ each promote the revelatory age and emphasise Morgan's interest in 'what does change' rather than 'in what has been and what is constant' (*NNGM*, 131). In the second scrapbook, a full article dated 1934 reports an 'Amazing Experiment with "Artificial Heart"'.⁷¹ It documents the early stages of biological transplants and scientific advancement, but may also be Morgan's first noted interaction with the idea of a 'second life', a phrase used throughout the article which would become the title of his 1968 collection. The scrapbooks' three-dimensional quality, with layered pages and the various newspaper clippings that hide beneath flaps for the reader to open, emphasises exploration and discovery. The books are at once local and global, personal and public, the vast collection of material from the often-separate worlds of science and art affirming Morgan's desire to 'join things together rather than split them apart' (*NNGM*, 53).

The scrapbooks establish and develop countless imagistic streams of consciousness, and the iconography of love, desire and war regularly emerges across the pages. Morgan's first volume, dated 1931 to 1957, opens with a newspaper clipping proclaiming 'OUTER WORLD AND INNER LIFE', with the Bible quoted underneath: 'By these things men live / In all these is the life of my spirit' (Isaiah 38:16).⁷² The dialogue of contrast and connection existing between the observable environment and internal experience is significant. In this first scrapbook, prose and poetry of love is regularly distributed among the seemingly random scattering of images and text. On a page of dense text about Babylonian mathematical astronomy, verse extracts are embedded such as 'For in my mynde, of all mankynde I love but

⁶⁹ Ibid., 2.

⁷⁰ Archives & Special Collections, University of Glasgow Library; MS Morgan C/1-2.

⁷¹ Ibid., C/2, 164.

⁷² Ibid., C/1, 215.

you alone' from the Scottish folk ballad 'The Nut Brown Maid'. Alongside this is an excerpt from Emanuel Swedenborg's 1758 text, *Heaven and Hell*.⁷³ A few pages later, botanical reports and textbook images of the planarian worm and cyclopic frog tadpole are juxtaposed with clippings of Renaissance poetry and drama, such as 'lust and forgetfulness have been among us', 'for here though death hath end their misery' and 'his heart stabb'd in with knife is reft of life'.⁷⁴ Above an image of a robotic body with the mask of a human face is another clipping from *Heaven and Hell*: 'for the spirit of man is altogether such as his love is'.⁷⁵ Here Morgan contrasts the tangible realities of science and nature and the abstract concepts of love, faith, and mortality. Their juxtaposition highlights the scrapbooks' initial presentation of 'outer world and inner life', the phrase from the opening newspaper clipping representing the outer spheres of science and knowledge and the inner spheres of visceral emotion and belief. It further hints at, as McGonigal describes, 'the ferment of a young creative mind that is encountering, in a direct and emotional way, new words, images and ideas' (*BTL*D, 42).

In the early scrapbooks, Morgan records handwritten fragments of his dreams and here again an affinity with Surrealism is suggested. André Breton states in his first Surrealist manifesto that he has 'always been amazed that the ordinary observer lends so much more credence and attaches so much importance to waking events than to those occurring in dreams'.⁷⁶ The cultural movement took insight from Sigmund Freud's text *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), which suggests that imagination is released when the unconscious is probed. In one extract, Morgan describes a dream of dogs fighting and the feeling of 'peculiarly poignant intensity, my own sadness deep and real'.⁷⁷ Two pages later, another fragment recalls 'the indescribable oppression of a grave'.⁷⁸ Taking into account the idea of dreams reflecting the unconscious, the imagery of fighting animals and the claustrophobia of death could relay Morgan's own concerns of mortality and the impending war, with both dreams dated '1939'.

⁷³ Ibid., C/1, 216. 'The Nut Brown Maid' in *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, compiled by Bishop Thomas Percy (1765); Emanuel Swedenborg, *Heaven and Its Wonders and Hell: From Things Heard and Seen* (1758).

⁷⁴ Ibid., C/1, 223-4. Thomas Middleton, *Women Beware Women* (1657); Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587); Thomas Norton, Thomas Sackville, *Gorboduc* (1561).

⁷⁵ Ibid., C/1, 295.

⁷⁶ André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, transl. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 10.

⁷⁷ ASC MS Morgan C/1, 350.

⁷⁸ Ibid., C/1, 352.

Around this point, the scrapbooks begin to show visual indications of the period in which Morgan was working. Also dated ‘1939’, a double page spread includes a background filled by an image of a burning, possibly bombed, structure. On top of this, a newspaper photo is placed of an injured, possibly dead, male with the words *ehéu uidete*, which translates from Latin as ‘alas’. A picture of a clock is embedded amongst these images, alongside a cutting from Thomas Lovell Beddoes’ poem ‘Life a Glass Window’ (1890): ‘Uncourteous Death / Knuckles the pane and ---’.⁷⁹ A certain quality of *memento mori* exists in these pages, especially concerning the pictorial representation of time and the personification of death in Beddoes’ poetry. The images of the injured man and the burned down building suggest that Morgan is consciously intertwining mortality and war, further highlighted in a surreal poetic on modern warfare created through a newspaper cuttings collage:

	War		a highly practicable experiment		Say Goodbye	
	You are free to choose any butcher you like					
	At this tragic moment		twentieth-century culture		Depressed and miserable	
BLACK						
	How long				ARTIFICIAL LIMBS	
	It does not matter how long you have suffered					
	a perfect rest, secure and deep		expressions of sympathy and floral tributes received in			
	their recent bereavement					
	Can’t anything be done to help the blind?		⁸⁰			

Terms such as ‘experiment’, ‘butcher’, and ‘artificial limbs’ suggest war to be a scientific observation on the human body and self, while the semantic field of mourning depicts its emotional realities. The connection between death and war is further emphasised by a similar word collage in Scrapbook Four, the words ‘nightmare nightmare nightmare’ reverberating from its middle section. A print of Goya’s etching *Bury Them and Be Silent* from his series *The Disasters of War* (1810-14) surrounds the collage, alongside pictures of whale ribs and a human skull, all symbolic of mortality.⁸¹

The scrapbooks frequently include media depictions of the atomic bomb, particularly in those created or rearranged in the 1940s. In one scrapbook, a photograph of Hiroshima’s aftermath

⁷⁹ Ibid., C/1, 379-80.

⁸⁰ Ibid., C/1, 390.

⁸¹ Ibid., C/4, 474.

in 1945 is positioned next to a 1948 newspaper clipping advertising a children's 'make your own atom bomb' toy and a 1947 report of the 'A-Bomb Day Festival', which commemorated the anniversary of Hiroshima with fireworks.⁸² The photograph of Hiroshima emphasises the insensitivity of the clippings, and this juxtaposition appears again in the eighth scrapbook with an increased sense of gravity. A picture of the Nagasaki atomic bomb is positioned next to a newspaper clipping asking that we 'hear no more [...] of this loose talk of "weighty morals" and "legal" objections to atomic warfare'.⁸³ Morgan's composition shows that, despite the devastation of the Second World War, the media still attempted to reinforce the belief of destruction as a necessary means to an end. Although Morgan's time in the forces encouraged personal liberation, the scrapbooks accentuate the pacifism that underpinned his initial intention to register as a conscientious objector to the war.⁸⁴

The collation of newspaper articles and photographs referencing war serves to make it a more prominent theme than that of love, and understandably so considering the decades in which Morgan created his scrapbooks. However, the scrapbooks present the overlapping of the subject matters before his writing did. The fourth scrapbook introduces Morgan's own photography, in which pictures of his war travels are positioned among prints from newspapers and magazines. Images of those Morgan befriended in the Royal Army Medical Corps are included, and on those that embed pictures of Cosgrove, described in *Love and a Life* as 'my closest companion that burning year on the Lebanese coast' (*LL*, 21, l. 1), the collision of love and war is most evident.

Above a photograph of the uniformed Cosgrove, a man with whom Morgan recalls sharing a 'totally unphysical' but 'intense friendship' (*NNGM*, 150), a handwritten extract reads 'For luff of Cosgrove, men tellis me, He tripped quhill he tint his panton...'.⁸⁵ The extract is taken from William Dunbar's poem 'Of a Dance in the Quenis Chalmer' (c. 1508), although Morgan replaces 'for luff of Musgraeffe', the 'maesteresse' from the original text,⁸⁶ with 'for luff of

⁸² *Ibid.*, C/7, 1276.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, C/8, 1440.

⁸⁴ Chris Jones, 'Edwin Morgan in Conversation', *PN Review*, vol. 31, no. 2 (Nov/Dec 2004), 47-51, 47-8.

⁸⁵ ASC MS Morgan, C/4, 612.

⁸⁶ William Dunbar, 'Of a Dance in the Quenis Chalmer' in *William Dunbar: Selected Poems*, ed. Priscilla Bawcutt (Harlow: Longman, 1996), 293-4, ll. 26-9.

Cosgrove'. The sixteenth-century version references 'Dunbar the Makar' who 'hoppet lyk a pillie wanton, / for luff of Musgraeffe'.⁸⁷ Although Dunbar's self-reference is not in Morgan's extract, he was likely aware of it when selecting lines, having written on the poem in his 1952 essay 'Dunbar and the Language of Poetry'. Taking this into account, the handwritten extract shows Morgan consciously replacing Dunbar as both the writer of the poem and as the figure in the text who dances for Musgraeffe's affections, or in this case, Cosgrove. By choosing this material, Morgan demonstrates his desire to present in a physical form the extent of his feelings for Cosgrove, as Dunbar does for Musgraeffe. However, the ellipsis he adds at the end of the extract suggests hesitance or the knowledge that this must remain a fantasy. Morgan never attempted to express his feelings for Cosgrove, knowing 'right away that it wasn't going to be reciprocated' (*NNGM*, 150).

A smaller print of Cosgrove's photograph is located four pages later in the scrapbook. The two pages that include the picture capture Morgan's deliberate entwining of love and war. With the first photograph, Morgan includes an extract from *Atom Science News* that claims, 'the atom bomb could kill people at a cost of £1 a head - a grotesquely cheap means of extermination'.⁸⁸ The second photograph is positioned underneath a print from Keith Vaughan's 1940s series 'Destruction of the Human City', a response to urban desolation following the Second World War air raids. For Morgan, the depth of emotion he felt for Cosgrove is invariably tied up with the atrocities of the war in which they met. The repeated juxtaposition of Cosgrove's portrait amidst the media response and artistic representation of war emphasises this further. On this later page, Morgan includes a handwritten extract from George Meredith's collection of sonnets, *Modern Love* (1891): 'Unnatural? My dear, these things are life: And life, some think, is worthy of the Muse'.⁸⁹ The quotation could, in this context, be reflecting on either love or war. Morgan's love for Cosgrove is inherently connected to his illicit sexuality, the pervading conviction during wartime being that there was something somewhat unnatural about nonheterosexuality. Similarly, the scrapbooks' emphasis on war's atrocities alongside Morgan's initial objection in serving suggests that he could be associating Meredith's line

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 48, ll. 22-6.

⁸⁸ ASC MS Morgan, C/4, 612.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, C/4, 616.

with the unnatural creation of atomic warfare. Love and war act as the ‘muse’ for Morgan’s poetry both separately and together, following Meredith’s statement that ‘these things are life’. In the scrapbook that includes photographs of Cosgrove, Albrecht Altdorfer’s painting *Die Alexanderschlacht* (1529), the Battle of Alexander, is positioned alongside an extract from Jane Austen’s novel *Persuasion* (1817):

It stood the record of many sensations of pain, once severe but now softened;
and of some instances of relenting feeling, some breathings of friendship and
reconciliation, which could never be looked for again, and which could never
cease to be dear.⁹⁰

For Morgan, the Second World War sparked the beginning of emotionally intense friendships and relationships, reflected upon in his collection *Love and a Life*. The first poem’s opening line, ‘Those and These’, lists Morgan’s ‘loves of sixty years’ - ‘Frank, Jean, Cosgrove, John, Malcolm, Mark’ (*LL*, 6, l. 1). While the latter three relationships occurred within a period covering almost fifty years, the first three introduced were people with whom Morgan felt a great connection either in interwar Glasgow or in the Royal Army Medical Corps. Collectively, Frank, Jean, and Cosgrove were important figures in Morgan’s life for less than a decade. Being selected for ‘Those and These’, in a collection that is primarily a sustained reflection on the past, emphasises the significance of first love in young adulthood that can, as Austen writes, ‘never cease to be dear’. The scrapbooks explore the interconnection of love and war before Morgan’s writing does. Their intertwining appears most evident when surrounded by implications of biography, suggesting that for Morgan in this period, war and love were inextricably bound together. It further presents the interconnection of the public and the personal for Morgan at this time, the Second World War providing the setting for his own internal conflict of desire and frustration.

While the arrangement of textual clippings and photographs of Cosgrove imply Morgan’s sexual orientation, the scrapbooks provide more conspicuous allusions to his illicit homosexuality. Miniscule artistic photographs of topless male bodybuilders are frequently embedded in the pages of almost every volume, the greyscale pictures easily disguised amongst newspaper articles and magazine prints. The sixth scrapbook repeats the

⁹⁰ Ibid., C/4, 651a.

camouflaging of uncovered men on a larger scale, a black-and-white photograph of a nude man hidden in a tree being placed amidst a double-page spread of monochromatic articles and pictures of forestry.⁹¹ Images of men and of the male form regularly occur across the pages, with a notable frequency when compared with Morgan's representation of women. A double page spread entitled 'THE EVAL ORGIA' includes a picture of a statuesque male body, his head replaced with the somewhat phallic cut-out of a church steeple.⁹² A sexually charged, animalistic quality exists in these two pages, characteristic of Morgan's visual representation of men. In comparison to the male's effect on the composition, one of the only photographs of a woman used in this arrangement is a black-and-white headshot of Rita Hayworth. The elegance of her portrait highlights the pages' separate representations of men and women, the tasteful aesthetic of female beauty contrasted with the eroticism of the sexualised male form.

Morgan uses the scrapbooks' bricolage style to experiment with different visual portrayals of men, the technique suggesting that he felt it necessary to conceal his sexuality. Just as his love poems often deploy the second-person pronoun to obscure the male presence, the scrapbooks' layered composition allows him to hide in plain sight his preference for men. However, although Morgan disguises his homosexuality in a number of ways, his codes are not indecipherable. As his replacement of 'Musgraeffe' with 'Cosgrove' highlights in his Dunbar extract, Morgan's masked references to his sexuality are easily revealed to a reader aware of the material's original implications. The first two scrapbooks include pictures of St. Sebastian,⁹³ described by Colin Dickey as 'the patron saint of secrets hiding in plain sight, secrets that are invariably about the ecstatic, erotic aspect of death, the beauty of youth impaled by arrows'.⁹⁴ Morgan's inclusion of the saint prompts a link with Van Vechten's scrapbooks, who is similarly 'drawn to the legend of St. Sebastian'⁹⁵ when evoking gay subtexts in history and art. Since the nineteenth century St. Sebastian has been considered a gay icon, with Oscar Wilde adopting the name 'Sebastian' after being convicted for sodomy, suggesting that he felt an affinity with the tortured saint. Sebastian's image is pertinent to both Morgan's sexuality and the notion of secrecy or concealment, but the pictures of the saint would not necessarily be

⁹¹ Ibid., C/6, 827-8.

⁹² Ibid., C/6, 909-10.

⁹³ ASC MS Morgan, C/1-2, 26; 333.

⁹⁴ Colin Dickey, *Afterlives of the Saints* (Cave Creek: Unbridled Books, 2012), 131.

⁹⁵ Weinberg, 36.

associated with homosexuality if the reader were unfamiliar with Sebastian's narrative in recent centuries. Another notable homosexual figure located in the scrapbooks is Socrates, Morgan having included the complete poem 'Sokrates und Alkibiades' (1799) by Friedrich Hölderlin at the beginning of Scrapbook 4.⁹⁶ The poem's inclusion in its original German form highlights again the notion of obscured knowledge in the scrapbooks. The first verse translates in English as: 'Why, holy Socrates, do you pay homage / To this youth constantly? Do you not know anything greater? / Why do your eyes look upon him / With love, as upon gods?'⁹⁷ This reference to the philosopher's love of male beauty is relatively unambiguous but may be overlooked if the reader of the scrapbooks is unfamiliar with the poem or the German language. These examples present Morgan's attempt to conceal the references to his sexuality, but only to a certain extent. To the well-versed reader, the scrapbooks reveal relatively frequent textual references to homosexuality, emphasised further by the recurring imagery of the male body.

Small sections of the scrapbooks further reveal the underlying anguish of concealment. On one page, a print of Albrecht Dürer's *Adam and Eve* (1504) is positioned next to a newspaper cutting, 'DEPENDS WHAT YOU MEAN BY LOVE', with a portrait underneath of a man and a photograph of a bodybuilder lifting a dumbbell.⁹⁸ The composition of the page creates a dialogue between the Abrahamic creation myth and Morgan's sexuality. It covertly responds to the Biblical condemnation of homosexuality, with Leviticus 20:18 stating that, 'If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death'.⁹⁹ On another page, amongst cut-out pictures of men with half-hidden faces, Morgan handwrites an extract from Søren Kierkegaard's philosophical work *Either/Or* (1843). It asks, 'Do you know that there comes a midnight house when everyone has to throw off his mask?', the last line stating that 'he who cannot love is the most unhappy man of all'.¹⁰⁰ The demonstration of forbidden love in this material is significant and further prevalent in another work of Morgan's from this era.

⁹⁶ ASC MS Morgan, C/4, 464.

⁹⁷ Friedrich Hölderlin, 'Sokrates und Alkibiades', *Great German Poems of the Romantic Era: A Dual Language Book*, ed. Stanley Appelbaum, transl. Stanley Appelbaum (New York: Dover Publications, 1995), 53.

⁹⁸ ASC MS Morgan, C/7, 995.

⁹⁹ *New American Standard Bible* (New York: Collins World, 1973).

¹⁰⁰ ASC MS Morgan, C/8, 1439-40.

A decade after the war Morgan wrote *The Cape of Good Hope* (1955), which he describes as coming out of ‘a very desperate phase’ in which ‘alienation was the keynote [...] solitude and the alienation of solitude’ (*NNGM*, 47). In one section, ‘A Dream at the Mysterious Barricades’, Morgan cinematically sweeps across ‘Mayakovsky, the revolver, the room’ (*CP*, 71, l. 453), locating the poet at the scene of his suicide. Mayakovsky is positioned behind the ‘barring / Window-glass that blocked him from the stirring / And sparrow-jaunty Moscow streets of spring’ (*CP*, 71, ll. 455-7), the imagery of the barricade representative of the isolation underpinning the poem. Morgan, as the narrator, asks the reader in earnest, ‘who forbids our love?’ (*CP*, 71, l. 460). The collective personal pronoun connects Morgan’s own anguish with that of the Soviet poet. As Ernest Schonfield suggests of the poem, ‘the sense of shared suffering is clear: Morgan, like Mayakovsky, suffered from forbidden love.’¹⁰¹

As with *The Cape of Good Hope*, the Kierkegaard composition covertly portrays Morgan’s own sense of despondency regarding his forbidden sexuality and the necessity of concealing it, the covered faces representing the hidden secret of his identity. The negative form of the modal verb in Kierkegaard’s statement, ‘he who cannot love is the most unhappy man of all’, signifies here a forbidden love rather than an emotional incapability. While the legal prohibition of Morgan’s homosexuality contributed to the ‘very unhappy phase’ (*NNGM*, 47) he experienced at this time, Mayakovsky’s sense of suffering arose from his own forbidden love affair with Tatyana Yakovleva. His attempts at the end of his life to reach the Russian model were stopped by Lilya Lavinskaya, the mother of Mayakovsky’s first child. In his letters to Yakovleva, he comments on the unnecessary waste of love, resonating with Morgan’s situation. As Mayakovsky asks, ‘why do we squander our love and our time by meeting via telegraph poles?’¹⁰²

Despite the connections between Mayakovsky and Morgan regarding the restricted personal affairs of heart, *The Cape of Good Hope* suggests another cause for Mayakovsky’s anguish.

¹⁰¹ Ernest Schonfield, ‘Edwin Morgan and European Modernism’ in *The International Companion to Edwin Morgan*, ed. Alan Riach (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2015), 116-30, 122.

¹⁰² Vladimir Mayakovsky, qtd. by Bengt Janfeld, *Mayakovsky: A Biography*, transl. Harry D. Watson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 426.

The Soviet state's cultural censorship, alongside Mayakovsky's understanding in the 1920s that the '[Bolshevik] party leadership's attitude toward him was not only negative but actually hostile',¹⁰³ arguably affected his artistic output, and R.S. Edgecombe suggests that Morgan's poem dramatises 'the failure of art to redeem the man from a fate of suffering'.¹⁰⁴ Marina Tsvetayeva suggests in an essay published two years after the poet's suicide that 'for twelve years Mayakovsky the man was destroying Mayakovsky the poet. On the thirteenth year the Poet rose up and killed the man'.¹⁰⁵ Patricia Blake further claims that Mayakovsky 'wasted his talent drawing posters and composing thousands of slogans and "agitational" jingles',¹⁰⁶ suggesting in the same manner as Tsvetayeva that the quality of his literary work was compromised in his later years. The sense of empathy that Morgan felt for Mayakovsky as a public poet is made apparent in his *Collected Translations* (1996), in which he opposes Blake's view by asking 'who is to say that these activities, which to Mayakovsky [...] were an important part of the cultural midwifery of the new Soviet state, can only be regarded as a "waste of talent"? *Ex ungue leonem*'.¹⁰⁷

The forbidden love found in Morgan's biography and work is similarly prevalent in Mayakovsky's. Although not 'forbidden love' in a traditionally romantic sense, the state directly affected and censored Mayakovsky's art. The poet's dedication to his craft, which brought together 'my own pledge and elegy / in a bridge of poetry' (*CP*, 72, ll. 500-1), was prohibited and consequently lost, just like his love for Tatyana. Morgan's figuration of Mayakovsky requests that 'Soviet, city, and friend, remember / My voice and verse' (*CP*, 72, ll. 509-10). He suggests that only in commemoration can his devotion to art and politics be left unrestricted, his poetry felt 'from heart to heart when I am history' (*CP*, 72, l. 502). Despite the claims made by Tsvetayeva and Blake, Morgan affirms Mayakovsky's own belief that 'his verse will reach and affect posterity - *because* of the honesty of its pain and cost [...] - when life itself has moved on' (*CT*, 105).

¹⁰³ Ibid., 160.

¹⁰⁴ Edgecombe, 37.

¹⁰⁵ Marina Tsvetayeva, qtd. by Anne D. Perryman, Patricia J. Thomson in *The Mayakovsky Centennial 1893-1993: A Commemoration of the Life, Work and Times of Vladimir Mayakovsky* (New York: Lehman College, 1993), 26.

¹⁰⁶ Patricia Blake in Vladimir Mayakovsky, *The Bedbug and Selected Poetry*, ed. P. Blake (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1961), 12.

¹⁰⁷ Edwin Morgan, *Collected Translations* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1996), 105.

The presentation of concealed or forbidden love in both Mayakovsky's portrayal in *The Cape of Good Hope* and the scrapbooks' visual imagery demonstrates the connection between Morgan's literary and artistic work from this period. He reflects on both the intimacy of emotional feeling and the reality of socio-political frameworks, connecting both the personal and the societal. The illicit nature of his sexuality underpinned Morgan's sense of isolation in this period, recognisable in his visual work. The 'sheer difficulty' (*NNGM*, 144) he faced in coming to terms with his homosexuality existed alongside the 'hideous aura of criminality and degeneracy and abnormality'¹⁰⁸ surrounding the matter in the post-war era. Despite it being a matter of social concern, the scrapbooks imply Morgan's personal reactions to it. Amongst the multiple meanings developed in the scrapbooks about the material collected, Morgan's compositions repeatedly suggest a deeply felt frustration regarding society's imposed limitations. Arguably only through this artistic collation, which served to act as a creative spur for his work as a poet, was Morgan able to express his emotional and physical urges.

The Cape of Good Hope illustrates Morgan's sense of affinity with Mayakovsky, the Scottish poet sympathetic to the political, artistic and emotional plight of the Soviet. Morgan translates Mayakovsky's poems in *Wi' the Hail Voice* (1972), allowing vernacular Scots to give life to the Soviet's satirical voice, empathising with Mayakovsky's 'extraordinary struggle with the material of his art to produce what he would regard as really a new kind of political poetry' (*NNGM*, 105-6). Mayakovsky to Morgan is both a 'legendary heroic figure' and one affected by the isolation brought on by his 'kind of tragic life'.¹⁰⁹ His diverging public and private personas perhaps provides reasoning behind Morgan's sense of affinity with him. Iain Crichton Smith writes on the 'masks' of Morgan, his overt optimism occurring alongside his private self who is at times 'agonised, lonely, isolated'.¹¹⁰ In the 1940s and 1950s, Morgan's conflicted self is most evident. Just as Mayakovsky's resounding poetic voice obscures the person experiencing the suppression of love in both a personal and artistic sense, underneath the aesthetic vibrancy of Morgan's scrapbooks a similar discord is implied. Conceivably this

¹⁰⁸ Antony Grey, interviewed by Geraldine Bedell in 'Coming out the dark ages', *The Guardian* (24 June 2007), <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2007/jun/24/communities.gayrights> [accessed 27.01.2016].

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Iain Crichton Smith, 'The Public and Private Morgan' in *About Edwin Morgan*, eds. R. Crawford and H. Whyte (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), 39-53, 49.

friction was provoked, at least in part, by the experience of love forbidden from him by society.

1.4. Pre-War Relationships

While the scrapbooks predominantly engage with the personal by interacting with and covertly responding to abstract material, Morgan's inclusion of personal photographs lends to the scrapbooks a greater sense of his own life. Appearing in the same volume that holds Cosgrove's photographs is a picture of Jean Watson, the 'very intelligent young woman' (*BLTD*, 57) with whom Morgan shared a 'purely platonic' relationship in his university years (*NNGM*, 147). Whilst it was their classmate, Frank Mason, with whom Morgan 'was absolutely in love [...] completely infatuated' (*NNGM*, 168), it was Jean to whom Morgan gifted the scrapbooks before his deployment in 1941, her letters evocatively portraying the tenderness, devotion, and sometimes overwhelming emotion of first love.

Although 'Pieces of Me' depicts a strained conversation between the pair of them before Morgan left for Glentress in 1940, the seven volumes of letters sent by Jean over the course of two years, now kept in Archives and Special Collections at the University of Glasgow, express both the strength and vulnerability of her emotions. Her letters show her to be an intelligent and eloquent writer, and yet she shows a frequent disbelief in her ability to adequately articulate her feelings to Morgan. Only through the words of others, such as Virgil and Shakespeare, is she able to express these emotions. One of Morgan's letters referred to by Jean mentions his 'continuous subconscious resistance to writing',¹¹¹ hinting at the writer's block Morgan struggled with throughout the 1940s. While this most probably refers to his feelings of poetic ability, in contrast Jean's letters suggest that she struggled with verbalising inner emotion. McGonigal proposes that Jean's letters show her 'possibly needing more affection than [Morgan] could ever have given' (*BTLT*, 74), and this sense of vulnerability is a strong current throughout her writing. She places Morgan in the highest regard while at the same time perceiving herself to be somewhat inferior. From her perspective, he appears to be the empathising boyfriend, learned teacher, and protecting confidante that she needs.

¹¹¹ ASC MS Morgan, DW/2/1.

The opening line of 'Jean' from *Love and a Life* succinctly summarises Morgan and Jean's relationship and was arguably felt from both sides: 'if you think it is easy to be in love, you have misheard' (*LL*, 19, 1.1). Jean's letters sometimes reveal her carefully controlled frustration, learning at one point that Morgan relayed information of his deployment to their friend George Hunter before she was told and later visited Glasgow without informing her. In Morgan's reflection on this time, he explains that 'I knew there was something wrong somewhere, and that I would have to deal with this as well as I could, but I tried to deal with it by getting rid of it, at that age' (*NNGM*, 147). His statement refers to his sexuality and the self-repression that affected him in this period. It highlights the source of love's hardship, with Morgan finding himself part of a relationship that could never develop further. This is not to suggest, however, that Morgan was not emotionally attached to Jean. On the scrapbook page that holds Jean's photograph, Morgan carefully compiles a selection of material around her image.¹¹² Underneath lies an extract from Blake's 'Jerusalem, The Emanation of the Giant Albion' (1804): 'Whence camest thou? who art thou, O loveliest? / the Divine Vision / Is as nothing before thee: faded is all life and joy'. This verse of elevation complements her picture, which is situated on top of a mountainous landscape print. Here, Morgan seemingly aligns Jean with the beauty of nature. Handwritten extracts of Robert Burns' love lyric, 'A Red Red Rose' (1794), and John Donne's poem, 'The Extasie' (1633), are positioned alongside it. 'The Extasie', in particular, represents the relationship as it stood for Morgan: the connection of souls despite the absence of the physical. The collage touchingly depicts Morgan's deep affection for Jean, referred to in biographical reflection and poetry throughout his life.

Affectionate and emotionally intimate as their relationship is shown to be in both Jean's letters and Morgan's reflections, there is a lingering sense that it could never be enough for either of them. In 'Jean', Morgan writes that she 'left me with an old red ring, a last kiss, and many letters I could reread [...] / In my sweltering troopship bound for shores where other loves were not to / be ignored' (*LL*, 19, ll. 5-8). This idea, of Jean being the neglected love, is an underlying factor of the letters, despite her own frequent attempts to relay her devotion to Morgan. McGonigal states in *Beyond the Last Dragon* that Morgan 'had given "clear hints" about his sexual preferences in his letters to Jean', suggesting 'that this would have been while

¹¹² Ibid., C/4, 648.

he was still in Egypt, in 1942 or early 1943' (*BTL*D, 73). Jean sent the last of her long and loving letters in December 1941, sending just three telegrams in 1942. It is possible, then, that in this period Morgan revealed to Jean the truth of his sexual identity. In his scrapbook collage of Jean, amidst the fragments of idolising poetry, Morgan includes a pertinent handwritten extract from Thomas Hardy's 'I Need Not Go' (1901): 'New loves inflame me / She will not blame me / But suffer it so...'. It is an appropriate excerpt to include, the discontinued letters suggesting the anguish possibly felt by Jean after learning the reason behind Morgan's refrain from their relationship. Despite this, Jean opens the final letter of the collection from late 1945 with 'My dear Edwin',¹¹³ her affectionate greeting and an arrangement for the pair to meet suggesting that, like Hardy's poem, she did not place accusatory blame on Morgan for what had occurred. They did not stay close friends, the meeting in question referring to Morgan's attempt to retrieve his Scrapbooks from her which may have caused some grievance. However, in Jean's Archives and Special Collections file, a newspaper extract from June 1960 reports her attainment of First Class Honours in Latin and French.¹¹⁴ Morgan's retainment of it suggests that his affection for his old friend remained present, even many years later.

George Hunter and Frank Mason were two other friends with whom Morgan kept in contact through letters while stationed in the Middle East, and, in George's case, over the course of fifty years following the war's end. As McGonigal writes, referring also to Jean, when reading the letters between these friends, 'one is struck by just how young they were, how serious and perplexed, as they try to bring their intelligence to bear upon experiences and moral ambiguities beyond anything encountered in their academic studies' (*BTL*D, 72-3). In a letter from George amidst lengthy discussions on literature, philosophy and music, a sudden reminder of the situation from which he is writing is recorded in his disclosure that one of Beethoven's symphonies provides a comfort to him, 'clear against the horror and the terror of dying'.¹¹⁵ For Frank, who held communist sympathies in the interwar period, his letters determine the Army helping him find his place in the world, having found the value of simplicity to be of more worth than the guiding principles he had previously sought. In a response to Morgan's own concern that the war would affect his capability of questioning the

¹¹³ Ibid., DW/2/7, Letter from Jean (October 1945).

¹¹⁴ Ibid., DW/2/7.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., DH/14: Letter from George (7 June 1943).

world around him, Frank reassures him that the ‘defects of intellect are not [...] permanent injuries of war’.¹¹⁶

Frank represented for Morgan the amalgamation of emotional, physical, and mental attraction, with his letters showing the intellectual stimulation the friendship provided for both of them. ‘Those and These’ opens with Frank’s name in its list of ‘loves of sixty years’ (*LL*, 6, l. 1). Just as ‘November Night’ documents Frank as being ‘the first, king of something [...] You were the first of men / In that impossible dimension of love’ (*LL*, 49, ll. 4-8), his primary positioning on the list of names in ‘Those and These’ suggests that Morgan considered Frank to be his first love. In Morgan’s collection *Sweeping Out the Dark* (1997), he writes of a social engagement that he and Frank had arranged together in ‘Tram Ride 1939 (F.M.)’. The first half depicts the restless ache of waiting, represented in the lines’ short agitated phrases in which Morgan remembers his ‘watch burning, how long now, yes but, / what, half an hour’,¹¹⁷ before the realisation that Frank would not be arriving. The magnitude of Morgan’s feelings for Frank is revealed in the imagined depiction of him, a ‘single stocky gallus figure / who might be anyone but was one only’ (*SOD*, 76, ll. 4-5), Frank’s singularity within the nameless crowds emphasising his significance.

Morgan reasons that Frank ‘([...] had simply forgotten, / you didn’t know that then)’ (*SOD*, 76, ll. 12-3), revealing a careless mistake rather than a deliberate act. However, the parenthesis of this explanation, which follows Morgan’s mournful attempt to ‘casually [...] / stroll off’ (*SOD*, 76, 10-1), suggests that Frank’s explanation is of little importance to the poet. It is presented merely as a side note just as how, on this occasion, Morgan had been Frank’s afterthought. The collected audience of ‘half indifferent, half curious folk’ (*SOD*, 76, l. 20) who inhabit the tram on which the narrator ‘shake[s] with / ridiculous but uncontrollable tears’ (*SOD*, 76, ll. 15-6) appear disparaging in their observation of the teenage boy. The last lines ask:

[...] would they sometime,
in half a century perhaps, accept that love is
what it is, that tears are what they are, that

¹¹⁶ Ibid., DM/19: Letter from Frank (15 January 1943).

¹¹⁷ Edwin Morgan, *Sweeping out the Dark* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1994), 76, ll. 8-9.

Jack can shiver in the numbing close-mouth
of missing dates for Jill or Jake, and suffer?

(*SOD*, 76, ll. 21-5).

The notion that they would ‘mock at’ Morgan’s emotions ‘if they knew’ (*SOD*, 76, l. 21) suggests a lack of empathy for not just adolescent infatuation but also for his homosexuality, which is referenced in the gender shift from ‘Jill’ to ‘Jake’. ‘Love is / what it is, tears are what they are’ emphasises the intrinsic nature of these emotions, regardless of when they are caused or by whom. The suggested period of fifty years between the event and acceptance places the crowd in 1989, one year before Morgan’s own public announcement of his sexuality. Frank learnt of Morgan’s feelings towards him in letters sent during the early 1940s. Morgan explains that ‘it was partly being separated, and this possibility of meeting a couple of years later [in Egypt] made me, probably very foolishly, confess my feelings’ (*NNGM*, 168). The letters show Frank explaining his intellectual understanding of the matter but with an awareness that he could never participate emotionally.

While Frank’s reaction is fairly direct in its meaning, George’s letters show his continued intellectual debate with Morgan regarding the implications of homosexuality. Although George writes of his own fear of homosexuality, McGonigal suggests that his position as a Royal Navy officer means ‘he may well have had to deal with, or at least consider, the disciplinary issues involved, apart from any personal considerations’ (*BTLD*, 73). George notes in their discussions of homosexuality that Morgan ‘speak[s] of “fraternities” and “freemasonry”’.¹¹⁸ The idea of brotherhood and its connection, or lack thereof, with sexual identity aligns Morgan and George’s discussion with the twentieth-century theory of male sociological relations, developed in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s text *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985). Morgan later described the theory as ‘a sort of ladder from homosexual to homoerotic (is it homosexual or is it not?) down to homosocial, which is just boys together or men together in an army or in a band’.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Ibid., DH/14: Letter from George (13 July 1943).

¹¹⁹ Morgan, ‘Gay Writing in Scotland’, 150.

In a letter from 1945, with the war approaching its end, George writes on their friendship that ‘as you say, the oceans lie between’.¹²⁰ The line strikes a certain similarity with Morgan’s later poem ‘The Divide’ (1977), its opening lines confessing: ‘I keep thinking of you which is ridiculous. / These years between us like a sea’ (*CP*, 369, ll. 1-2). The poem has been attributed to Morgan’s relationship with John Scott,¹²¹ and yet the ‘semi-epistolary’¹²² lyric could also relate to George. Published in *The New Divan* (1979), in which Morgan reflects on his war experience, ‘The Divide’ depicts difficulties between two people, the poet-narrator writing in his letter that ‘you would say I can’t be what I’m not, / yet I can’t not be what I am’ (*CP*, 369, l. 10-1). In a letter from July 1943, George writes that he does not believe Morgan’s confession of his homosexuality. The line from the poem may represent this discussion and Morgan’s feeling of being unable to conceal ‘what I am’ from one of his closest friends.

The two men experience a division of understanding at this time, but in terms of a lifelong divide the geographical distance between them remained a constant, with George asking Morgan in a letter from January 1946 to ‘tell me what it is like to come home again; I somewhat fear the experience’.¹²³ While George’s naval career after the war took him to Colombo, Sydney and Hong Kong before returning to England to take a post at Oxford University,¹²⁴ Morgan returned to the University of Glasgow to finish his degree and take up a teaching post. Despite their distance, their letters over the years suggest a connection never entirely lost, with George frequently displaying his encouragement of Morgan’s academic essays and admiration for his poetry. George’s own statement regarding society’s reaction towards sexual polarities, that ‘we are merely specimens of our age’,¹²⁵ arguably applies to his own position. George and Morgan remained in contact for the remainder of their lives, suggesting George’s initially apprehensive reaction to Morgan’s confession did not affect their relationship, and may well have been a result of the era in which they were writing, or a by-product of George’s position as a naval officer. Like the newspaper cut-out of Jean’s

¹²⁰ ASC MS Morgan, DH/14: Letter from George (13 August 1945).

¹²¹ James McGonigal, ‘Edwin Morgan Poems, National 5’, *Schools Conference of the Association for Scottish Literary Studies* (3 October 2015).

¹²² R.S. Edgcombe, ‘The Poetry of Edwin Morgan’, *Dalhousie Review* 62(4) (1982-3), 668-79, 678.

¹²³ ASC MS Morgan, DH/14: Letter from George (14 January 1946).

¹²⁴ George later founded the Department of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Warwick. He died in 2008.

¹²⁵ ASC MS Morgan, DH/14: Letter from George (3 July 1945)

achievements, a 1996 copy of *PN Review* is kept in Morgan's files of George, the article noting Professor G. K. Hunter's 'wiry Glaswegian intelligence' and 'endearing eccentricities',¹²⁶ Morgan's archiving marking once more an adolescent affection never lost to age.

1.5. Homosociality in War

In 'Epilogue: Seven Decades', Morgan writes that 'At twenty I got marching orders, kitbag, / farewell to love, not arms, (though our sole arms / were stretchers)' (*CP*, 594, l. 11-3). Initially stationed in the Scottish Borders, his 'sole arms' as 'stretchers' refer to his chosen position as a non-combatant soldier in the Royal Army Medical Corps. As previously noted, Morgan had intended to present himself as a conscientious objector to the war. His dramatic monologue 'Merlin' (2002), a poetic reconstruction of the semi-legendary Celtic figure Myrddin Wyllt, hints at why this may have been his initial stance. As the bard of King Roderick, Merlin is commanded to go with the monarch into war to "Record my victory" (*C*, 12, l. 16) where he observes 'the victory of death, the cries, the rolling limbs' (*C*, 12, l. 18). These miseries of war compare to a description from 'The New Divan', in which the narrator observes 'that dead officer [...] drained in blood, wasted away' (*CP*, 330, l. 1358). The 'fury / That hunts the pain that hunts the clouds' (*C*, 12, ll. 21-2) portrays Merlin seeking internal justification for having to 'watch the head of a friend / Bounce down the hill' (*C*, 12, ll. 23-4), leading to his emphatic alliterative statement that 'War wins wounds, widows' (*C*, 12, l. 28). The declaration suggests that no side can ever win if one recognises the casualties of each battle.

War represents the loss of the humanity that exists at the core of Morgan's writing. Merlin's experience provokes his decision to remove himself from society and become 'a green man, man of the woods',¹²⁷ the poem correlating his pacifism with Morgan's own personal beliefs. However, Morgan recalls the internal conflict he faced in the lead up to his tribunal, coming to feel that 'it was wrong to stand aside from what was happening. [...] There was an actual enemy over there'.¹²⁸ Morgan's non-combatant role removed him from physical battle and facing the 'blood path, not bearable' (*C*, 12, l. 24). In 1941, as the Second World War

¹²⁶ Ibid., DH/14: *PN Review* 108, vol. 22, no. 4 (March-April 1996).

¹²⁷ Edwin Morgan, 'Merlin', *Cathures* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2002), 13, l. 35.

¹²⁸ Edwin Morgan, 'Edwin Morgan' in *Footsteps and Witnesses: Lesbian and Gay Lifestories from Scotland*, ed. Bob Cant (Edinburgh: Word Power Books, 1993; 2008), 15.

persisted in Europe, Morgan was sent to the Middle East, far from the ‘northern mists’ of Glentress (*CP*, 328, l. 1302) and into a place and position in which new ‘loves were not to be ignored’ (*LL*, 19, l. 6).

Up until the beginning of the twenty-first century, the British military prohibited homosexuals from serving in the British Army, Royal Navy, and Royal Air Force. In 1994, the Policy and Guidelines informing the matter stated that:

Homosexuality, whether male or female, is considered incompatible with service in the armed forces. This is not only because of the close physical conditions in which personnel often have to live and work, but also because homosexual behaviour can cause offense, polarise relationships, induce ill-discipline and, as a consequence, damage morale and unit effectiveness.¹²⁹

Emphasising attitudes that pervaded the subject of non-heterosexuality throughout the twentieth century, the document published by the Ministry of Defence highlights the segregating regulations still being enforced in the lead up to the millennium. Morgan’s sexual orientation was not only forbidden in his military position but also in his place in Scottish society, the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality not administered in Scotland until 1980.¹³⁰

In her study on gay men and women in the American military, Mary Ann Humphreys notes that, ‘during World War II, the gay individual was not harassed as greatly as in the peacetime. The tendency was to “look the other way”’.¹³¹ She suggests that the necessity for labour force overrode the illegality of homosexual behaviour, stating that ‘little emphasis was placed on discharge procedures’.¹³² Although Morgan was based within the British, rather than American, military, his experience aligns with that described by Humphreys. Morgan speaks in interview of explicit encounters he undertook with other men during the Second World War and his own sense of removed inhibition. Reflecting on a sexual encounter ‘that would have been a court martial offence’, Morgan states that the other man in question ‘was sent away

¹²⁹ Ministry of Defence, *Armed Forces Policy and Guidelines on Homosexuality*, London (15 December 1994).

¹³⁰ Meek, 50.

¹³¹ Mary Ann Humphreys, *My Country, My Right to Serve: Experiences of Gay Men and Women in the Military, World War II to the Present* (New York: Harper Collins, 2000), 2.

¹³² Ibid.

from the unit, I think because somebody had either observed or suspected very strongly what we had been doing'. He suggests that 'one of the officers must have said "We'll just break it up, without making a great thing out of it"' (NNGM, 149-50). In a later recollection for Bob Cant's anthology, *Footsteps and Witnesses: Lesbian and Gay Lifestories from Scotland* (1993), Morgan writes of returning from a local film showing when he was stationed with the British Army and witnessing 'two soldiers in passionate embrace' at a bus stop, about which 'no one said anything'.¹³³ He recalls sensing that 'the officers must have known something' about homosexual encounters in the army, 'but perhaps turned a blind eye unless it became really scandalous'.¹³⁴ Meek's study similarly describes homosexual activity occurring in the army, with one of the interviewees recalling:

My father had a labourer who was very much a man of the world who [...] used to retell all these tales about the army days to me, oh the things they got up to you wouldn't believe, and homosexuality would very much come up in this, the army guy who literally had his own harem of army men and I thought this was great and couldn't wait to be a part of it.¹³⁵

These accounts suggest that, for some non-heterosexuals who partook in sexual activity while serving, the military paradoxically removed them from the social stigma surrounding their sexuality. Morgan believed the war 'removed the guilt [...] to a large extent' (NNGM, 149) in terms of how he felt about his own sexuality, describing his experience as 'dangerous and at the same time liberating'.¹³⁶ Despite this personal sense of release, an underlying and troubling fact remains: Morgan and his fellow non-heterosexual service members were fighting or working on behalf of a military and country that did not officially recognise their individual rights until the late twentieth century. Humphreys compares the military to a 'fickle lover', the institution 'embracing gay and other minorities as welcome cannon fodder' in war time, while in peacetime 'that same erratic lover becomes more selective, and the purges begin again with increased fervor'.¹³⁷

¹³³ Morgan, *Footsteps and Witnesses*, 16.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Meek, 72.

¹³⁶ Morgan, *Footsteps and Witnesses*, 16.

¹³⁷ Humphreys, xxiii.

The military was a place for Morgan to experiment and follow his own sexual inclinations. His writing reflecting on this period also suggests that the military was Morgan's gateway into homosocial companionship. As described by Gilbert H. Herdt, homosociality 'indicates the extent of same-sex exclusivity of social contacts and interactions', suggesting that 'the more polarized the gender roles and restrictive the sexual code, the more homosociality one expects to find in a society'.¹³⁸ In this respect, homosociality and military life easily merge. Morgan states in *Footsteps and Witnesses* that 'there was both a lot of very intense friendship and actual sexual activity in the Army'.¹³⁹ Again, Morgan's recollections indicate the paradoxical nature of the situation, the military context effectively condemning homosexual inclination while simultaneously establishing the importance and amplification of homosocial bonds.

Morgan's poem 'The Unspoken' from *The Second Life* (1968) conveys the homosociality of the Army and his subsequent feeling of belonging. Morgan describes a scene from his sea voyage around the Cape of Good Hope:

When the troopship was pitching round the Cape
in '41, and there was a lull in the night uproar of seas and winds, and a sudden full
moon
swung huge out of the darkness like the world it is,
and we all crowded onto the wet deck, leaning on the rail, our arms on each other's
shoulders, gazing at the savage outcrop of great Africa,
And Tommy Cosh started singing 'Mandalay' and we joined in
with our raucous chorus of the unforgettable song,
and the dawn came up like thunder like that moon drawing the water of our yearning
though we were going to war, and left us exalted,
that was happiness,
but it is not like that.

(CP, 182, ll. 1-10)

The characterisation of Morgan and his troop bears similarities with the warriors of *Beowulf* who 'cast off' together as 'eager voyagers [...] / over the choppy sea' (*Beowulf*, ll. 215-7). Through the continued use of collective pronouns, the opening verse of 'The Unspoken' presents a vision of conviviality and affection with the men's 'arms on each other's

¹³⁸ Gilbert H. Herdt, 'Extract from *A Comment on Cultural Attributes and Fluidity of Bisexuality* (1984)' in *Bisexuality: A Critical Reader*, ed. Merl Storr (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 162-66, 165.

¹³⁹ Morgan, *Footsteps and Witnesses*, 15.

shoulders', beginning their military adventures together. Tommy Cosh, pictured here commencing the group chorus of a soldier song, writes to Morgan in 1943 and describes the war as having brought 'new experiences, new faces, new friends'.¹⁴⁰ His letters are spirited in their descriptions and reminiscences of army life, with Tommy offering 'Ted' friendly advice on women, which suggests that Morgan never revealed to him the reality of his sexual orientation. In the same letter that speaks of their friendship, Tommy suggests to 'dear Ted' that 'when all of this is over, I doubt if you and I will find much in common with each other'.¹⁴¹ His words capture the reality of their situation, in which men who may have never otherwise been connected were positioned together in close community.

The sense of affection in Tommy's letters illustrates the connection that can occur between men in the army's homosocial environment. In an article from 1948, Edward A. Shils and Morris Janowitz consider the primary and secondary groups of military life. They argue that the unifying relationships which occur in smaller groups are fundamental for developing centripetal force in the army and help the groups to endure stressful tasks or issues.¹⁴² The homosocial bonds, therefore, create a sense of dependency and understanding between the soldiers, regardless of how they may have interacted with one another outside of the military unit. The letters received by Morgan from Tommy taper out by the end of the 1940s, with one of his final letters congratulating Morgan on his graduation and describing the domesticity of his new family life.¹⁴³ As Tommy suggested, the bonds created in military life were their connecting force, their friendship felt most strongly in the camaraderie of war.

Morgan defines the troopship scene in 'The Unspoken' as 'happiness', his description of the unit as 'raucous', 'yearning' and 'exalted' portraying the enthusiastic commotion of the young men going to war together as a community. Morgan ends the stanza with a conjunctive statement, 'but it is not like that'. 'It' in this context is the titular 'unspoken' of the poem, an unarticulated feeling but one that acts as the underlying force throughout the text. In the

¹⁴⁰ ASC MS Morgan, DC/12: Letter from Tommy (4 October 1943).

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Edward A. Shils, Morris Janowitz, 'Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II', *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 12, no. 2 (Summer 1948), 280-315.

¹⁴³ ASC MS Morgan, DC/12: Letter from Tommy (7 June 1947).

following verse, the ‘Promethean warmth’ (CP, 182, l. 22) he experiences encapsulates his thrill in witnessing humanity’s great developments in science and space, but here again he emphasises, ‘it is not like that’. As Christopher Whyte notes, ‘the “but” with which the third section opens hints that Morgan is about to reveal “it”,’¹⁴⁴ and yet the reader is instead presented with a selection of seemingly ordinary moments between two people that collectively become ‘extraordinary’ (CP, 183, l. 43). Morgan compares ‘our first kiss’ with the celestial imagery of ‘a winter morning moon’, before metamorphosing ‘you shifting in my arms’ into ‘the sea changing the shingle that changes it / as if for ever (but we are bound by nothing, but like smoke / to mist or light in water we move, and mix)’ (CP, 183, ll. 44-6). Through the poem’s depiction of the moon and the elemental imagery of water, earth, and air, the moments and emotions existing between the couple are suggested to be as intrinsic to life as the nature that surrounds them, in turn presenting ‘a story as old as war or man’ (CP, 183, l. 47).

‘It’ is left without definition, with Morgan describing it in the final line as ‘without a name to the end’ (CP, 183, l. 51). Despite this, the tone and lyricism of the final stanza determines that Morgan is referring to the same ‘silent love’ (CP, 183, l. 2) described in ‘From a City Balcony’, the poem that directly follows ‘The Unspoken’ in *The Second Life* (1968). ‘The Unspoken’ is evidently a poem of romantic, reciprocated love, the ‘move and mix’ of the elements symbolising the physical and emotional unification of two people. The feeling is different than that experienced by Morgan with his troop, emphasised in his own assertion that ‘it is not like that’, but by collating the three experiences Morgan suggests that a similarity exists between them all. ‘The Unspoken’ depicts the elation of love in all three stanzas, with each one representing a separate subset of love. The elemental and celestial imagery of the closing stanza is also present in the earlier verses, with Morgan describing ‘the dawn [that] came up like thunder like that moon drawing the water of our yearning’ and ‘the future / [...] still there, cool and whole like the moon’ (CP, 182, ll. 7; 25-6). Morgan’s comparative technique and his climactic depiction of the ‘indispensable and eternally unsayable’¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Christopher Whyte, ““Now You See It, Now You Don’t”: Revelation and Concealment in the Love Poetry of Edwin Morgan” in *The Glasgow Review* 2 (Autumn 1993), 82-93, 87.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

presents his vision of romantic love in the final verse as the poem's primary focus, but through this connecting imagery the first two subsets of love appear similarly deep-rooted.

In the second stanza, in which he witnesses the 'thrilling brilliance' (*CP*, 182, l. 31) of history, Morgan's elation stems from a love of and dedication to scientific and human development, a prominent theme throughout his work. He writes in 'The Poet and the Particle' (1974), that, 'if it is not the duty, it should at least be the delight, of poets to contemplate the world of science' (*E*, 17), and this delight is evident in 'The Unspoken' (*CP*, 182, l. 33). Compared to this focus on Morgan's intellectual priorities, the first and final stanzas connect with each other through their presentation of love existing through human relationship. In 'the raucous chorus of that unforgettable song', Morgan presents the elation of love that stems from the homosocial inclusion and companionship of the military. The collective experience of friendship is highlighted alongside the platonic love formed by close relationships. Morgan suggests that 'I'm not myself a great joiner of anything. I'm not much part of a band',¹⁴⁶ and his time in the army represents his first documented encounter of being connected to a larger body. While his friendships with Jean, George and Frank are shown to be of great importance to him, they do not represent a unified assembly of people but a selection of singular relationships that can be grouped together because of time and place. Arguably the letters analysed demonstrate a greater connection existing between Morgan and his three friends from Glasgow than any documented friendship from his wartime experience. However, Morgan chooses to include his group on 'the troopship [...] pitching around the Cape' in his subsets of love and as his definition of 'happiness' in 'The Unspoken', emphasising its fundamental importance to him.

Morgan's experiences of belonging to a close-knit community and encountering the intensities of friendship were arguably a leading factor in his decision to translate the Anglo-Saxon text *Beowulf* when he returned to Glasgow. Its tales of fellowship and of the homosocial affection existing between a band of warriors may have lent to him a sense of comfort after 'the confusion of war' and his new feelings of 'dislocation and sterility' (*BTL*D, 87).

¹⁴⁶ Morgan, 'Gay Writing in Scotland', 147.

1.6. *Beowulf*

In 1952 Morgan published his translation of *Beowulf*, seven years after his return to civilian life and at the start of the decade he defined by its incessant hardship, as ‘week after week after week / [I] strained to unbind myself, / sweated to speak’ (CP, 594, l. 28-30). As Chris Jones notes, the ‘difficulty in unbinding speech [...] is itself an Old English *topos*’,¹⁴⁷ and Morgan’s reliance on the translation of medieval texts to help with his writer’s block extended to further translations, such as the poems ‘The Ruin’, ‘The Seafarer’, and ‘The Wanderer’ (1952). These poems were intended for publication under the title *Dies Irae* for the Acadine Poets series, but when the series experienced financial difficulties, the collection was shelved. The poems were not published in a collected form until the appearance of *Dies Irae* in *Poems of Thirty Years* (1982). Morgan writes that *Dies Irae* ‘was intended as a complementary volume to *The Vision of Cathkin Braes* --- rather like the tragic and comic masks of drama’ (CP, ‘Preface’, 15). The sombre tone of the medieval translations in the collection, alongside poems such as ‘A Warning of Waters at Evening’ and ‘The Sleights of Darkness’, corresponds with Morgan’s own feeling of despondency that permeated throughout the 1950s.

Hugh Magennis argues that Morgan’s *Beowulf* translation must be seen as being on ‘a different level poetically from any translation of the poem that had been produced up until that time’.¹⁴⁸ Morgan provides a scathing account of earlier translations in his introduction, describing the ‘grotesqueness’ of William Morris’ 1895 edition as ‘disastrously bad, being uncouth to the point of weirdness’ (*Beowulf*, xxi; xii) and Francis B. Gummere’s 1909 text as ‘painstaking [with] no poetic life’ (*Beowulf*, xiii). When reflecting on post-1918 translations, Morgan suggests that there is a conspicuous and collective failing ‘to establish a contact with the poetry of their time’, which in turn leads to a failure of communication with the intended audience (*Beowulf*, xiii).

Morgan’s *Beowulf* does not specifically aim to preserve the archaisms of Old English, established in his assertion that ‘if it is a case of losing an archaism or losing the poetry, the archaism must go’ (*Beowulf*, xvi). Nor is the text primarily attempting to entice the general

¹⁴⁷ Jones, ‘While Crowding Memories Came’, 124.

¹⁴⁸ Hugh Magennis, *Translating Beowulf: Modern Versions in English Verse* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2011), 81.

reader. Morgan's adoption of a stress metre aligns his work with the poetics of G. M. Hopkins and W. H. Auden, establishing his translation in a modern poetical context. Hopkins' work predates modernist poetry but Hugh MacDiarmid suggests that the nineteenth-century poet 'anticipated the experiments of our contemporary "ultra-moderns"'.¹⁴⁹ Morgan states that 'a poet with a strong sensuous and linguistic tone to his imagination can find himself inspired within his own concern with words, with rhythm, with shape', suggesting that Hopkins' poetry epitomises this 'verbal energy'.¹⁵⁰ This, alongside his experimentation with concepts such as sprung rhythm, demonstrates Hopkins' contemporary innovation of form and language, which in turn would go on to influence twentieth-century Modernist poets like Auden. Hopkins' departure from the conventions of nineteenth-century poetry is comparable with Morgan's own attempt to abandon the archaisms of previous *Beowulf* translations. Morgan's fervent emphasis on poetic technique in the introductory 'Translator's Task' suggests that *Beowulf* is first and foremost a text composed for the accomplished reader of contemporary English poetry, just as MacDiarmid claims Hopkins' work is 'poetry for poets'.¹⁵¹

Morgan believes that 'the translator's duty is as much to speak to his own age as it is to represent the voice of a past age' (*Beowulf*, xvi). Although he writes this with the context of modernising language in mind, it can be further extended and applied to other areas of translation. Umberto Eco argues that 'referential equivalence' should be considered as a fundamental component of translation, in that the translator should attempt to convey as closely as possible the meaning and events of the original text.¹⁵² However, as Magennis states:

[T]he interpretation and translation of works from the past in particular take place in a context of cultural relativism in which the text does not remain an objective entity [...] Each translation is thus of its time and context not only in its approach to poetry but also in basic aspects of the understanding of the original poem that the translation expresses.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Hugh MacDiarmid, *The Raucle Tongue: Hitherto Uncollected Prose Vol. II*, eds. Angus Calder, Glen Murray, Alan Riach (Manchester: Carcanet, 2000), 254.

¹⁵⁰ Edwin Morgan, *Crossing the Border: Essays on Scottish Literature* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1990), 38-9.

¹⁵¹ MacDiarmid, 255.

¹⁵² Umberto Eco, *Mouse or Rat?: Translation as Negotiation* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2003), 62.

¹⁵³ Magennis, 2-3.

The meaning of the original text does not necessarily disappear when considering cultural relativism, but rather an added dimension of meaning can be derived from the translation. To consider this in relation to *Beowulf*, in the context of literary theory Seamus Heaney's 1999 translation presents itself as being 'exactly in step with the arrival of postcolonialism in medieval studies in the late 1990s',¹⁵⁴ reflecting the academic priority of the time. A further politicisation of the text occurs in Heaney's application of Irish diction, which 'rais[es] issues of language and identity and of cultural connections'.¹⁵⁵ In a similar manner, Burton Raffel's 1963 translation has been defined as a product of mid-twentieth-century America, his authorial responses reflecting 'a time and place of confidence and cultural optimism, if also of perceived external threat'.¹⁵⁶

In Morgan's translation, cultural relativism can be considered in relation to his post-war life. McGonigal states that, after returning from the Middle East, '[Morgan's] parents found him altered [...] re-adjustment was difficult' (*BTL D*, 78) and the following decade was considered by Morgan to be his 'bleakest' (*BTL D*, 92). For Morgan, the medieval poetry he was translating aligned with the era in which he was writing, the Anglo-Saxon narrative portraying 'the psychology and the morality of human actions' (*Beowulf*, xxxiv). He recalls seeing 'shadows and echoes' of the doubts he and others experienced in their hesitant army positions 'in many old Anglo Saxon poems',¹⁵⁷ emphasised by the subtle blends of heroism and elegy that appear within the texts. Morgan's preface to *Beowulf* in the 2002 reprint states that it was 'in a sense my unwritten war poem'. His resistance to alter the version in later years stemmed from his feeling that 'I would not want to alter the expression I gave to its theme of conflict and danger, voyaging and displacement, loyalty and loss' (*Beowulf*, ix). Magennis suggests that 'Morgan's translation did not fully achieve his aim in writing it',¹⁵⁸ in relation to his introductory translator's task, and with fifty years hindsight Morgan may well have felt this. However, to alter aspects of the text would have potentially removed his writing from the context in which it was created. Therefore, Morgan's decision to leave it unchanged in the

¹⁵⁴ Conor McCarthy, *Seamus Heaney and Medieval Poetry* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), 167.

¹⁵⁵ Magennis, 162.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹⁵⁷ Jones, 'Edwin Morgan in Conversation', 50.

¹⁵⁸ Magennis, 81.

2002 reprint emphasises the importance of cultural relativism for him in this case, his translation of *Beowulf* belonging to his 1950s self.

When reflecting on this period in 'Epilogue: Seven Decades', Morgan writes of how 'At thirty I thought that life had passed me by / translated *Beowulf* for want of love' (CP, 594, ll. 21-2). *Beowulf* became a remedy for the loneliness he experienced, Morgan finding that 'one night stands in city centre lands / [...] were wild but bleak' (CP, 594, ll. 23-4). James McGonigal and John Coyle suggest that in this difficult period Morgan 'came to value all the more his correspondence with those to whom he could unburden, sensing that they would accept him as he was'.¹⁵⁹ W. S. Graham, a friend and poet much admired by Morgan, wrote in a letter dated 31 July 1950:

For the last let me say 'Edwin, you are one
Of the few people I love.' Let it go on,
That we try our utmost towards helping
Each other in the facts of even our existence
And each other to go into the farthest silences
With vessel and art to break them into words,
I sit here quiet.¹⁶⁰

The verse responds touchingly to Morgan's earlier revelation of his homosexuality, with Morgan replying to Graham in the same form:

O it was gratitude welled for the verse of
Your letter when you said what I had confessed
Could make no difference to how you regarded me,
And if all the imagery and congestion and turgidity
Round a simple thing could have been swept away
I would have swept it away, but it is hard, hard
To say the simple things that involve a life and a friend,
And to me friendship is like others' love,
The most of life: and for this called, in pain, 'love'.
(TML, 14-5).

¹⁵⁹ James McGonigal, John Coyle, *The Midnight Letterbox: Selected Correspondence, 1950-2010*, eds. James McGonigal, John Coyle (Manchester: Carcanet, 2015), 7.

¹⁶⁰ W. S. Graham, *The Nightfisherman: Selected Letters of W. S. Graham*, eds. Michael & Margaret Snow (Manchester: Carcanet, 1999), 117.

Alongside the appreciation evidently felt by Morgan for Graham's identification of his homosexuality as one of 'the facts of [...] our existence', the composition acknowledges again the obstacle of 'unbinding'. McGonigal suggests that Morgan's confession of his sexuality to George in his war letters was 'possibly ambiguous' (*BTLD*, 73). This later reference to his own 'imagery and congestion and turgidity' suggests that obfuscated disclosure was the only way he felt able 'to say the simple things'. Considering this, Morgan's 'strain[ing] to unbind [...] sweat[ing] to speak' does not merely allude to the creative condition of writer's block. It suggests that Morgan considered a confession of his sexual identity to be a task of strenuous difficulty, his inability to explain his situation clearly to those close to him potentially provoking further feelings of isolation. His reflection on friendship in the verse to Graham demonstrates this further, with Morgan believing it to be a fundamental part of love and life from which he was alienated due to the 'hard, hard' task of revealing the 'simple thing'.

Although the verse confession and his participation in Glasgow's gay scene demonstrates Morgan engaging with the concealed part of his identity, his later reflections emphasise the 'oppressive' atmosphere of the 1950s.¹⁶¹ The homosocial environment of *Beowulf* contrasts with the 'social ostracism' that Morgan associated with gay identity at this time,¹⁶² the titular character leading a band of warriors who 'will remain with him still, his people stand by him / When war returns' (*Beowulf*, ll. 23-4). In this respect, homosociality in *Beowulf* is a particularly relevant strand to consider when reflecting on the cultural relativism of Morgan's translation. The poem emphasises the same bonds of friendship he experienced in the war, suggesting that *Beowulf* may have been a 'palliative against the loneliness'¹⁶³ that Morgan was experiencing.

It is debatable as to whether Morgan's *Beowulf* depicts homosociality as a more significant theme than that found in other translations. Any dramatic emphasis could effectively alter the original meaning of the text and disregard Morgan's 'general principle of being a good servant to the foreign poet, rather than thanking him very much and then going on to write a new poem of one's own' (*CT*, xxi). However, when analysing the text alongside some of Morgan's

¹⁶¹ Morgan, 'Gay Writing in Scotland', 141.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 142.

¹⁶³ Jones, 'While Crowding Memories Came', 124.

later poems that intertextually refer to *Beowulf*, the pertinence of the homosocial theme becomes more apparent. The differences in Morgan's text in comparison to other translations will be considered, and an analysis of homosociality in *Beowulf* through the characters of Hrothgar and Grendel will demonstrate the connection between war and love and its primary role within the text, as intrinsic to the story as heroism, religion, or the act of voyage.

1.6.1. Hrothgar

'My dear son, it is not very far from the utmost and final day of the inevitable parting, so that not long after this you must listen to the last guidance by words of mine - never devoid of things profitable - in this worldly existence. Acquit well all the concord and the friendship and the words, dearest of men, we two have spoken together.' 'Master, never shall I let the kinship of love grow sluggish in your time of need.'¹⁶⁴

The above prose translation is of 'Guthlac B', one of two poems from the *Exeter Book* (c. 960-90 A.D.) relating to the life of the eremitic Saint Guthlac. J.R.R. Tolkien writes that the Guthlac poems demonstrate 'well-wrought language, weighty words, lofty sentiment, precisely that which we are told is the real beauty of *Beowulf*'.¹⁶⁵ The similarities between the texts rest not only with diction and style but with content too. The above interaction between Guthlac and Beccel mirrors the relationship found throughout medieval literature between lord and retainer, and it finds likeness with the relationship existing between Hrothgar and Beowulf, as well as Beowulf and Wiglaf. The bindings of kinship and the inherent function of loyalty within the relationship, as depicted in 'Guthlac B' and *Beowulf*, marks the relevance of male-male bonding in Anglo-Saxon texts. In *Between Medieval Men* (2009), David Clark draws attention to a translated verse from the Old English poem *Maxims I*, indicating the anguish of isolation provoked when a man lacks a warrior brotherhood:

Wretched is he who shall live alone - fate has ordained
him to dwell friendless. It were better for him that he
had a brother... Always shall those warriors carry arms

¹⁶⁴ 'Guthlac B', *Anglo Saxon Poetry: An Anthology of Old English Poems in Prose Translation*, transl. S. A. J. Bradley (London: Orion Publishing, 2004), 278.

¹⁶⁵ J. R. R. Tolkien, 'Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics' in *Interpretations of Beowulf: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Robert Dennis Fulk (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 14-44, 20.

and sleep together - let one never slander them, before
death separates them.¹⁶⁶

Clark suggests that the 'lateral homosocial bond is depicted as an eternal union of equals, the words of the gnomacist echoing the traditional marriage ceremony'.¹⁶⁷ The vision of warriors sleeping next to one another, their kinship severed only by death, resonates in *Beowulf*. In the text's first mention of Grendel, the creature finds in 'That lofty hall [...] / the band of warriors / Sleeping after the feast' (*Beowulf*, ll. 116-9). It is a categorically male affair, the breaking of the dawn revealing 'Grendel's battle-strength [which] filled men's eyes' (*Beowulf*, l. 127), the remaining warriors mourning the loss of their brothers in arms. Despite Hrothgar's elevated position as the Danish king, he is still intimately connected to the soldiers hierarchically beneath him, remarking after Grendel's initial attack that he has 'friends the fewer' as he grieves the devoured soldiers of his 'beloved chivalry' (*Beowulf*, ll. 487-9).

As Karma Lochrie explains, Anglo-Saxon homosociality 'structures the heroic code of masculinity and the power relations of early medieval society, emphasizing loyalty and military achievements as primary elements of its ethos'.¹⁶⁸ Following this homosocial convention, Beowulf presents his own accomplishments to Hrothgar when he first arrives, describing 'the force of my strength' as seen in battle when he took 'five captive, / Ravaged giantkind, and on the waves by night / Slaughtered the krakens' (*Beowulf*, ll. 418-22). Beowulf's allegiance to Hrothgar is made clear at this early point of the text, despite no hereditary relation existing between them. Grendel's mother is shown seeking 'vengeance [...] / For her child, her only son' (*Beowulf*, ll. 1546-7), and the strength of the familial bond informing her attack is similarly felt by Beowulf in his desire to fight on behalf of Hrothgar. Prepared to fight until 'death takes me / [...] crimson-sullied' (*Beowulf*, ll. 446-7), he experiences the depth of 'heart-pent fury / And anger for the ravager' (*Beowulf*, ll. 708-9). In 'Love' from *Love and a Life*, a collection in which *Beowulf* and the character of Hrothgar are

¹⁶⁶ 'Maxims I', *Between Medieval Men: Male Friendship and Desire in Early Medieval English Literature*, transl. David Clark (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 130.

¹⁶⁷ Clark, 130.

¹⁶⁸ Karma Lochrie, 'Configurations of Gender and Sexuality in Medieval Europe' in *The Cambridge History of Gay and Lesbian Literature*, eds. E. L. McCallum, Mikko Tuhkanen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 89-106, 91.

both alluded to in ‘The Last Dragon’, Morgan provides a litany of subject complements for love. In the poem’s fourth statement, love ‘is the honour that kills and saves’ (*LAAL*, 25, l. 4), with Morgan aligning his definition of love with the homosocial code. Love impels the chivalric acts of Beowulf and his treatment of Hrothgar, emphasised further in the final passage of *Beowulf* in which the poet-narrator states that ‘Man’s words should honour his lord and friend / Love lifted up in the hours of death’ (*Beowulf*, ll. 3175-6).

The text depicts the early Germanic structure *comitatus*, which presents the formation of ‘strong bonds between men who [are] attached to each other more by the circumstance of war and military exploit rather than sexual inclination’.¹⁶⁹ Hrothgar and Beowulf follow the established medieval homosocial structures, the two men existing in a context of ‘masculine social affection and friendship, [...] approved by the Christian narrator telling this story from the ancient past’.¹⁷⁰ However, some critics question whether their relationship portrays an underlying erotic subtext. Reference is made in particular to the scene of Beowulf’s departure from the Scylding king:

[T]he king renowned
 In every excellence took the best of warriors
 By the neck and kissed him; and he shed his tears;
 [...]
 [T]he man was so dear to him
 That he could not stem the surging in his breast;
 But locked in his heart by the mind’s bonds
 His hidden longing for the beloved man
 Burned on through his blood.

(*Beowulf*, ll. 1870-80)

Howell D. Chickering questions the passage’s underlying expression, suggesting ‘it almost seems as though the language of erotic poetry were being misapplied to a father’s love for a son’.¹⁷¹ Similarly, Allen J. Frantzen believes that the ‘secret longing suggests a hidden sexual

¹⁶⁹ Allen J. Frantzen, ‘Sexuality: Male Same-Sex Relations’ in *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Margaret C. Schaus (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 748-50, 749.

¹⁷⁰ Rita J. Simon, Alison Brooks, *Gay and Lesbian Communities the World Over* (Lanham; Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2009), 30.

¹⁷¹ Howell D. Chickering Jr., *Beowulf: A Dual-Language Edition* (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 109, l. 1045.

desire',¹⁷² and in a contemporary context there is arguably an element of the homoerotic in Hrothgar's gestures. However, in consideration of John M. Hill's explanation of the scene as 'a contrast of two worlds within the embrace of the same values',¹⁷³ Frantzen suggests that 'the scene does not seem to be an erotic gesture at all but rather a nostalgic one that extends leave-taking to thoughts of separation at death'.¹⁷⁴ This reading of the text suggests that the scene indulges with the aforementioned sentiment of soldiers bound together in 'eternal union' as opposed to homoeroticism. Hrothgar's anguish regarding the loss of an important relationship bears similarities with another Old English text. 'The Wanderer', an Anglo-Saxon poem translated by Morgan and published in the same year as *Beowulf*, depicts the suffering of the titular solitary exile:

[W]ho has so long missed
 The counselling voice of his cherished prince,
 When sorrow and daydream often together
 Seize the unhappy man in his solitude:
 It all comes back, he embraces and kisses
 The lord he is loyal to, lays on his knee
 Hands and head as he did long ago

(CP, 35, ll. 37-43)

As noted by Chris Jones,¹⁷⁵ 'Freeze-Frame' from *Love and a Life* intertextually refers to the passage by mirroring the physical interaction:

None of those once known is disknown, hidden, lost, I see them in clouds in
 streets in trees

[...]

They prod and probe: 'When my head was on your knees
 And your hand was on my head, did you think time would seize
 Head, hand, all, lock all away where there is no ring of keys - ?

(LL, 7, ll. 1-5)

'Freeze-Frame' is quintessential of *Love and a Life*, the collection described by McGonigal as a 'quasi-confessional reflection on the range of others who had touched [Morgan's] life' and

¹⁷² Allen J. Frantzen, *Before the Closet: Same Sex Love from Beowulf to Angels in America* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 94.

¹⁷³ John M. Hill, *The Cultural World in Beowulf* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 131.

¹⁷⁴ Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 94.

¹⁷⁵ Jones, 'While Crowding Memories Came', 137.

that which considers ‘the sheer variety of forms of love’ (*BTL*D, 404-5). The intertextual connection between ‘Freeze-Frame’ and ‘The Wanderer’ emphasises their shared depiction of love’s nostalgic remembrance. By mirroring the physical demonstration of love in ‘The Wanderer’, Hrothgar’s reaction to Beowulf’s departure arguably represents an anticipated nostalgia, the king acutely aware that ‘never again would they see one another / As heroes met together’ (*Beowulf*, ll. 1875-6). In an earlier speech addressed at once to himself and to Beowulf, Hrothgar acknowledges that ‘the end is written and it comes to pass’ (*Beowulf*, l. 1753). Morgan defines this extract as ‘meditation, homily, eulogy, reminiscence and *memento mori*’ (*Beowulf*, xxxii), emphasising the prominence of nostalgic remembrance in the character of the ageing king. Hrothgar’s ‘surging in his breast’ likely indicates both his respect and honour for Beowulf and his desire to suspend time, his ‘longing’ portraying his own inherent awareness of their imminent separation and his desire to keep Beowulf close. Christopher Looby suggests that military contexts instinctively emphasise ‘male-homosocial affective attachments’, accelerating ‘male-male emotional bonding to the highest pitch of intensity short of avowed homosexual love’.¹⁷⁶ In this respect, their closeness and familiarity primarily emphasises the strength of their homosocial bonds.

1.6.2. Grendel

While Hrothgar and Beowulf exist within a homosocial environment, Grendel’s position as the severer of bonds exemplifies the monster’s place outside of this structure. His actions reveal his desire to divide the warriors, not just in life and death but in their customary doings as well, and arguably Grendel’s reign of terror is a reaction to his position as the Other. The *Beowulf* poet-narrator explains that, after Grendel’s initial attacks, ‘it wasn’t rare for a man elsewhere / At a greater distance to look for his rest, / For a bed in the outbuildings’ (*Beowulf*, ll. 138-40). The warriors’ geographical separation from one another suggests a loss of solidarity, with each soldier’s physical withdrawal from Heorot inadvertently implying that his personal safety is of greater importance to him than the lives of his fellow men. While this falter of the homosocial bonds is arguably a by-product of Grendel’s brutality rather than an

¹⁷⁶ Christopher Looby, “‘As Thoroughly Black as the Most Faithful Philanthropist Could Desire’: Erotics of Race in Higginson’s *Army Life in a Black Regiment*” in *Race and the Subject of Masculinities*, eds. Harry Stecopoulos, Michael Uebel (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1997), 71-115, 75.

intended primary purpose, Grendel's characterisation suggests that the rupture of union may well have been the monster's aim. He is described as 'spite-filled', a 'lawless ravager', and 'God's antagonist' (*Beowulf*, l. 749; 801; 811), identified by his role as the adversary, or the Other. Richard E. Zeikowitz suggests that the society inhabited by Beowulf and his warriors is 'characterized by homosocial normativity - that is, societies characterized by socially acceptable male-male bonding and intimacy', rather than the heteronormativity of contemporary society.¹⁷⁷ Therefore, the figure of Grendel as the Other must be examined in relation to this environment.

Heorot, the hall in which Beowulf and his warriors primarily deal with Grendel, is described as the 'most massive of halls [...] / tower[ing] up / Clifflike, broad-gabled: (it awaited flame-battling, / Fire's hostility [...])' (*Beowulf*, ll. 79-83). Heorot is symbolic of the Scyldings and their band of warriors, the description of it as 'cleverly compacted both inside and out / With its bands of iron' (*Beowulf*, ll. 773-5) referring not just to its physical structure but to the indomitable strength of its warrior inhabitants. The description depicts the warmth and joy of their society, 'the happiness / Of the hall resounding: the harp ringing, / Sweet minstrel-singing' (*Beowulf*, ll. 88-90), acting in direct opposition with Grendel's environment. He is the 'Wasteland stalker, master of the moors', crossing 'looming marshlands / To his joyless home' (*Beowulf*, ll. 820-1). While the bonds of love and loyalty are constructed and regularly re-established in Heorot, the mead-hall containing the homosocial environment within its walls, Grendel exists as a singular entity within the darkness. Although his mother seeks to 'avenge her kin' (*Beowulf*, l. 1339), demonstrating their familial bond, the two creatures are presented separately and never as a singular unit. While the mother's attack is an act of familial reprisal, Grendel's attack is arguably a direct result of his ostracisation from Heorot's enclosed homosocial society.

In a group of dramatic monologues published in *Collected Poems* as the 'Uncollected Poems 1976-1981', Morgan writes 'Grendel' from the point of view of the monster. In his opening statement, the creature declares 'It is being nearly human' that 'gives me this spectacular

¹⁷⁷ Richard E. Zeikowitz, 'Befriending the Medieval Queer: A Pedagogy for Literature Classes', *College English*, vol. 65, no. 1 (Sep. 2002), 67-80, 71.

darkness' (*CP*, 427, ll. 1-2). The line is Grendel's direct recognition of his difference, which in turn forms the justification for his actions. In 'being nearly human', Grendel is defined as the Other, corresponding with Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément's terms that 'in a hierarchically organized relationship [...] the same is what rules, defines, and assigns "its" other'.¹⁷⁸ He is separate from the group he stalks because of his essential nature as a monster not categorically human, despite his hominine qualities. In *Beowulf*, the poet-narrator explains that:

[T]he world of demonkind
 Was for long the home of the unhappy creature
 After his Creator had cast him out
 With the kin of Cain, the everlasting Lord
 Destining for the death of Abel killed; A
 joyless feud, for he banished him far,
 His Maker for his crime, far from mankind.

(*Beowulf*, ll. 104-10).

He is not just the Other because of his monstrous form; Grendel is stained with the sin of Cain, his marking of evil working in binary opposition to Beowulf's soldiers who are, in their antithetical position, categorised as 'good'.

In Grendel's position as the isolated observer in the eponymous poem, he recalls seeing Beowulf's warriors 'soused with wine behind their windows / I watched them making love, twisting like snakes' (*CP*, 427, ll. 5-6), the singular and collective pronouns working in opposition to each other. When Morgan's figuration of Grendel asks, 'Who would be a man?' (*CP*, 428, l. 24) and refers later to man's 'hideous clamorous brilliance' (*CP*, 428, 39), a personal envy is implied. The creature remarks on the Heorot environment as 'pestilence', an intertextual reference to Morgan's translation in which Grendel is described as 'like pestilence, raging and ravenous' (*Beowulf*, l. 120). It could be argued, therefore, that Grendel is attempting to define the warriors in the same way he himself has been defined, implying a desire to share the same categorisation. Zeikowitz suggests that Grendel in *Beowulf* 'longs for interactions with men, eventually forcing his way inside the hall, but cannot conform to

¹⁷⁸ Hélène Cixous, Catherine Clément, *The Newly Born Woman*, transl. by Betsy Wing (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 71.

normative homosocial culture', asking 'might Grendel be simply operating under a very different understanding of homosociality?',¹⁷⁹ Due to his banishment from the soldiers' collective society, Grendel is never formally introduced to the warrior codes. Beowulf's position as the 'hateful' against the 'hated' (*Beowulf*, l. 440) is inextricably linked to his bonds of loyalty; he feels the surge of contempt on behalf of his lord, his efforts made to avenge his fellow man. Grendel is the 'hated' because he is the singular entity, attacking on the behalf of no-one.

Zeikowitz asks 'could [Grendel] possibly be merely desiring some physical contact with the warriors?',¹⁸⁰ an important question to consider when understanding Grendel's position as the disconnected Other in Heorot's homosocial environment. His attacks on Heorot are his only way of physically interacting with the homosocial environment from which he is immutably forbidden. Zeikowitz argues that the cultural codes of *Beowulf* should be critically interrogated, suggesting that Grendel kills the soldiers because he does not know how to follow normative homosocial codes, asking 'must we assume that he intends to kill the men?',¹⁸¹ While this is one way of assessing his actions, arguably Grendel is reacting against his own seclusion from the society in which the social code was made instead of misunderstanding the code itself.

Morgan humanises Grendel in *Beowulf* by describing him as the 'God-hated [...] hell-fettered man' (*Beowulf*, l. 787). Compared with his predecessors' versions, the same line is translated by Francis Gummere as 'God's foe [...] / captive of hell',¹⁸² and by Clark Hall as 'adversary of God [...] the prisoner of hell'.¹⁸³ The phrase from the original text, *godes andsacan*, shows Gummere and Clark Hall translating faithfully from Old English, with Old English language sources translating *andsacan* to mean adversary, denier, renouncer or enemy.¹⁸⁴ Morgan's

¹⁷⁹ Zeikowitz, 72.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Francis B. Gummere, *The oldest English epic: Beowulf, Finnsburg, Waldere, Deor, Widsith, and the German Hildebrand* (New York: MacMillan, 1909) 56, ll. 786-8.

¹⁸³ John R. Clark Hall, *Beowulf and the Finnesburg fragment: a translation into English prose* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1950), 60, ll. 787-8.

¹⁸⁴ See Arthur R. Borden Jr., *A Comprehensive Old-English Dictionary* (Washington D.C.: University of America Press, 1982), and Henry Sweet, *The Student's Dictionary of Anglo Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896; 1987).

version does not particularly emphasise Grendel's role as an opposing force but instead marks once more his place as the 'God-hated', or the Other. The description of him as 'hell-fettered' or indeed a 'captive' or 'prisoner' of Hell suggests in all three translations that Grendel's role as the adversary is one unwanted by the monster himself. Morgan's description of Grendel as 'man' takes this further. By anthropomorphising Grendel, Morgan implies the creature's underlying kinship with the warriors he attacks. This connection is emphasised further in the text's glossary, in which Grendel is defined as 'anthropoid' (*Beowulf*, 85). This term used alongside Morgan's translation choices connects *Beowulf* with his 1968 dramatic monologue, with Grendel transgressing the boundaries of his position as monster and recognising himself to be 'nearly human'.

By highlighting Grendel's human aspects, Morgan suggests that the acts Grendel makes 'in hatred, in violence' (*Beowulf*, l. 137) are a reaction to his oppression and isolation from the society that perceives him as 'the outcast spirit' (*Beowulf*, l. 86). In his detachment from warrior society, Grendel is denied the affection, loyalty, friendship and subsequent strength that homosociality provides to the soldiers. The statement that Grendel 'aimed to divide' (*Beowulf*, l. 731) may not just be referring to the physical division of each soldier's 'life from limb' (*Beowulf*, l. 732), but also his desire to permanently separate the group from one another. Like the viewpoint taken in John Gardner's novel *Grendel* (1971), in which the monster is reconstructed as the antihero, Morgan suggests in both his translation and his dramatic monologue that Grendel's violence is borne out of his own jealousy and loneliness, affected by his segregation from the homosocial warriors.

The characteristics of Grendel and Hrothgar each highlight *Beowulf*'s own traits and the value he places on warrior society and the homosocial code. Examining them alongside poems like 'Grendel' and 'Freeze-Frame' suggests that Morgan perceived the Anglo-Saxon text's homosocial theme to be significant. Corinne Saunders argues that Morgan's text engages in particular with 'the rich and strange vocabulary of Old English, as well as with the ways that its heroism and homosocial society resonated with the experience of the servicemen in the

Second World War'.¹⁸⁵ Her statement echoes the notion that the act of translation in conjunction with the significance of *Beowulf*'s themes enabled Morgan to break into literary territory after time away from academia. McGonigal suggests that Morgan, after returning to Glasgow, was locked into an 'unliterary frame of mind' and felt unable to engage easily with certain writers and texts, such as the 'Romantic poets' who 'seemed totally removed from life' (*BTL*D, 79). *Beowulf*, in its portrayal of 'craggy solidarity' and the 'unity [...] and dignity' of warfare (*Beowulf*, xx; xxxiv), embodies that which Morgan left behind in the army, assisting his transition back into a literary and academic mindset through contexts applicable to his own experience. As Chris Jones states, 'in the Beowulf-poet's ancient stories of feud, genocide and monstrous conflict, [Morgan] found a thematic rhyme with his own times'.¹⁸⁶ For Morgan, the Anglo-Saxon warriors may have felt akin to his companions in the RAMC, the memories of 'some sleekit dark sub from Kiel' (*LL*, 20, l. 8) resonating with medieval sea-monsters.

Morgan admits that the appeal of 'a band of fairly close-knit persons' drew him to the quests and adventure of medieval poetry, suggesting that 'maybe that's why I liked *Beowulf* so much'.¹⁸⁷ He further states that his 'interest in the future [...] must have something to do with a certain dissatisfaction with the present'.¹⁸⁸ Morgan feasibly experienced this dissatisfaction in his return to Glasgow in the 1950s. His movement back into the past through his translation of *Beowulf* and other medieval poems was, in a sense, a way of retrieving or re-envisioning the homosocial context lost to him. The texts offer a continuity of experience in this context. Poems like 'The Ruin' and 'The Seafarer' depict the 'armies of men in the earth' (*CP*, 31, l. 20) and reflect on 'this mortality / And loan of life' (*CP*, 33, ll. 70-1), and Morgan perhaps took comfort in the idea of time's circularities, encountering in his life the same stories of war, death and companionship as found in the medieval texts.

Magennis argues that Morgan's translation 'invit[es] his readers to respond to it in its own terms'.¹⁸⁹ His version presents no real guide for the audience in terms of material

¹⁸⁵ Corinne Saunders, 'Epilogue: Afterlives of Medieval English Poetry' in *A Companion to Medieval Poetry*, ed. C. Saunders (Chichester; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 647-60, 657.

¹⁸⁶ Chris Jones, *Strange Likeness: The Use of Old English in Twentieth-Century Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 123.

¹⁸⁷ Morgan, 'Gay Writing in Scotland', 147.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Magennis, 85.

contextualisation or marginal annotation, with Morgan's main offering to his audience being the theory of his translation and a brief glossary of characters. This suggests that, although he may consider certain elements of the text to hold particular relevance, Morgan believes the text is not his to dictate in meaning. For Morgan, *Beowulf* may very well have represented the warrior brotherhood and community from which he felt alienated after the Second World War, but that does not necessarily suggest he intended for each reader to adopt the same interpretation. On a similar note, and in stark difference from many other translations of *Beowulf*, Morgan's text removes communal perspective. The original opening line, 'Hwæt! Wé Gárdena' or 'Listen! We -- the spear kings', is translated in his version as: 'How that glory remains in remembrance, / Of the Danes and their kings in days gone' (*Beowulf*, ll. 1-2). As identified by Magennis, 'the formulaic phrase *mine gefraege*, "as I have heard tell", is either ignored or recast in impersonal terms. [...] Morgan always removes the first-person perspective in his translation'.¹⁹⁰ This detachment from the 'intense emotional involvement'¹⁹¹ of first-person perspective could be a way for Morgan to extend the themes and ideas of the medieval tale into the modern world. A theme such as war, then, is not simply locked into *Beowulf*'s Anglo-Saxon context, but instead can be used to engage with the audience's contemporary world.

1.7. 'The New Divan'

Twenty-five years after his translation of *Beowulf*, Morgan published *The New Divan* (1977), the collection sharing its title with its opening sequence. Morgan describes the one-hundred-poem sequence as 'not just one thing, but to me, it's my war poem' (*NNGM*, 148). While *Beowulf* captures the stoicism and companionship of war in a rugged, medieval context, 'The New Divan' is a kaleidoscope of colours, landscapes and people, its poems addressing fragmentary moments in time through a nonlinear narrative. Morgan's 'liberating time' in the forces was 'partly what went into "The New Divan"' (*NNGM*, 147), the war having offered for Morgan 'a breaking down of inhibitions' (*NNGM*, 150). Liberation is evoked through the sequence's continuous movement and unpredictability, with Morgan ostensibly following the traditions of the Middle Eastern divan and referencing the fourteenth-century *Divan of Hafiz*. Like its Eastern counterpart, Morgan's divan often engages with the theme of love, at times

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 99.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 100.

interweaving the changing narratives with the pronounced and recurring images employed by Hafiz, such as roses, music and overflowing wine. Genders are left relatively ambiguous with stanzas shifting from one referent to another, and Morgan's divan implies that, as with Hafiz's, the central focus is 'longing and desire, polymorphous and overwhelming'.¹⁹² Through its metamorphosing locations and narratives that reverberate across history, 'The New Divan' aligns itself with the same 'abrupt switches of tone and scope of reference'¹⁹³ found in Hafiz's composition. Morgan, from his twentieth-century position, takes clear inspiration from the Persian poet, echoing his ability to draw 'wholly disparate areas of human experience [...] into the same poetic moment'.¹⁹⁴

The poems of 'The New Divan' are presented somewhat like the pages of the scrapbooks, at times brazenly offering a theme or point of focus while glimmers of something else exist in the background, questioning that which is on the page. The sequence offers a deliberate randomness 'in the sense that one is not following a story that really goes forward step by step' (*NNGM*, 136) and this, too, aligns with the structure of Morgan's multi-textual scrapbooks rather than with his poetry sequences or collections. Unlike *Sonnets from Scotland* (1984) or 'Planet Wave' (1997), in which each poem inhabits a secure space within a chronological framework, 'The New Divan' follows the discursive and 'deliberately [...] anti-structural' (*NNGM*, 136) quality of the Middle-Eastern divan, with ambiguity of meaning being a fundamental characteristic. The divan delivers a nonlinear narrative that is instinctual rather than calculated, one that gives priority to feeling instead of action. Unlike the articulated structural devices regularly established throughout Morgan's work, 'The New Divan' is unrationalised by pre-designed form and yet still seriously connective through visible, palpable distractions and digressions. In *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), Friedrich Nietzsche reveres digressions and objections, claiming that 'everything unconditional belongs in pathology',¹⁹⁵ and Morgan's sequence embraces a similar idea. In 'The New Divan', inconclusivity is progress towards meaning. Its deliberate engagement with unpredictability suggests that the sequence is built on an unexpressed purpose rather than a frivolous retreat

¹⁹² Dick Davis, *Faces of Love: Hafez and the Poets of Shiraz* (Washington D.C.: Mage Publishers, 2012), xxiv.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, xxxix.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, xxxix-xl.

¹⁹⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, eds. Rolf-Peter Horstmann, Judith Norman, transl. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 70.

into whim, and Edgecombe suggests that ‘the effort of discovery rather than the guarantee of results [...] prompts the enterprise’.¹⁹⁶ The reader is left to wonder what is ‘real’, what is constructed, what connects, with Morgan deliberately inviting them down different paths of exploration.

McGonigal’s analysis of Morgan’s sequence in ‘Recovering the Divan’, in which he divides it into six distinct sections, emphasises the Western reader’s instinctive longing to identify in poetry a ‘formal structure [...] that helps explain why it is shaped like it is’.¹⁹⁷ However, this desire for categorisation arguably inhibits the reader’s engagement with ‘The New Divan’. The sequence becomes meaningful through its phantasmagoric nature and from the moments of surprise that occur in each changing narrative. The titles of McGonigal’s sections, such as ‘dimensions of love [poems 40-59]’ and ‘the force of commitment [poems 60-80]’, offer themes that are certainly present at particular moments, but it is debatable as to whether ‘The New Divan’ can be so clearly divided into neat categories that move sequentially from poem ‘1’ through to poem ‘100’. McGonigal’s search for a set framework is understandable considering that one hundred numbered poems positively suggest the security of structure and a fixed definiteness, but the number also seems curiously arbitrary. ‘The New Divan’ is a long poem that could potentially have been extended or abridged at will, and to remove stanzas at random would not leave the sequence in an incomprehensible state. Instead, it would create a dimension in which the remaining verses could be newly perceived. The capacity of ‘The New Divan’ to omit or, if Morgan had so desired, affix stanzas without formal restraint is a particularly rare quality for a text. Morgan’s poetry, though often experimental, typically embraces the governing quality of structural device, but in ‘The New Divan’ stability is found only in its refusal of structural balance. Morgan suggests that, instead of following a particular laid-out path, the sequence should be read as ‘something that you enter; you move around; you can cast your eye here and there, you look, you pick, you perhaps retrace your steps’ (*NNGM*, 136). Ambiguity is ubiquitously present in ‘The New Divan’ and this is perhaps as it should be. The sequence, instead of falling neatly into defined categories, embodies the nature of a kaleidoscope in its engagement with the principle of multiple reflection, of which the

¹⁹⁶ Edgecombe, *Aspects of Form and Genre*, 26.

¹⁹⁷ McGonigal, ‘Recovering the Divan’, 57.

unexpected is the key element. To read 'The New Divan' is an onerous task, but it is up to the reader to engage with its mercurial movement and be receptive to surprise.

For the purpose of this thesis, two thematic lines have been chosen for examination together: love and sex. At their heart, they offer the same instability that the sequence does; however the words are defined, neither love nor sex offer a secure or guaranteed structure in life. They are repeatedly made victim to life's ever-changing circumstances, and Morgan's question from '37' lingers beneath the sequence's surface, asking 'Where can love, in this world, ever lodge?' (*CP*, 307, l. 458). With its multitudinous presentations of the two themes, the sequence demonstrates an acute awareness that love and sex are rarely able to exist in stable equilibrium. Witnessing the heightened tensions of war as a young man, Morgan perhaps felt the distinct reality of these uncertainties most clearly. In these two thematic strands autobiographical elements are at their most apparent, differently processed than anything found in Morgan's other collections. In the evocations and references to love and sex, the same personal energy informing the poems of *The Second Life* is found and yet a certain enigmatic intensity envelopes each stanza. Morgan's life and self are an obscured but fundamental presence, subliminally relevant to the different narratives but often concealed from the reader. Morgan compares the 'subterranean structural device' of his sequence to the way in which Alasdair Gray structures his work, suggesting that '[Gray's] own life is very much embedded in *Lanark*, as my own life is embedded in 'The New Divan', and many of the other poems too' (*NNGM*, 132). More so than the intimate lyrics of *The Second Life* or *From Glasgow to Saturn* (1973), Morgan's Middle Eastern sequence is principally referred to as his autobiographical work but, like the scrapbooks' arrangements, the reader must decipher the significance of each of its interweaving narratives.

In approaching the sequence, Morgan's own analysis from his 1995 lecture 'Long Poems - But How Long?' has been taken into consideration. He generalises in ways that imply reference to his own work:

Even the best long poem, certainly, will have sinking moments as well as soaring ones [...] in a good poem the reader's impetus of expectation should be able to

carry him forward across transitions, bridge passages, new build-ups and approaches, without the thread being snapped.¹⁹⁸

Exactly so, 'The New Divan' relies on the transitions of time, place and memory to create that which Morgan defines as its 'mysterious, subterranean' structure (*NNGM*, 136), presenting a collection of narratives that seemingly offer no sense of resolution. Amongst these disorientating transitions, however, are the 'soaring' moments, or the poems that act as signposts and connecting bridges, providing the reader with the 'impetus of expectation'. For a single poem in 'The New Divan' to be categorised as one of these 'moments' is entirely dependent on the way in which the reader has chosen to approach the sequence. In his lecture, Morgan draws on Wolfgang Iser's theory of the implied reader, which states that:

As the reader uses the various perspectives offered to him by the text in order to relate the patterns and the 'schematized views' to one another, he sets the work in motion, and this very process results ultimately in the awakening of responses within himself.¹⁹⁹

The reader is given the role of structuring the text and determining what could exist in the narrative gaps, a process that offers the 'awakening of responses'. Iser goes on to state that 'the "stars" in a literary text are fixed; the lines that join them are variable'.²⁰⁰ This emphasis on each reader's interpretation defining the structure and meaning of a text mirrors Morgan's suggestion for the reader to move around within 'The New Divan' and choose the path they wish to follow. Depending on the line that the reader chooses to pursue in 'The New Divan', particular poems are focal points among the narratives of hazy Eastern contexts. For example, if the reader wished to engage with the theme of music, poems such as '27', '39' or '76' would be relevant stanzas to consider, the motif employed within the background of the poems' depictions of love, death, and loneliness. The reader is left to create a coherent flow by considering these particular connections and the spaces that exist between them. While a theme such as music may not appear as relevant to the sequence as the larger affairs of love or sex, it indicates the sequence's emphasis on performance or sensation and the unpredictability

¹⁹⁸ Morgan, 'Long Poems — But How Long?': *W.D. Thomas Memorial Lecture, delivered at the University of Wales Swansea on 27 November 1995* (Swansea: University of Wales, 1995), 3.

¹⁹⁹ Wolfgang Iser, 'The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach', *New Literary History*, vol. 3, no. 2 (Winter 1972) 279-99, 280.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 287.

of their forms. Each theme or motif, however small, opens into further areas of experience and perception, but it is to the curiosity of the reader that Morgan leaves the exploration of ‘topographical, temporal, thematic lines forever crossing and enriching each other’.²⁰¹ Although certain poems appear particularly significant depending on the reader’s chosen route, the poems that have not been considered as focal points should not be disregarded. Each verse belongs to the sequence’s framework and may provide a different perspective for the reading of particular poems. Furthermore, as Iser explains, ‘certain aspects of the text will assume a significance we did not attach to them on a first reading, while others will recede into the background’.²⁰²

To read ‘The New Divan’ in this way aligns Morgan with an international context separate from his engagement with the Middle Eastern poetic tradition. Referring to Stephen Fender’s study *The American Long Poem* (1977), Morgan affirms that the ‘dark doppelgänger’ of ‘a text outside the text’ does not structure his own poetry in the same way it does in the work of modernists like Ezra Pound (*NNGM*, 116). Despite this key difference, Fender’s text provides a separate insight into how Morgan’s divan follows a particularly American tradition. Unlike the European model, the long poem that is ‘more characteristically American [...] and perhaps more central to American literary traditions’²⁰³ is cast with open sides. Fender describes it as having:

[No] formal outline and, if it contains fragments of argument or story, they do not inform the whole. It is not long because of its message but because it needs to include, or to seem to include, everything it encounters during the course of its composition. And yet ‘composition’ is not quite the appropriate word; ‘assembly’ might be more accurate.²⁰⁴

Like the reader assessing the outer material of Pound’s *Cantos* (1948), Morgan’s reader is encouraged to assemble the fragmented stanzas of ‘The New Divan’ into a coherent theme, the divan similarly transformed into ‘the shape of the “vortex” — what the reader constructs from

²⁰¹ Edgecombe, *Aspects of Form and Genre*, 45.

²⁰² Iser, 286.

²⁰³ Stephen Fender, *The American Long Poem: an Annotated Selection* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), vii.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

the disparate images in the poem'.²⁰⁵ The American form embraces humanity's breadth of experience and engages with alternating styles and tones, finding affinity with the multitudinous elements of Morgan's sequence. Certain specifics of the American long poems analysed by Fender also bear similarity. When Fender writes of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1855) and its 'open field composition without the outline of story or argument, the disappearance of the mediating narrator',²⁰⁶ he could very well be referring to Morgan's divan which, like Whitman's poem, 'contain[s] multitudes'.²⁰⁷ Similarly, 'The New Divan' finds a certain connection with Hart Crane's long poem *The Bridge* (1930), which 'so passionately projects "bridges" between past and present, West and East'.²⁰⁸

In Morgan's lecture on the long poem, he draws attention to the many *Paradise Lost* (1667) allusions in Wordsworth's *The Prelude* (1798), and suggests that 'such major poets [...] have an unusual awareness of their predecessors'.²⁰⁹ The American long poems are similarly familiar with certain preceding texts, and 'The New Divan' evidently follows this tradition with its allusions to Hafiz. However, Morgan's essay from this period, 'MacDiarmid's Later Poetry Against an International Background' (1978), draws on the occupation of his early contemporary with the long poem and highlights new contexts from which he may have taken inspiration. The essay contextualises MacDiarmid's long poems in relation to the work of modernists like Pound and Williams but makes no reference to Morgan's own divan. However, the timing of this publication, one year after the release of *The New Divan*, suggests that Morgan critically encompasses his sequence into the same context. By considering two of MacDiarmid's major texts, *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* (1926) and *In Memoriam James Joyce* (1955), certain links can be made between Morgan's divan and the new Scottish framework for the long poem introduced by MacDiarmid. Structurally, *A Drunk Man* establishes MacDiarmid's early shift from a rigid linear progression into an intricate, fluctuating arrangement of images, the surface of the poem presenting 'chaos representative of

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 9.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 14.

²⁰⁷ Walt Whitman, 'Song of Myself' in *Leaves of Grass* (Philadelphia: David McKay Publications, 1891), 78, l. 1326.

²⁰⁸ Fender.

²⁰⁹ Morgan, 'Long Poems — But how long?', 4.

the fragmentary quality of modern experience'.²¹⁰ It is a step towards the framework that 'The New Divan' would incorporate, but *A Drunk Man* is structurally disparate from Morgan's divan, it being sustained by its ballad form. Published almost thirty years later, MacDiarmid's *In Memoriam James Joyce* (1955) presents something formally closer to the long poems of Pound or Williams but, like 'The New Divan', without the structuring force of the lyrical ego. The shared absence of this governing authority highlights the sense of arbitrary connection that exists at times between individual sections in *In Memoriam* and 'The New Divan'. The poems each find meaning in interruption and this controls the poems with greater force than that of any identified self. The fundamental similarities of MacDiarmid's poem and 'The New Divan' are further accentuated by Nancy Gish's summary of *In Memoriam*, which suggests that:

[N]o particular section is indispensable or immovable, but details must pile up, creating a large sweeping movement, a sense of immense scope along with individual detail, and an openness to all kinds and degrees of human experience.²¹¹

Unlike MacDiarmid's *In Memoriam* or American long poems such as Charles Olson's *The Maximus Poems* (1953), 'The New Divan' was not made subject to continuous rearrangement or extension. Despite this, it retains the same quality for potential continuation. The divan mirrors the breadth of experience found in MacDiarmid's text, with Morgan's lyric ego retaining a subliminal presence on which the sequence extends its multiple personae. The reader of 'The New Divan' is continually reminded that the fluctuating narratives exist in a foreign, unknown space, but a space in which Scottish frameworks still transpire.

Although 'The New Divan' encourages a non-chronological reading of the poems, for the purpose of analytical comprehensibility the chosen poems will be discussed in the order they appear in the sequence. There is not space to analyse each focal point regarding love or sex in 'The New Divan', but the chosen stanzas depict distinctive aspects of the themes. Each poem will be considered in its dual position as a single moment and as a fragment existing in the wider narrative of love and sex. The position of war in the sequence has been described as

²¹⁰ Catherine Kerrigan, *Whaur Extremes Meet: The Poetry of Hugh MacDiarmid (1920-1934)* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1983), 112.

²¹¹ Nancy K. Gish, *Hugh MacDiarmid: The Man and His Work* (London: Macmillan, 1984), 184.

‘missing, hypostasized, fleetingly present, fundamental’,²¹² and its conspicuous or obscured presence within the chosen poems will also be considered throughout the analysis.

Colin Nicholson suggests that ‘The New Divan’ possesses a ‘clearly marked beginning, middle and end’,²¹³ and his assessment relates specifically to the poems ‘1’, ‘50’, and ‘100’. This does not negate the amorphous variability of the structure as a whole, but rather indicates rudimentary ‘key points’ that are as simple as ‘beginning, middle and end’, through which the sequence moves. The first and last of these clearly indicate an opening and closing of the sequence, and Morgan suggests ‘the one in the middle (the fiftieth one) is of some importance too’ (*NNGM*, 135-6). Representing a very basic framework against which each thematic line can be placed, these three poems will be examined alongside the chosen poems depicting love, sex and war.

The opening poem addresses Hafiz directly, asking ‘Hafiz, old nightingale, [...] / how could you ever get your song together?’ (*CP*, 295, ll. 1-3). By characterising the sequence of the Persian poet as his ‘song’, Morgan refers to the tradition of setting a divan to music, but ‘song’ further encompasses the art of poetry itself. The question draws attention to the task at hand and the difficulty of cohesively presenting on paper the disorientating layers of memory, history, and fiction. ‘1’ and ‘2’ can both be read as introductory remarks to the reading of the sequence. In Morgan’s presentation of a heart in ‘1’ that is ‘as / burning dead as beating’ (*CP*, 295, ll. 7-8), he alludes to the sequence’s merging narratives and the concurrence of separate temporal dimensions. The commands of ‘2’ to ‘be the driver / of tritons and the triton, be before / the mast and the aftermath’ (*CP*, 295, ll. 17-9) emphasise this further, the different spheres of being used to embody the sequence’s overlapping movements through time. In the call of ‘2’ to ‘keep / no form but water’ (*CP*, 295, ll. 20-1), the changing amorphous sequence is compared to the shapeless quality of liquid. In these lines, ephemerality and change are revered as Morgan invites the reader to consider the sequence’s metamorphosing paths, of ‘what might / be, what could never be’ (*CP*, 295, ll. 19-20). It is unclear as to whether he is directing himself or his readers to ‘dance yourself into the masks’ (*CP*, 295, l. 13), but

²¹² Kinloch, 101.

²¹³ Colin Nicholson, *Edwin Morgan: Inventions of Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 114.

Edgecombe draws comparison with the tradition of a masquerade and suggests that ‘each new lyric space [is] a testing ground for disparate views and attitudes’.²¹⁴

Poems ‘4’ and ‘5’ exist somewhat as a double arrangement, introducing the homosexual undercurrent that occurs at times within the sequence. While Edgecombe suggests that ‘4’ exhibits ‘details of Morgan’s relationship with John Scott [...] overlaid with oriental colours’,²¹⁵ it could also be depicting a wartime relationship. The ‘sentinel’ (*CP*, 296, l. 36) suggests that a third person, a soldier or guard described as a ‘bear’, watches over the collective ‘we’ (*CP*, 296, l. 41) of the poem. As Kinloch notes, a ‘bear’ is ‘a term for a large, hairy, older gay man’, the phrase ‘in circulation since the 1970s at least and pre-Aids was used of primarily rural, blue collar masculine men’.²¹⁶ This suggests that the couple’s guard is also homosexual, their shared acknowledgement of each other’s sexual identity meaning that ‘you don’t need passwords’ (*CP*, 296, l. 37). The bear drinks wine, depicted ‘dancing like / a madman in a play’ (*CP*, 296, ll. 41-2) before falling into a drunken stupor. In the morning, described in ‘5’, he lets the sheets of the couple’s beds lie unmade as he ‘grimac[es] through drugged plums’ (*CP*, 296, l. 50), the plural beds suggesting that the couple have spent the night together in a barrack-like structure. The morning brings a lyrical domesticity that implies tenderness after perhaps a passionate night, the speaker vowing to ‘close my book when the curtain’s surrounded / by grey light, bring you tea with the sun’ (*CP*, 296, ll. 53-4). The bear, with whom ‘relations / are excellent’ (*CP*, 296, ll. 39-40), ‘lets’ (*CP*, 296, l. 49) them behave in this manner. The scene mirrors a senior figure turning a blind eye to forbidden relations, perhaps empathising personally with the situation. From this perspective, ‘4’ and ‘5’ embody the ‘little emphasis [...] placed on discharge procedures’ in the Second World War, as ‘every willing man and woman was needed for the war effort’.²¹⁷ The poems’ reference to passwords is significant, emphasising the necessary caution when pursuing homosexual encounters. For Morgan, this necessity lingered with him after the war. Morgan responded doubtfully to Christopher Whyte’s statement in their 1989 interview that ‘I think you can afford not to be apprehensive now’, asking ‘you think so?’ (*NNGM*, 187). Coming almost fifty years after his

²¹⁴ Edgecombe, *Aspects of Form and Genre*, 49.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

²¹⁶ Kinloch, 97.

²¹⁷ Humphreys, 2.

initial deployment, Morgan's reply suggests he felt compelled to lead a 'double life' in a city where 'there wasn't much of a sense of solidarity' (*NNGM*, 164).

The speaker of '11' requests their lover to 'Wear only the lamp behind the curtain', before contemplating, 'Are these the shadows Plato wrote of?' (*CP*, 298, ll. 121-2). Plato's 'Allegory of the Cave' from *The Republic* (380 BC) examines true reality and enlightenment. In '11', Morgan considers this Platonic theory as the narrator interacts with the corporeal scene in front of him, in which 'You stretch, yawn, soft, lazily lift up the curtain, then put out the light' (*CP*, 298, ll. 130-1). The 'you' and 'I' of the poem symbolise the 'human beings living in an underground cave-like dwelling' from Plato's allegory, for whom 'true reality is nothing other than the shadows' of externally-controlled puppets projected on the cave wall.²¹⁸ These humans are unenlightened, passive to manipulation, and Julia Annas suggests that 'worse, they are used to their state and *like* it, resisting efforts to free them from it'.²¹⁹ Like '5', this bedroom scene offers a certain tenderness and yet the 'roused' (*CP*, 298, l. 123) thoughts of reality suggests that the narrator quietly questions the relationship's validity and the foundations of instinct and desire on which it appears to be built. The narrator's internal debate is interrupted by the lover who breaks 'the image I had', presumably of the Platonic cave, 'as the sea / breaks words on the sand' (*CP*, 298, ll. 132-33), encouraging physicality over abstraction. The description of the landscape from the bedroom's window hints at the external echo of war, the narrator observing 'a rosy gunmetal plat[ing] the hilltops' (*CP*, 298, l. 127). The speaker neglects the peripheral vision, returning to the bedroom's enclosed scene and concentrating instead on 'those few / watery gleams of your body' (*CP*, 298, ll. 134-5), the couple favouring that which Plato would consider illusion. The scene's bodily preoccupation is revisited in '38' in which 'my study / was my joy, your body, moving there. / My joy was groaned into your thick strong hair' (*CP*, 307, ll. 474-6). This similarly intimate scene is candidly eroticised as the narrator states he was 'Too / quick for art' (*CP*, 307, ll. 4767), perhaps abandoning philosophical debate again before 'wrapp[ing] my legs around you there / til we were empty' (*CP*, 307, ll. 477-8).

²¹⁸ Plato, 'Book VII' in *The Republic*, qtd. from *A Plato Reader: Eight Essential Dialogues*, ed. C. D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis; Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2012), 463-4.

²¹⁹ Julia Annas, 'Understanding and the Good: Sun, Line and Cave' in *Plato's Republic*, ed. Richard Kraut (New York; Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1997), 143-68, 153.

‘20’ highlights the human concern that Morgan presents throughout his work. Like Pelagius from Morgan’s later sequence ‘Nine in Glasgow’ (2002), the narrator of ‘20’ exclaims to ‘O god or gods’ to ‘Leave love [...] at last, for mortals!’ (CP, 301, l. 231). Identifying as neither human nor deity, the narrator exists in an uncertain space, a quality that connects each of the monologic voices in Morgan’s poetry. Morgan’s voices, whether they be the hyena or the apple in *From Glasgow to Saturn* or Edith Piaf or Marilyn Monroe in *The Second Life*, all belong to a great masquerade but one which is focused not only on disguise but on expressivity and subversion. The speaker’s ambiguity in ‘20’ and the place from which he speaks emphasises Morgan’s characteristic desire to give a voice to the otherwise silent, offering a space from which each figure can communicate. The speaker of ‘20’ remains enigmatic throughout, separating himself from humans by repeatedly employing the third-person collective pronoun ‘they’ instead of ‘we’, implying his own independence from them: ‘They are dying with every breath [...] / nothing they do ever replied / to what the dark vizier demands’ (CP, 301, ll. 232-36). He is similarly detached from any celestial beings, unaware of whether he should be calling to ‘god or gods’ (CP, 301, l. 231), ‘lord or lords’ (CP, 301, 240). Despite this, the speaker shows a desperate affection for and empathy with humankind, mirroring the time-travellers of *Sonnets from Scotland* who ‘take with them perhaps a kind of love’²²⁰ for humanity when they depart from Earth. He urges the gods to leave humans ‘with love and / mercy’ and ‘the watch of the foundations’ (CP, 301, ll. 240-2).

‘20’ implies humanity’s continuous failings, with history’s circularities demonstrating that ‘what they accomplish they undo’ (CP, 301, ll. 237). Despite this, the speaker pleads for humanity to be offered love and mercy, ‘one grain of the crystal’ (CP, 301, l. 234), instead of leaving them ‘abandoned in that wilderness’ (CP, 301, l. 238). The urgency of the unidentified speaker suggests that he has faith in humanity’s ability to rectify past mistakes, sharing again a Pelagian compassion and a belief in will and action. The sincerity of his plea to the gods suggests that he has encountered a world like ‘92’, which is presented without the ‘grain of crystal’, the angels shrugging as they watch ‘computers mass the injuries’ (CP, 327, l. 1256). ‘92’ employs war as the backdrop of a world in which shadows, ‘not angels’ (CP, 327, l.

²²⁰ Edwin Morgan, qtd. by Lesley Duncan, ‘Poet’s place for looking out at the universe’, *Glasgow Herald* (1 December 1984).

1267), watch soldiers. Humanity is left to question ‘when was our ACHTUNG MINEN ever [the angels’] / concern, or their tears where our bodies were?’ (CP, 327, ll. 1266-7). Amidst his anguish, the speaker of ‘20’ considers love and mercy to be humanity’s salvation. He implores the gods to consider how ‘beautiful / They could be’ (CP, 301, ll. 239-40). This line in particular resonates with Pelagius’s teachings by embracing humankind’s potential, the theologian calling from Morgan’s 2002 poem ‘for the unborn to accomplish their will / With amazing, but only human, grace’ (C, 11, ll. 86-7).

Love is moved back into an earthly context in ‘26’, defined by Edgecombe as ‘a record of heterosexual love’.²²¹ The poem opens with a statement relevant to Morgan’s own experiences: ‘To take without anxiety the love / you think fate might have left for you is / hard, when the brassy years without it / have left an acid on the ease of purpose’ (CP, 303, ll. 307-10). Morgan writes in *Footsteps and Witnesses* of how ‘all through the Fifties, I despaired that [love] would ever happen’,²²² and the opening lines of ‘26’ emphasise the effect that this deprivation has on the self. They echo the absence of love portrayed in Morgan’s earlier poem ‘Without It’ from *The Second Life*. Here love is identified as the foundation on which an otherwise lonely life is built, declaring that ‘Without it / there is nothing [...] / no hand on yours on either side of the slipping wall’ (CP, 187-7, ll. 1-8). Kinloch suggests that ‘26’ follows a ‘road of misdirection’²²³ by presenting a heterosexual relationship, but the poem arguably demonstrates Morgan’s hope for ‘the love poems [...] reach[ing] a general audience’ (NNGM, 145). Morgan states in his interview with Whyte how ‘I’ve always tended to feel that in writing poetry you’re just writing for human beings’ (NNGM, 185), suggesting that certain poems offer separate readings of both hetero- and homosexuality. The opening lines of ‘26’, then, apply both to Morgan’s experiences in the 1950s and to the woman in the poem who, after the absence of love, ‘turned back from the dazzling silence / and without a word ran into his arms’ (CP, 303, ll. 318-9). To place the woman in the context of war, her narrative could be that of a military wife. In this context, the absence is a space waiting to be occupied again by her husband, who created that space and to which he will one day, hopefully, return. For Morgan writing about his experiences as a young man, the absence is a space uninhabited by

²²¹ Edgecombe, *Aspects of Form and Genre*, 57.

²²² Morgan, *Footsteps and Witnesses*, 19.

²²³ Kinloch, 98.

love. Loneliness in love's absence is drawn upon again in '39'. The Lebanese singer Fairuz is depicted singing from the radio 'the final / flake and loosened quiver, winding down, of love' as the lonely wait for the day when 'someone will come, belong, return!' (*CP*, 307, ll. 486-8). The hopeful exclamation wanes, like the music, and the poem lingers on the 'meskin scene where nothing's right / and we lie and die many alone uncalled' (*CP*, 307, ll. 495-6).

'The New Divan' frequently explores the emotional dimensions of the heart but '28' presents the organ in its physiological reality. Alluding to romantic lyrics that metamorphose the heart into 'the seat of love', the narrator directs 'these / verses, these pens' to the clinicality of 'that red pulsing bag' (*CP*, 303, ll. 336-8). Detached from feeling, this image provides an antithesis to the speaker's past self who belongs 'in my mimosa days', lamenting over 'your cruel heart' while 'my / heart you said was faithless' (*CP*, 304, ll. 339-41). The speaker's removal of himself from clichéd sentiment emphasises his own transformation and his belief that 'men / don't gallivant in ventricles' (*CP*, 304, ll. 341-2). The poem appears to be a simple statement of physicality dominating abstract emotion, but in its final lines the speaker's sexual identity is brought to the fore when he dictates that men deserve 'the science of danger, / the valved incubus' (*CP*, 304, ll. 343-4). Rosemary Ellen Guiley defines the incubus as a 'a lewd male demon' from Hebrew mythology who, along with the female succubus, 'visit[s] women and men in their sleep, lie[s] and press[es] heavily upon them, and seduce[s] them'.²²⁴ For men to 'deserve' the male demon over the female demon implies an instinctive homosexual desire. The specific alignment of the lyric self with the sequence's homoerotic dimension is highlighted, a contrast to 26's open interpretation of sexuality. Despite the speaker detaching the heart from emotion to see it only in its physical form, the final line personifies it once more: 'The heart says this' (*CP*, 304, l. 345). The speaker connects physical longing to the heart rather than romantic sentiment, but his lust can still be regarded as an abstract sentiment; desire is both a physical and emotional state. In this final line, the speaker unwittingly shows his own connection of 'that red pulsing bag' with abstract feeling, despite the speaker associating it here with an erotic dimension.

²²⁴ Rosemary Ellen Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Demons and Demonology* (New York: Facts on File, 2009), 119.

The isolating fear of a life without love as briefly explored in '39' is inverted in the sequence's subsequent poem. '40' depicts the relationship between a child and her gerbil as an allegory of the potentially precarious, deceptive, or unhealthy nature of love. The absurdity of the characters, a small girl and her domestic pet, in relation to the poem's thematic line suddenly becomes palpable and immediate. The surreal image magnifies vulnerability and power as they both are shown to be almost helpless in their relation to each other. The child, eager in her affection, is perceived as monstrous by the small creature, the paint splatter from an art class 'varicos[ing] her arms / like a murderer's' (*CP*, 308, ll. 501-2). The anxiety and uncertainty of what the girl may do with her impatient, enthusiastic love leads the gerbil to desire nothing but the safety of the cage. Edgecombe suggests that it 'prefers the predictable confines of imprisonment to the dangerous adventure of love'.²²⁵

Morgan's exploration of the different dimensions of love in the sequence accentuates the differing intensities of its highs and lows, but the gerbil's experience of it is a touchstone for the entire collection: love exists as the menacing unknown. Different experiences of love are considered but the sequence's mercurial quality means that each demonstration dwells in an ambiguous space, emphasising love's capricious nature. Although the familial scene of '40' is not a noble one, obscured behind the sequence's references to a great war, it emphasises something essential to 'The New Divan'. The correspondence between power and vulnerability is as crucial to the sequence as love, sex or war, because it exists at the heart of each of them. Their variable imbalances provoke the changing conditions of each narrative and act as a structuring force behind each story. '40', in all of its absurdity, emphasises the fundamental nature of these imbalances, both in life and in the sequence itself. The swelling of the child's 'rage of rejection [...] / rooted in darkness' (*CP*, 308, ll. 505-6) depicts the potential problem of a relationship founded on unequal power, the child having slapped the gerbil after it 'sniffs and strains' (*CP*, 308, l. 503) to be released from her grip. Inequality of power glimmers at the heart of the sequence, the relationship between the child and the gerbil finding strange likeness in the stories of forbidden or unrequited love and in the devastations of war. Morgan describes the heart as 'dark and broad / and twisted like an araucaria under / a varicose sky' (*CP*, 308, ll. 506-8), depicting the breadth of a person's inner complexities from

²²⁵ Edgecombe, *Aspects of Form and Genre*, 62.

which the pain of rejection or jealousy may lead to danger. In this moment, love really is menacing. Possession is the fundamental element structuring the child's love from her position of power, her actions precipitated by a suffocating desire for control.

'49' exemplifies the sequence's preoccupation with performance and the body, but it further explores cultural standards similar to those Morgan may have experienced in the war. In front of what is presumably a male assemblage, perhaps a group of soldiers, a 'half-boy half-man' is pictured having 'rose, spun, went still, leaned, melted with / a shudder' in a dance that was 'strong and noble' (*CP*, 311, ll. 627-30). A strong homoerotic current underlies the scene but one which finds acceptance, rather than rejection, from the onlookers. When the companions 'murmured to me / to save a drop of rosewater, my / brow might need it' (*CP*, 311, ll. 625-7), the speaker's sexuality and the arousing effect of the dancing boy on him is outwardly recognised. However, the tone is light-hearted rather than uneasy. In this foreign space, the speaker and his companions' homoerotic observation is both accepted and encouraged, removed from the cautious or disparaging attitudes experienced in wartime Scotland. In this assenting space, the speaker can contemplate the dancer's effect on the self. The eroticism is clear in the thick humidity of a Middle-Eastern sunset as the dancer 'g[ives] us the / cry he carried from his high Afghan mountains', driving the spatial dimension even further East. However, the speaker considers the performance to be 'unrousing in its grace' (*CP*, 311, ll. 628-31), seeking instead a yet undefined other.

As previously noted, Morgan emphasises the central role of '50' in the sequence's basic framework (*NNGM*, 135). The poem humanises the cataclysm of the Second World War, the soldiers returning 'when the last guns were silenced' (*CP*, 311, l. 632) to a small village burnt down in warfare. Ghostlike soldiers 'flutter' among the 'rags of / everything abandoned' (*CP*, 311, ll. 636-8), life's illusory nature implied in the narrator's question, 'Years / leave what, ashes?' (*CP*, 311, ll. 638-9). '50' is one of very few poems in the sequence that deals frankly with war, although here the reader is led to the negative space left by war, 'a Tarkovskian image of fragility, an atmosphere rather than a meaning'.²²⁶ A melancholic echo of loss and the insignificance of lives in war exists in the emptiness, epitomised by 'the grave of the

²²⁶ Kinloch, 94.

sisters' who lie unnamed (*CP*, 311, l. 640). Yet, this pervading tone is balanced by the presence of something else existing at the fringes of the abstract space. Kinloch suggests that '50' 'offers no sense of resolution',²²⁷ and Edgecombe argues that the elusiveness of '50' disorientates the reader further considering its supposedly seminal role.²²⁸ This is perhaps its fundamental purpose. War is shown to be as incomprehensible as the sequence itself, with '50' depicting the senseless death of the sisters while a tin bowl is shown to have been 'disdainfully / spared' (*CP*, 311, ll. 640-3).

Despite this, an element of hope still exists in '50'. While Goethe uses the Ginkgo biloba tree in his *West-östlicher Divan* (1819), 'a botanical image of duality within unity',²²⁹ to symbolise the unification of man and woman and the East and West, '50' features the 'winged / seed of a sycamore' (*CP*, 311, ll. 643-4). In Egyptian mythology, the holy sycamore encompasses both life and death, existing as both the Tree of Life and the funeral tree of the underworld.²³⁰ Morgan's places this symbol at the heart of the sequence, emphasising life persevering in the midst of death. Robert Crawford suggests that 'the seed, with its promise of the future, is enough in the work of this poet, for whom even the most destructive change leads towards some form of positive evolution'.²³¹ Hope is the abstract presence, acting as the balancing force of the poem. '50' evolves as a space where war once was and the space in which life and love can still survive, the soldiers calling out in the final line to 'our loved and fated!' (*CP*, 311, l. 645).

Moving back into the realm of love's absence, '54' follows the first-person narrative of a singular figure who calls out from the side of the shore to 'Return, return / over the waste!' (*CP*, 313, ll. 686-7). This opening exclamation, emulating T. S. Eliot's figuration of the sea as 'Öd und leer das Meer' in *The Waste Land* (1922), addresses a nameless figure, the speaker

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Edgecombe, *Aspects of Form and Genre*, 65.

²²⁹ Catriona MacLeod, *Embodying Ambiguity: Androgyny and Aesthetics from Winckelmann to Keller* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press), 253.

²³⁰ William R. Osborne, 'The Tree of Life in Ancient Egypt and the Book of Proverbs', *Journal of Ancient Near East Religions*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2013), 114-39.

²³¹ Robert Crawford, "'to change / the unchangeable" - The Whole Morgan' in *About Edwin Morgan*, eds. Robert Crawford and Hamish Whyte (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), 10-24, 22.

pictured restlessly waiting for something or someone as ‘I watch this sail, that sail / as it teasingly grows, passes and goes’ (CP, 313, ll. 688-90). Who or what the speaker is waiting for is never revealed, but a certain absence can be assumed. Living in solitude, the speaker admires ‘This rock / I have made my own’ (CP, 313, 690-1). Compared to the rock, which ‘having no mind’ remains ‘great’ (CP, 313, 692) and imperishable, an internal suffering goes on to lay its claim on the figure on the shore, who admits that ‘the iron immense / absence fills [the mind] or / poisons its turns’ (CP, 313, ll. 695-7). The speaker’s solitude affects the mind, which ‘suffers first, most, / is not great’ (CP, 313, ll. 693-4), and yet the figure clings to the belief that ‘if I wait, I am great’ (CP, 313, l. 300). The narrative becomes a battle between the reality of the mind’s ruin and the speaker’s attempt to mirror the rock’s fixed and changeless nature, despite the lyric self shown to be an innate victim of human fragility left with a hollow yearning for another. ‘54’ ultimately rejects the absence felt in love that inevitably obstructs the self, its closing lines depicting the speaker’s desired metamorphosis: ‘I have forgotten my mind. / I am a figure on the shore. / I am not wedded to that sea’ (CP, 313, ll. 701-3).

The final perception of the self as a singular force shows the speaker’s persistence in becoming the dependable rock. The speaker rejects the sea, which becomes a symbol of that which is absent and ravages the self. In these final words, the speaker opens a space in which the Pelagian thought of possibility and potential exists. A similar moment is noted in Charles Olson’s long poem, *The Maximus Poems* (1953), in which the titular character reflects on ‘the undone business’ after having ‘had to learn the simplest things / last’, the ‘sea / stretching out / from my feet’.²³² Here Morgan and Olson’s lyric narrators exist in a comparable inchoate state, but one which recognises that ‘undone’ means ‘ongoing’ as they familiarise and engage again with the earth on which they stand. For Olson, the ‘undone business’ directly relates to his epic poem, which was left unfinished and, in turn, ongoing. Morgan’s divan, though complete in a typical sense, embraces open-ended narratives and the evolving story, and in this respect finds resonance with *Maximus*, ‘the consciously incomplete work [...] that continues to stimulate and enable thought’.²³³

²³² Charles Olson, ‘Maximus, to Himself’, *Selected Poems of Charles Olson*, ed. Robert Creeley (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1997), 101-3.

²³³ David Herd, ‘Introduction: Contemporary Olson’ in *Contemporary Olson*, ed. D. Herd (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 19.

‘79’ opens with the quiet happiness of a domestic romance, the speaker reflecting on a past day that was ‘an onion of skins / it came apart in temporary / hours, distinct, sweet, pungent and good’ (*CP*, 322, ll. 1038-40). The metaphor of the onion suggests that this quotidian scene from the past is yet to reveal the deeper heart of the couple’s relationship. The light-hearted atmosphere of the kitchen in which ‘you chopped the prickles / of nameless sticklebacks and sang’ (*CP*, 322, ll. 1041-2) masks the impassioned reality of their love. The speaker moves quickly from the afternoon kitchen to the bedroom at night, recalling that ‘It / was the evening, though, that cut the heart’, the intensity of their love removing the layers of the day as ‘it / blew from your flesh like a plume’ (*CP*, 322, ll. 1047-51). While the poem offers an atmosphere of tempered bliss, Morgan’s personification of mornings with ‘afternoons in their arms like moons’ (*CP*, 322, ll. 1044) signifies the ephemeral cycles of time. The line echoes a moment from the Scottish ballad ‘Sir Patrick Spens’, in which the phases of the moon prefigure a deadly storm: ‘I saw the new moon late yestreen, / Wi the auld moon in her arm; / And if we gang to sea, master, / I fear we’ll come to harm’.²³⁴ Aligning ‘79’ with the ballad suggests that the ideal of an enduring relationship is eventually destroyed by its own tempest, mirroring the fate of Sir Patrick Spens. The intertextual reference alongside the poem’s reflective quality suggests that the lyricised period exists in a secluded and unreachable past, the speaker left to ‘marvel / still at the splinters the shut-out moonlight made’ (*CP*, 322, ll. 1051-2).

In an interview with Robert Crawford, Morgan discusses the impact that E. Powys Mathers’ translations of Arabian, Persian and Indian poetry had on him before the Second World War. Morgan emphasises the genuine feeling of human experience that came out of the ‘strange storytelling or very powerful erotic imagery’, the ‘highly imaginative’ scenes still offering a depiction of ‘the real thing’ (*NNGM*, 125-6). Morgan’s own take on the *divan* similarly combines exotic visions with personal affairs, the poet stating how ‘parts of the sequence come from my own experience over [in the Middle East], other parts are invented characters, not me at all’.²³⁵ ‘86’ presents the first evident example of autobiography in Morgan’s *divan*, opening with the statement that it was ‘Not in King’s Regulations, to be in love’ (*CP*, 325, l.

²³⁴ ‘Sir Patrick Spens’ in *Scottish Ballads*, ed. Emily Lyle (Edinburgh: Canongate Press, 1994), 52.

²³⁵ Morgan qtd in Colin Nicholson, *Poem, Purpose and Place: Shaping Identity in Contemporary Scottish Verse* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1992), 70.

1169). With its reference to the British Army's prohibition of homosexuality, this declaration of love appears to be a fairly open confession of Morgan's sexual identity. However, positioned within a sequence that shifts through fictive settings and identities, the statement's reality is masked. Concealment structures the poem as Morgan parodies the reality of his emotions by offering to Cosgrove 'the flower [...], joking', his 'heart bursting' (*CP*, 325, ll. 1169-70) as Lebanese children 'laughed at our bad Arabic, and the flower' (*CP*, 325, l. 1175). Morgan's unrequited love is buried within these moments of frivolity and embodied in his reasoning that Cosgrove 'knew no more of what I felt than of tomorrow' (*CP*, 325, ll. 1176). Regarding a confession of his feelings, Cosgrove's 'gallus' nature underpins Morgan's understanding that he would have cared for 'little of that' (*CP*, 325, l. 1178). The impact of their relationship on Morgan is emphasised in the poem's close as the poet states 'I've not lost / his photograph', Cosgrove existing for him in both 'Yesterday [and] tomorrow, / he slumbers in a word' (*CP*, 148, ll. 1178-80).

Like the final lines of '86', Morgan's reference to Cosgrove's death in '87' alludes to the perpetuity of moments in history, the poet's tender commemoration to past love offering a perspective for the reading of time in the sequence. Morgan depicts at first the all-encompassing ache of grief after Cosgrove's passing, calling to the departed that 'it is very dark / The waves root like beasts' (*CP*, 325, ll. 1181-2), while Cosgrove's mother 'wail[s] [...] / with ashes on her head' (*CP*, 325, ll. 1188-9). Despite Morgan's acknowledgment that in death, as in war, 'nothing wins — something breaks' (*CP*, 325, l. 1183), he moves into something of acceptance as he suggests that 'History so fearfully / draws us backward / that to be gone / even as you are these thirty years is not to be / lost' (*CP*, 325, ll. 1191-5). McGonigal suggests that war 'had been resurfacing in dreams and nightmares [...] for several years' (*BTLD*, 242-3) before Morgan wrote 'The New Divan'. The strength of history's underlying presence echoes in Morgan's description of 'visual' and 'quite real' memories of his past, 'remember[ing] things thirty years later that were as if they had been the day before' (*BTLD*, 68). Arguably, the intensity of retrospection grants each moment's perpetuity. Morgan calls for Cosgrove's mother to 'Make do! Make do!' (*CP*, 325, l. 1190), recognising that Cosgrove's existence in the past means that he permanently remains somewhere in time and memory. He returns to this idea again in 'In Sidon' from *Love and a Life*, insisting 'I see you, your image is clear, you are in / my mind, you have not grown old, my Cosgrove, you are no

ghost!’ (*LL*, 21, l. 13-5). In this perception of moments or people existing in eternity, a correspondence is made with the structure of fourth dimension space-time. Of the concept, Rudolf Rucker explains that ‘every moment of past and future history exists permanently [...] I will always be drawing that picture, typing this sentence and meeting my death’.²³⁶ Just as Cosgrove remains an everlasting fixture of existence, so, too, do Morgan’s encounters with the different aspects of love. Time’s non-linear topology in the sequence suggests that each fragmentary moment exists concurrently and permanently. Through this, Morgan offers both the specific elements of love and the wider experience of love’s overlapping dimensions.

Unlike Morgan’s relationship with Cosgrove, which emphasises emotional connection, ‘98’ presents the physical relationship between Morgan and an officer in the Dental Corps, Arthur. Morgan describes their ‘strong sexual’ affair as ‘intensely pleasurable in a bodily sense’ (*NNGM*, 148). ‘98’ starts as another bedroom scene but this time in Middle Eastern barracks, where the sexual encounters of the pair take place ‘under my mosquito-net / many times’ (ll. 1139-40). This scarce concealment of their risky activities is shown to be frustrated when Arthur is ‘posted far off’ (*CP*, 329, ll. 1139-40). Morgan, more astute in later years, recollects that he was ‘innocent enough / to think the posting was accidental’ (*CP*, 329, ll. 1141-42). Again, reference is made to the ‘King’s Regulations’ from Cosgrove’s poem. Arthur’s transfer to another base ended their forbidden relations, and Morgan’s poetic reflection suggests that this was the intended purpose of the posting, the pair covertly separated by their superiors. ‘98’ epitomises their relationship as ‘the body, not the heart’ (*CP*, 329, ll. 1345) and, like the Cosgrove poems, presents sex and love as isolated spheres, with neither relationship offering cohesion between the two.

Love and sex are often depicted independently in the sequence, their disengagement from one another indicative of Morgan’s personal experience both before and during the war. Each attachment Morgan formed is described as explicitly physical or emotional, and he suggests that it was not until his relationship with John Scott that the two existed in harmony: ‘That was the first time it had worked both ways, a very strong sexual thing, and yet emotional too’ (*NNGM*, 170). Marking a new beginning for Morgan, their relationship represented a

²³⁶ Rudolf v. B. Rucker, *Geometry, Relativity and the Fourth Dimension* (New York: Dover Publications, 1977), 60.

balancing of powers. As in every relationship, the potential for vulnerability was still there for Morgan and John, but the shared commitment they made to both the physical and emotional aspects of their relationship means they were exposed to fewer issues of unestablished boundaries. When Morgan acknowledges that it was ‘my studious avoidance of [Arthur] that said goodbye’ (*CP*, 329, ll. 1343-4), it becomes a confession of his own vulnerabilities that existed in the space of their intimacy. Morgan’s inability to acknowledge their separation may have been due to the external prohibition of their affair. It may also indicate his reluctance to blur the line between physicality and emotion, his ‘studious’ evasion suggesting a deliberate restraint from feeling. The poet admits he formed no great emotional attachment to Arthur, and so this particular situation suggests that he did not feel it was his place to say goodbye despite their physical connection. Throughout ‘The New Divan’, Morgan emphasises the instability of love and sex as separate elements, but in this moment he highlights the increased difficulty of sustaining love and sex together and the fragile balances of power that exist between the two.

The autobiographical poems in ‘The New Divan’ present the intimate interlinking of love and sex with war, depicting Morgan’s physical and emotional relationships within a setting of international conflict. ‘99’ follows Morgan’s depiction of his furtive affair with Arthur and exhibits the brutality of the backdrop, describing an officer killed in action and ‘wrapped in a rough sheet, light as a child, / rolling from side to side of the canvas / with a faint terrible sound’ (*CP*, 330, ll. 1359-61). In *Footsteps and Witnesses*, Morgan explains that the magnitude of sexual activity occurring in the army corresponded with the soldiers’ placement at ‘the edge of the operation, the edge of life and death’,²³⁷ the situation’s intensity finding release in physical connection. Despite the contrasting tones of ‘98’ and ‘99’, the underlying connection between sex and violence is significant, and Kinloch suggests that ‘both poems foreground the frail, bestained human body as the only reality worth fighting for’.²³⁸

The intensity of physicality is a crucial element of the sequence and in poem ‘99’ itself, captured in the sweat and strain of the speaker and the vulnerability of the newly dead.

²³⁷ Morgan, *Footsteps and Witnesses*, 16.

²³⁸ Kinloch, 101.

However, 'The New Divan' does not perceive the tangible body as the singular existing truth valued above all else. The reader is confronted with a medley of experiences regarding love and sex, Morgan's presentation of them being Whitmanesque not only in its fluctuation between bodily intimacy and passionate attraction but also in its evolution of a distinct homosexual narrative. He evokes the American poet's demonstration of love, which is at once 'various, suffocating, and empowering, lust free and lustful [...] is simultaneously genital-love, body-love, sensual-love, and spirit-love'.²³⁹ In '43', the speaker remarks that 'Kelsons shudder the / world over even in the sun' (CP, 309, ll. 544-5), and here a link is made between Morgan's divan and Whitman's long poem *Song of Myself*, in which the lyric self realises 'that a kelson of the creation is love'.²⁴⁰ A central statement of Whitman's narrative, it emphasises love, both sexual and spiritual, as an energy that informs the world and 'animates existence, guarantees ongoing life, and gives the most ordinary objects their heightened significance'.²⁴¹ Morgan's reference to this line endorses the unification of bodily and spiritual love, both equally a reality worth fighting for, amidst a recognition that creation is vulnerable but resilient, fragile yet still enduring.

The intensity of the experiences keeps them alive in memory, and in '100' the merging narratives and lives of the sequence are shown existing in 'that other sea-cave / of my head' (CP, 330, ll. 1371-2). The breaking wave that 'closes, darkens, rises, foams, closes' (CP, 330, l. 1373) embodies the sequence's meditations that swell and break against each other. This evokes an image from 'Slate', the opening poem of *Sonnets from Scotland*, of the 'sea-poundings' that 'shouldered off into night and memory' (CP, 437, ll. 9-10). 'Slate' references Staffa, an uninhabited island off the west coast of Scotland and the home to Fingal's Cave, the sea cave from which Felix Mendelssohn took inspiration for his 1830 overture, *The Hebrides*, Op. 26. 'Slate' builds on the thunder and glory of creation's beginning, but '100' shares the same contemplation of subject found in Mendelssohn's composition. To suggest that the concluding poem of 'The New Divan' took inspiration from *The Hebrides* would be speculation, but both arrangements embody the changing temperaments of a particularly

²³⁹ Jonathan Ned Katz, *Love Stories: Sex Between Men Before Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 104.

²⁴⁰ Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (Boston: Thayer and Eldridge, 1860), 28.

²⁴¹ Robert Schulman, *Social Criticism and Nineteenth-Century American Fictions* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987), 214.

Scottish seascape, simultaneously embracing its stark serenity and its swelling waves. The flashes of visceral reality from eidetic memory as seen in ‘98’ and ‘99’ depict the transience of life and all of its affairs, but as Morgan rests upon the visionary seascape in ‘100’, his lyric self ‘can’t speak / of that eternal break of white, only of / memories crowding in from human kind’ (*CP*, 330, ll. 1367-9). Morgan has spoken of his admiration for the mercurial and ‘the great liking I have for energy as a quality’ (*NNGM*, 128), and here in this pluralised image of human experience, ‘of memories crowding in’, the reader is presented with a central idea of the sequence: ‘it is from flux [...] that the valuable is to be extracted’.²⁴²

‘The New Divan’, with its metamorphosing narratives and settings, ultimately finds meaning in humanity’s restless energies. ‘30’ argues that ‘man in his restlessness is really / making, making’ (*CP*, 304, ll. 369-70), and this evocation of spirit pinpoints Morgan’s underlying hope for humanity to embrace its potential, echoed later by the lyric narrator of ‘Changing Glasgow’ (2002), who ‘hopes they are thinking. / I really hope they are wondering and thinking’ (*C*, 31, ll. 18-9). The speaker of ‘100’ clings to the plurality of human experience and memory rather than ‘that eternal break of white’, and here again the Pelagian humanism that dictates Morgan’s poetry appears distinctly. The obscured presence of war highlights the fragility of each experience, but all of humanity is embraced as ‘the dead climb with us like the living to the edge’ (*CP*, 330, l. 1363). In this final poem, the fragmentary episodes of love and life in ‘The New Divan’ are the reality to be held onto rather than ‘the life beyond that sages mention’ (*CP*, 330, l. 1365).

The poems analysed illustrate the multitudinous layers of understanding in ‘The New Divan’ as being contrasting areas of human experience brought together. There is no contingent story or clear path to follow directly, but the poems collectively create a journey of experience. They contemplate areas such as the frustration of unrequited or rejected love, the physicality of sex and the concealment of sexual identity, creating a tapestry of moments on which the reader may pause and move between. Morgan articulates personal experience in the later poems, showing the ‘emotional infrastructure of an autobiography [...] elliptically plotted and

²⁴² Crawford, 23.

partially pieced'.²⁴³ Morgan's personal experiences are fundamental to the narrative defined by Kinloch as 'a gay man's war',²⁴⁴ delivering the pain of suppression amongst moments of lyrical eroticism. However, the poems and their stories that depict these instances exist synchronically in the divan's wider narrative. Morgan offers a number of contexts for the poems of 'The New Divan', and in doing so he mirrors his own understanding of the mercurial and its frameworks, 'which like overlapping worlds perhaps, or different spheres of existence, do amount perhaps to something very, very solid really because life might just be like that' (*NNGM*, 128). Despite their apparent singularity, the divan's individual narratives are fluid and run through each other, strengthening the current, making streams or whirlpools of the sequence's different energies. Together they create a concentrated yet exfoliating reality, compounded of the abstractions of war and founded on specific autobiographical experiences and references.

Morgan speaks of the long poem containing the 'full stretch of poetic ambition [...] the sense of devotion and dedication beyond the poet, something in his society or in the world of ideas or in the human race'.²⁴⁵ This idea is explicitly present in the American long poems of the twentieth-century and in Morgan's arrangements of love and sex in 'The New Divan'. Morgan offers the individual stories to the reader as personal and as examples of a wider experience, existing separately but still in movement and connection with one another. While some poems emphasise a specific homosexual or homoerotic experience, others are left open to interpretation, following the Middle-Eastern divan and its 'implied ambiguity of reference [and] the multiple and shifting possibilities of meaning'.²⁴⁶ Morgan connects autobiography with worldly contexts, East with West, history with the present, the bodily with the spiritual, and war with peace. Just as the speaker of '17' travels 'Halfway down the road' before wondering 'had it only been about this and that?' (*CP*, 300, ll. 196-7), the audience of 'The New Divan' is left to interrogate, or wonder at, the sequence's multifaceted perspectives, exploring the separate and merging spheres of love and sex in which homosexual and

²⁴³ Nicholson, *Inventions of Modernity*, 117.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Morgan, 'Long Poems - But How Long?', 4.

²⁴⁶ Dick Davis, xviii.

heterosexual dispositions and desires might meet on converging paths then go their different ways.

Chapter Two: Love and Desire in the Fifties, Sixties, and Seventies

2.1. Introduction

James McGonigal suggests that ‘the years between 1950 and 1960 were [Morgan’s] bleakest [...] partly because so much of his life had to be censored and separate’ (*BTL*, 92). Not until *The Second Life* (1968) did Morgan’s poetry reflect on and interact with the contemporary development occurring in Glasgow and the wider world, the collection published in a decade in which Morgan encountered change and renewal in both his personal and professional life. This section will analyse the scrapbooks in relation to post-war cultural and socio-historical contexts, focusing on their engagement with homosexual literary figures and infamous legal cases from the post-war era. Following this will be an exploration of Morgan’s relationship with John Scott and the love poems from *The Second Life*. Both components will extend into an analysis of the era’s social contexts and how they affected the candour of Morgan’s work regarding his sexuality. With John, Morgan experienced ‘the main love relationship of his life’ (*BTL*, 130), extending sixteen years and inspiring the poems analysed in this chapter. Their relationship released Morgan from his post-war creative block, embodying his belief that love ‘fills us and fuels us and fires us to create’ (*LL*, 25, ll. 3-4). A study of their relationship through Morgan’s poetry allows for an examination of class, cross-cultural divide, and the interconnection of the physical and the emotional in the period in which Morgan established his place in Scottish poetry. Concealment in the sequence of love poems from *The Second Life* will be explored alongside the theme of absence, which is further established in the final text examined, ‘The Moons of Jupiter’ from *Star Gate: Science Fiction Poems* (1979). Written the year after John’s death, the sequence contemplates personal and universal grief against the backdrop of space.

2.2. Scrapbooks II

Although Morgan experienced a creative block following his return from the war, his scrapbooks provide a visual narrative of the transforming world, described by McGonigal as ‘an extended commentary on twentieth-century life as filtered through one sensibility’.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁷ McGonigal, ‘The Once and Future Pilot’, 18.

Morgan suggests that the scrapbooks were a form of ‘surrogate activity’²⁴⁸ for writing poetry, providing a platform on which to contemplate the metamorphosing spheres of science, art, and society. In the volumes constructed through the 1950s and the early 1960s, the reader is made witness to the deaths of Mussolini and Stalin by way of newspaper articles, alongside extended columns documenting the Soviet-American Space Race. Stamps from the Philippines, Bermuda, and Yugoslavia, amongst others, are pasted onto the pages, while a handwritten dream fragment entitled ‘A Modern Dream, Or, Space Time’ describes a vision in which Morgan ‘went up in a space-ship to some far-off world’.²⁴⁹ Despite his own sense of isolation in this period, the scrapbooks demonstrate Morgan continually responding to and communicating with the wider world.

Morgan’s later scrapbooks document the extensive development of nuclear weapons in the post-war period. His collages provide a narrative for the nuclear arms race, a ‘multidimensional phenomenon’ that ‘altered the very character of war, forcing dramatic changes in the military doctrines of both the Soviet Union and the United States’.²⁵⁰ The articles depict the frequency with which different nations tested their nuclear resources as nuclear deterrence became a regular and accepted form of defence. Morgan frequently implies in his compositions the price placed on human life by world powers in their contest for supremacy. One article reports the successful explosion of Britain’s first atomic weapon in the Monte Bello islands, followed by a newspaper photograph of a wheelchair-bound child dressed in bandages.²⁵¹ Taken from a separate article, the overlaying caption comments knowingly, ‘oh, you’ll get the idea when the Penny drops’. Its sardonic tone insinuates the failure of world powers to concern themselves with the correlation between atomic warfare and the death or disablement of millions. Morgan’s implied condemnation further resonates in pictures of Nagasaki’s devastated landscape. Pictures of people sprawled amongst rubble are positioned beneath newspaper captions, which exemplify the motivations uncomfortably

²⁴⁸ ‘Off the Page: Edwin Morgan’, *Off the Page*, STV (1989), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8lXmV6B_pI [accessed 20.09.2016].

²⁴⁹ ASC MS Morgan, C/13, 2593.

²⁵⁰ Sergey Radchenko, ‘The Soviet Union and the Cold War Arms Race’, *Arms Races in International Politics: From the Nineteenth to the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Thomas Mahnken, Joseph Maiolo, David Stevenson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 158.

²⁵¹ ASC MS Morgan, C/10, 1820-1.

lingering behind many political decisions: 'All through the night the robin sang' / 'Bombs 2 1/2d!'.²⁵²

Morgan positions this media coverage in proximity with man's triumphs of the age. While one page reports the 'Biggest Atom Blast Yet', the following announces Edmund Hillary's conquering of Everest.²⁵³ Here Morgan juxtaposes nuclear weaponry, a feat of creation but one with the potential for monumental devastation, with one of humankind's triumphs of conquest. Humanity's achievements are captured in a double-page photograph of the view from Everest's summit, but the threat of what else man can and is willing to do lingers in surrounding pages and their reports of further nuclear weapon testing. In a particularly apocalyptic composition, a monkey's eye stares out above a deserted, Mars-like landscape, with a caption in the middle of the page reading: 'thought the end of the world had come'.²⁵⁴ The opposite page is laden with newspaper pictures of the hydrogen bomb exploding over the Marshall Islands, described in its subtitle as 'a crouching terrible monster - a Horror-Bomb at the moment of explosion'.²⁵⁵ Compared to earlier volumes, the later scrapbooks seldom rely on literary extracts to create a dialogue between the material on the page, but in this instance Morgan includes the entirety of Edwin Muir's poem 'The Grave of Prometheus' (1956) on the following page.²⁵⁶ The imagery of Prometheus' final resting place, a wasteland where 'No one comes [...], neither god nor man', complements the 1950s world depicted by Morgan in the scrapbooks. An article is positioned beneath Muir's text, its title succinctly summarising the bleak atmosphere of the era: 'Beneath yesterday and Doomsday'.

Alongside the scrapbooks' documentation of the post-war era, personal elements overlap with the social such as the discernible narrative of Morgan's concealed homosexuality. Miniature pictures of half-naked men from 1950s 'physique' magazines frequently adorn the pages of the later scrapbooks, finding likeness with the inclusion of 'sports photos in which male athletes are brought into the close proximity of lovers'²⁵⁷ in Carl Van Vechten's scrapbooks.

²⁵² Ibid., C/10, 1826.

²⁵³ Ibid., C/10, 1870-5.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., C/12, 2243.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., C/12, 2244.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., C/12, 2245.

²⁵⁷ Weinberg, 29.

The physique magazines, which featured photographs of semi-exposed statuesque men often in classical or athletic poses, existed under the pretence of promoting physical fitness. The pictures ‘worked on the basis of suggesting or inferring the male member, usually by lighting and pose, but always stopped short of revealing it’.²⁵⁸ This steer away from outright nudity ensured that there was no transgression of any legal boundaries. Gavin Butt notes that ‘the gaze of physique photography’s male consumers on its near naked images of men was legitimized in the only way possible in the 1950s, by an appeal to homosocial forms of attention’.²⁵⁹ The homoerotic wrestling of two nude men in one of Morgan’s scrapbooks²⁶⁰ is an example of the photographs’ homosocial appeal, with male-male contact rationalised under the guise of violence. Jeffrey Weeks suggests that, in the 1950s, there was a ‘characteristic tendency [...] to emphasize the polarity of the sexes’.²⁶¹ These photographs of testosterone-fuelled men arguably played into that temperament, with the models presented to the traditionalist public as pinnacles of masculinity rather than as implicit material for the gay male consciousness.

The scrapbooks’ homosexual narrative is not solely limited to photography from physique magazines. Morgan also turns to twentieth-century literary gay icons, incorporating pictures of Hart Crane and a print of Jean Genet’s portrait painted by Leonor Fini.²⁶² Considering the rarity of Morgan’s own script in the later volumes, his inclusion of handwritten excerpts from the poetry and novels of these two international writers is noteworthy. Amongst the range of preeminent twentieth-century cultural figures that Morgan includes in the scrapbooks, Crane and Genet arguably hold a personal significance.

2.2.1. Literary Figures

Morgan states that, having read Crane’s biography after the war, ‘I was very much attracted to his work and just the kind of pathos of his life’ (*NNGM*, 154). Morgan dedicates a manuscript

²⁵⁸ Gavin Butt, ‘Bodies of Evidence: Queering Disclosure in the Art of Jasper Johns’, *Gender, Sexuality and Museums: A Routledge Reader*, ed. Amy K. Levin (London; New York: Routledge, 2010), 243.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ ASC MS Morgan, C/10, 2031.

²⁶¹ Jeffrey Weeks, *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present* (London: Quartet Books, 1990), 157.

²⁶² ASC MS Morgan, C/10, 1909; 1894.

draft of *The Cape of Good Hope* (1955) to the American poet, quoting a line from Crane's posthumous collection *Key West: An Island Sheaf*: 'To Hart Crane (1899-1932). Here has my salient faith annealed me'.²⁶³ Published after Crane's suicide, the poem from which the line is taken, 'Key West', illustrates the frustration and failure of love, with the speaker left to gaze 'to skies impartial' having been abandoned with 'no breath of friends'.²⁶⁴ It perhaps held a certain significance for Morgan, whom McGonigal reports as having 'considered suicide' around the same time that *The Cape of Good Hope* was published, 'harried as he was by frustrations in his personal, academic and creative lives' (*BTLD*, 92). Morgan felt Crane's letters to be 'remarkably vivid' and 'very touching' (*NNGM*, 154), including in one scrapbook a copy of Hart Crane's letter to the American novelist Waldo Frank. In his letter, Crane describes his new relationship with Emil Opffer, a Danish merchant mariner:

And I have been able to give freedom and life which was acknowledged in the ecstasy of walking hand in hand across the most beautiful bridge of the world, the cables enclosing us and pulling us upward in such a dance as I have never walked and never can walk with another.²⁶⁵

In this evocation of love's delight established in the structures of Brooklyn Bridge, Michael Trask suggests that 'what really distinguishes this relation is the heightened newness Opffer provides to Crane'.²⁶⁶ Crane's relationship with the merchant seaman provided an intensity of feeling unmatched by any other previous romantic or sexual encounter.

A comparison can be made here between Crane's relationship with Opffer, 'the great love of his life',²⁶⁷ and Morgan's relationship with John Scott. Although the two poets were born a generation apart on opposite sides of the Atlantic, they both lived and loved in homophobic societies, with each writer forced to censor their sexual identity. Before meeting Opffer, Crane

²⁶³ ASC MS Morgan, P/1/69, manuscript draft of Morgan's *The Cape of Good Hope* (completed Dec. 1950).

²⁶⁴ Hart Crane, 'Key West', *The Complete Poems and Selected Letters and Prose of Hart Crane*, ed. Brom Weber (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 171.

²⁶⁵ ASC MS Morgan, C/10, 2033.

²⁶⁶ Michael Trask, *Cruising Modernism: Class and Sexuality in American Literature and Social Thought* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 113.

²⁶⁷ Edward Brunner, 'Hart Crane (1899 - 1932)' in *The American Midwest: An Interpretive Encyclopaedia*, eds. Andrew R. L. Cayton, Richard Sisson, Chris Zacher (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007), 486-7, 487.

employed the alias Mike Drayton when partaking in the ambiguous world of erotic encounter, often relying on gay cruising to fulfil his forbidden desire.²⁶⁸ The Elizabethan poet from whom Crane took his pseudonym, Michael Drayton, similarly employed a *nom de plume* to explore love's anguish, although only within the bounds of literature. Under the pseudonym 'Rowland', Drayton captures the heartbreak of a love ending prematurely in 'Sonnet 61' (1594): 'Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part'.²⁶⁹ Its message applies to Crane's twentieth-century society, in which he had to 'kiss and part' from those he encountered when under the Drayton alias due to the forbidden nature of their meetings. Morgan never reports having turned to a pseudonym, but his homosexual experiences before he met John were similarly limited to 'one night stands in city centre lanes' (*CP*, 594, l. 23) and 'the curious business of public activity, semi-orgies, no doubt very disapproved of' (*NNGM*, 171). A sense of isolation exists in the worlds of Crane and Morgan prior to their respective relationships. They both express energy in light of new love, their relationships unifying both the physical and the emotional. Crane writes of the 'freedom and life' that his relationship with Opffer brought in comparison to the secrecy of his pseudonymous double life. So, too, does Morgan's poem 'The Second Life' explore that which comes with new love: the perception that 'all things are possible, he rises with it / Until he feels that he can never die' (*CP*, 180, ll. 10-1). Both poets demonstrate their love poetically within the image of the city and its changing technology. Established 'under yellow tower cranes, concrete and glass and steel' (*CP*, 180, l. 17) is the 'unspoken love' that epitomises Morgan's relationship with John. Likewise, in his letter to Waldo Frank, Crane envisions Brooklyn Bridge and the movement of its cables as inherently entwined with the metaphysical nature of his romantic love. A few years later, the harbour scene of his acclaimed poem, 'To Brooklyn Bridge' (1930) intimates the presence of the lover.

In his essay 'Three Views of Brooklyn Bridge', Morgan compares Crane to Walt Whitman and notes their shared 'prophetic pride in the achievements of industry and science, and a conviction that poetry's job was to encompass that area of experience as well as the

²⁶⁸ Hart Crane, *O My Land, My Friends: The Selected Letters of Hart Crane*, eds. Langdon Hammer and Brom Weber (New York; London: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1997), 318.

²⁶⁹ Michael Drayton, 'Sonnet 61', qtd. in *Poetry: an introduction*, eds. Ruth Miller and Robert A. Greenberg (London; Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1981), 177-8.

experience of nature or love' (*E*, 45). Morgan shares this belief, calling for the poet to 'react, as man, to his whole environment' (*E*, 14). New love becomes synonymous with the modernisation of the world as Crane and Morgan herald the unknown and the changing of time. Arranging the scrapbook in a decade Morgan describes as 'a very oppressive period',²⁷⁰ in which he 'sensed himself to be an outsider' (*BTL*, 92), Morgan perhaps took comfort in the epistolary testimony of Crane's love. Despite the legal perimeters and hostile attitudes that pervaded the issue of homosexuality in 1920s America, Crane's relationship still flourished.

In the same scrapbook containing Crane's letter to Frank and a hand-copied excerpt from Crane's poem *Voyages* (1921-6),²⁷¹ a sequence based on his affair with Opffer, Morgan includes material from Jean Genet, another writer towards whom he felt a certain inclination. Discussing gay writing and 'recognising aspects of experience that have been suppressed or submerged' in an interview with James McGonigal, Morgan draws attention to the work of the French writer.²⁷² In terms of 'books written by gay writers on gay themes that are not part of a mainstream', Morgan states that:

The best example is Jean Genet in France: these are really gay books. Proust is mainstream with a gay substratum, but Genet is only and openly gay, he uses gay slang - and I didn't know what the ordinary reaction to this would be. When I came across them, I thought this was most extraordinary.²⁷³

In the same interview in which he highlights the impact that Crane's biography had on him, Morgan expresses a sentiment similar to that in the above excerpt regarding Marcel Proust's writing. Morgan suggests that, although he was interested in Proust's aesthetic principles, 'he didn't make any tremendous impact on me from the point of view of his being a gay writer' (*NNGM*, 155). Despite the hostility towards homosexuality during his lifetime, Proust notably integrates a homosexual narrative in his writing, with many of his characters exhibiting gay inclinations and behaviours. However, Florence Tamagne suggests that 'in Proust, one does not find acceptance of homosexuality - much less homosexual pride'.²⁷⁴ In Proust's most

²⁷⁰ Morgan, 'Gay Writing in Scotland', 141.

²⁷¹ ASC MS Morgan, C/10, 2034.

²⁷² Morgan, 'Gay Writing in Scotland', 152.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 152-3.

²⁷⁴ Florence Tamagne, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe, Vol. I & II: Berlin, London, Paris, 1919-1939, Vol. I* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2006), 92.

renowned work, *In Search of Lost Time* (1927), the gay character Baron de Charlus depicts homosexuality as a pathological ‘inversion’, his desire for men due to a supposed inborn reversal of gender traits. This definition of homosexuality as a form of latent heterosexuality, its meaning implying gender difference, represents late nineteenth-century theories of sexology rather than those of the interwar period.

Proust’s writing frequently associates homosexuality with disparaging stereotypes of the era, and Tamagne argues that ‘in his anxiety to provide a meticulous description of the homosexual world, [Proust] gives examples that end up looking more like a list of cautions’.²⁷⁵ French novelist André Gide found Proust’s depiction of homosexuality particularly problematic, denouncing him for doing ‘more to encourage entrenched attitudes than the most forceful moral tract’.²⁷⁶ This condemnation extended not just to Proust’s literature but to his personal life, in which self-denial encroached on his sexuality. In one particularly overwrought reaction to accusations made about his sexual identity by the openly gay Jean Lorrain, Proust went so far as to challenge his disputant to a duel.²⁷⁷ Despite his writing helping to make visible the homosexual in modern literature, Tamagne suggests that Proust’s world ‘perpetuated the image of a homosexual subculture haunted by shame and secrecy’.²⁷⁸

In his introduction to *And Thus I Will Freely Sing: An Anthology of Gay and Lesbian Writing from Scotland* (1989), Morgan quotes the Scottish writer Compton Mackenzie who, in discussing gay writing, makes a veiled reference to Proust: ‘One day a novelist with that [i.e. homosexual] temperament will have the courage to write about himself as he is, not as he would be were he actually Jane or Gladys or Aunt Maria’.²⁷⁹ By heralding Mackenzie’s own

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 93.

²⁷⁶ André Gide, ‘Tuesday [3 May 1921]’ in *Marcel Proust: Selected Letters, Volume 4 1918-1922*, ed. Philip Kolb, transl. Joanna Kilmartin (London: HarperCollins, 2000), 218.

²⁷⁷ Didier Eribon, *Insult and the Making of the Gay Self*, transl. Michael Lucey (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2004), 236.

²⁷⁸ Florence Tamagne, ‘Homosexual Networks and Activist Strategies from the Late Nineteenth Century to in *Anglo-French Attitudes: Comparisons and Transfers between English and French Intellectuals Since the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Christophe Charle, Julien Vincent, Jay Winter (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 271-83, 275.

²⁷⁹ Compton Mackenzie, qtd by Morgan, ‘Introduction’, *And Thus I Will Freely Sing: An Anthology of Gay and Lesbian Writing from Scotland*, ed. Toni Davidson (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1989), 12.

‘curiously sympathetic insight’²⁸⁰ into life as a homosexual in the twentieth century, a covert understanding is made between Morgan and the reader: Proust’s treatment of the subject, while perhaps understandable, is problematic. To quote Mackenzie in this context is, however, an unusual choice. In *Queer Voices*, Meek claims that ‘Mackenzie’s “queer” writing did little to dispel popular myths about same-sex desire and its dysgenic and corrosive effects on society’.²⁸¹ He goes on to suggest that Mackenzie’s *Capri* (1927-8) novels demonstrate the contempt of the writer ‘who views homosexuality as destabilising and, in some cases, an ultimately fatal condition’.²⁸²

The different perspectives of homosexuality in Mackenzie’s novels suggest that he had an ambiguous and complex outlook on the subject matter. However, he pushed fundamental boundaries by being one of the only heterosexual writers of his period to engage frequently with the topic of homosexuality. Furthermore, his own attitudes, unlike Proust’s, arguably adjusted over time. Almost thirty years after the publication of his *Capri* novels, Mackenzie published *Thin Ice* (1956), selected by Morgan as one of his twentieth-century Scottish classics.²⁸³ Prejudices about homosexuality held by Geegee, the narrative voice, are challenged by his friend Henry, a closeted politician who struggles with the prohibited nature of his sexuality. Homosexual stereotypes are emphasised by characters such as Geegee and Henry’s parents, who question Henry’s ‘mental perversion’²⁸⁴ and inquire as to ‘where Henry got this infernal thing’.²⁸⁵ Despite this, a sympathetic undertone exists. Through Henry’s narrative voice, Mackenzie questions why a person ‘should deny myself what for me is the normal expression of human passion’.²⁸⁶ Although Geegee never fully accepts Henry’s sexuality, by the end of the novel he is critical of England’s anti-gay laws: ‘Are we to suppose that the police consider a homosexual offence more serious than blackmail? [...] It soon will

²⁸⁰ Morgan, *And Thus I Will Freely Sing*, 12.

²⁸¹ Meek, 68.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Edwin Morgan, *Twentieth Century Scottish Classics* (Edinburgh: Book Trust Scotland, 1987).

²⁸⁴ Mackenzie, *Thin Ice* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1956), 111.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 62.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 56.

[come to that]’.²⁸⁷ This reference to blackmail connects with Mackenzie’s later critical text, *On Moral Courage* (1962), in which he argues that:

Blackmail [of homosexual men], all too often leading to the suicide of the victim, is encouraged by that preposterous clause in the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1886, and here we are in the second half of the twentieth century without the moral courage to delete it from the statute book.²⁸⁸

When considering mid-twentieth-century perspectives of homosexuality, the text is openly disparaging of the popular press and certain Members of Parliament. Mackenzie argues that ‘their moral courage does not rise to it in case they may themselves be suspected of sympathy with homosexuality’.²⁸⁹ His indignation of this, alongside his examination of Oscar Wilde’s imprisonment in which he defines the public as having ‘behave[d] like yahoos’ towards the playwright,²⁹⁰ suggests that Mackenzie does, as Morgan argues, share a ‘sympathetic insight’ into the treatment of homosexuals, despite his characters often only showing a qualified acceptance of the matter. If time altered the attitudes that Meek attributes to Mackenzie in his *Capri* novels, perhaps Proust may have developed a less problematic perspective on homosexuality had he lived further into the twentieth century.

Morgan emphasises in *And Thus I Will Freely Sing* that ‘to anyone of my generation, the inhibitions were enormous, and habits of disguise and secrecy, inculcated at an early age, are hard to break’.²⁹¹ He argues that the writer does not necessarily need to write candidly on the subject, asking the reader to ‘think of Housman and Whitman, where lack of frankness is the very power the poem thrives on!’.²⁹² By referencing Proust, however, a clear distinction is made between concealment and shamed protestation. Morgan does not condemn Proust for how he responded to his sexual identity but highlights his own alignment with writers who aspired for society’s accommodation of homosexuality. As Frédéric Martel proposes,

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 201.

²⁸⁸ Mackenzie, *On Moral Courage* (London: The Quality Book Club, 1962), 25.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 60.

²⁹¹ Morgan, *And Thus I Will Freely Sing*, 13.

²⁹² Ibid.

‘Homosexual men can be broadly divided into two groups: those who have read Proust, and those who have read Genet’,²⁹³ and it is the latter to whom Morgan turns.

Comparing the homosexual narrative in Genet’s writing to that of early French modernists such as Proust and Gide, Denis M. Provencher suggests that:

[A] narrative ‘upheaval’ occurs in Genet for a variety of reasons: he signs his own name to his writings on the subject of homosexuality; he creates a narrator who self-identifies as homosexual; the narrator and characters recount undeniably homosexual acts.²⁹⁴

In his work, Genet juxtaposes homosexuality and criminality, seeking to represent the ostracised homosexual body. Genet was not motivated by a desire to liberate the homosexual, doing little to involve himself with gay rights, but his writing offers no apology for homosexuality. This separates Genet from his gay predecessors, who, as Edmund White suggests, ‘almost always resort to an aetiology of homosexuality which functions as a plea for understanding’.²⁹⁵ Likewise, Genet’s gay characters do not undergo a slow, self-conscious realisation regarding their sexual identity. Described by White as ‘unsentimental, anti-social, unself-justifying’ characters,²⁹⁶ they never question the essential nature of their desire, accepting it as an absolute.

Living on ‘puritanical islands’ (*TML*, 56) in a decade in which psychiatric care and hormone therapy were recommended forms of treatment for homosexuality, it is understandable that Morgan turned to Genet’s ‘extraordinary’ writings. In a letter to the editor of *The Scotsman* in 1958, Morgan cites Genet in his suggestion that:

[I]t is possible to distinguish between ‘well-written pornography’ and outspoken literary works of serious intention [...] Genet’s writings - novels, plays, poems,

²⁹³ Frédéric Martel, *The Pink and the Black: Homosexuals in France Since 1968*, transl. Jane Marie Todd (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 49.

²⁹⁴ Denis M. Provencher, *Queer French: Globalization, Language, and Sexual Citizenship in France* (Burlington; Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 61.

²⁹⁵ Edmund White, *Genet* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993), 445.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

autobiography - are undoubtedly obscene by any definition, and just as undoubtedly they have real literary power [...] These books certainly have what Judge Horn called 'social importance'.

(*TML*, 46).

Here, Morgan references the 1957 obscenity trial against Allen Ginsberg's *Howl and Other Poems* (1956) in San Francisco, in which Judge Clayton W. Horn ruled that 'unless the book is entirely lacking in "social importance" it cannot be held obscene'.²⁹⁷ Casey Charles suggests that the judicial decision served 'as both a critique of the First Amendment's repressive tolerance and a triumph of the elusive power of aesthetics in the legal arena',²⁹⁸ a defining moment after the repressive McCarthy era. Morgan associates the work of Ginsberg and his Beat contemporaries with the 'liberating process of the 1960s' (*NNGM*, 138), and this extends to his perception of Genet. In a letter to editor and poet Michael Shayer in 1960, in which Genet and Ginsberg are both mentioned, Morgan relays his belief in a writer overcoming 'in the actual production of his works, deficiencies and frustrations which are real enough - and perhaps criticizable enough - in his private or sexual life [...] All depends on his attitude and spirit, his deepest desires and hopes' (*TML*, 57-8). Arguably, Morgan recognised this spirit in both Genet and Ginsberg. Not only did they provide a voice for the socially ostracised, they both helped to popularise gay writing, or at least bring it into the public's eye, with both men choosing to speak as the homosexual in their work rather than on the homosexual's behalf.

Morgan contributed 'Jean Genet: a life and its Legend' to the short-lived periodical *Sidewalk* in 1960, as well as several translations of Genet's poetry and the article 'Jean Genet: "a legend to be legible"' to *The Outsider*. Schonfield suggests that 'through translating, Morgan found a number of poets with whom he could identify',²⁹⁹ and Genet arguably finds a place in this group. Morgan, unlike Genet, did not write candidly about his sexuality until the later decades of his life, but gay subtexts exist in Morgan's earlier work. Like Crane, Morgan's earlier writing is somewhat abstract and deliberately shrouds the homosexual narrative. However, as with Crane, this is arguably an apprehensive response to the animosity directed at non-heterosexuals rather than an ingrained sense of shame regarding his sexual identity. Genet's

²⁹⁷ *People of California vs. Lawrence Ferlinghetti* (San Francisco, 1957).

²⁹⁸ Casey Charles, *Critical Queer Studies: Law, Film, and Fiction in Contemporary American Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 2012), 166.

²⁹⁹ Schonfield, 117.

candid, unapologetic treatment of homosexuality in his writing certainly made an impression on Morgan, who was dealing with ‘the sheer difficulty [...] of even thinking, far less writing openly about these things’ (*NNGM*, 144).

2.2.2. Public Trials

A selection of articles included in Morgan’s scrapbooks highlight the negative perception of homosexuality in post-war Scotland. In Scrapbook Ten, he includes an extract from an eighteenth-century article reporting the suicide of John Clarke, a man awaiting trial at Reading Gaol having been accused of sodomy. The journalist covering the story infers that ‘the occasion of [Clarke] committing this rash action was a letter from some of his companions being intercepted, which discovered some more of his vile practises in that most abominable and detestable crime’.³⁰⁰ Considering Morgan’s inclination to depict mainly the contemporary world in the scrapbooks, especially regarding news stories, his incorporation of a report from almost two centuries ago is noteworthy, making a statement on the subject of homosexuality in the modern day. Underneath the news story documenting Clarke’s suicide, Morgan positions an article reporting Sir John Gielgud, a well-respected Shakespearean actor and theatre director, being fined £10 ‘on a charge of persistently importuning male persons for an immoral purpose’.³⁰¹ The magistrate is reported to have advised Gielgud to seek a doctor, stating that ‘this conduct is dangerous to other men, particularly young men, and it is a particular scourge in this neighbourhood’. Both articles propose a similar condemnation of homosexuality. By positioning them together on the same page, Morgan makes an implicit statement about the outdated persecution of homosexuality in mid-twentieth-century Britain.

Gielgud’s case contributed to the frenzied influx of tabloid anxiety about Britain’s moral decline in the 1950s. In an interview with McGonigal, Morgan suggests that ‘if something like Gielgud’s situation had applied to me, I would have been sacked’, emphasising the tension of the decade with its legitimate potential for the ‘social ostracism’ of an ‘outed’ homosexual man.³⁰² Gielgud, who had been knighted only months before the scandal hit the press, was protected somewhat by his status in the theatrical world and the loyalty of his colleagues and followers. In his biography of theatre manager and producer Binkie Beaumont, Richard

³⁰⁰ ASC MS Morgan, C/10, 1935.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Morgan, ‘Gay Writing in Scotland’, 141.

Huggett reports the audience's reaction to Gielgud onstage for the first time following the newspaper reports of his homosexual inclinations:

To everybody's astonishment and indescribable relief, the audience gave him a standing ovation. They cheered, they applauded, they shouted. The message was quite clear. The English public had always been loyal to its favourites, and this was their chance to show that they didn't care tuppence what he had done in his private life [...] they loved him and respected him dearly.³⁰³

Although this account suggests that the audience's respect for Gielgud as an actor outweighed any opinion they may have had regarding his sexuality, this was a reaction to one of their 'favourites' and, indeed, even Gielgud was not completely immune to hostility. Referring to the case in *Footsteps and Witnesses*, Morgan recalls watching one of Gielgud's films in the cinema after the actor had been charged. While Huggett reports the unwavering support of loyal followers, Morgan heard 'hisses from the crowd' when Gielgud's name appeared in the credits.³⁰⁴ For Morgan it indicated 'the intelligentsia's response'³⁰⁵ to homosexuality, a worrying insight into the potential reactions of others should Morgan's own sexuality be discovered.

Rebecca Jennings suggests that, in the decade following the Second World War, 'the cultural emphasis on the family and heterosexual marital love highlighted the perceived deviance of alternative sexual practices'.³⁰⁶ Concealing the 'deviant' side of one's character was a fundamental necessity for non-heterosexual men, and Morgan speaks about the 'double life' he led during the 1950s, being a respected lecturer at the University of Glasgow and a homosexual man covertly following his prohibited inclinations (*NNGM*, 164). Morgan's isolation emanated not just from the fact that his sexuality 'was so much not a matter for discussion', but also from his understanding that any homosexuals he knew existed not as an aggregated group so much as 'a series of solitary people who were in fact gay' (*NNGM*, 165).

³⁰³ Richard Huggett, *Binkie Beaumont – Éminence Grise of the West End Theatre, 1933–1973* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1989), 249.

³⁰⁴ Morgan, *Footsteps and Witnesses*, 21.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Rebecca Jennings, 'Sexuality' in *20th Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change*, 2nd ed., eds. Francesca Carnevali, Julie Marie Strange (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), 293–307, 295.

Gielgud's case documents the social climate of the time, representing the disconcerting reality for the 'outed' homosexual.

While the widely reported Gielgud case highlights the conflated reprehensibility of homosexual conduct as depicted by the British tabloids, the sensationalist interest in the story was overshadowed a few months later by a bigger scandal. In Scrapbook Twelve, an article from January 1954 reports Lord Montagu of Beaulieu being charged 'with committing a serious offence with John Reynolds' and 'with conspiracy to incite the commission of serious offences with male persons'.³⁰⁷ In the summer of 1953, Lord Montagu was joined at his beach house by his cousin, Michael Pitt-Rivers, and a journalist, Peter Wildeblood, who brought with him two RAF servicemen, Edward McNally and John Reynolds. All five men were accused of homosexuality and committing indecent acts, but the two servicemen turned Queen's evidence to receive lighter sentences. In March 1954, Lord Montagu was sentenced to twelve months in prison, while Wildeblood and Pitt-Rivers received an eighteen-month sentence.

In Scrapbook Twelve, Morgan includes several articles detailing the trial including the verdict from the prosecution counsel that Wildeblood's private letters to McNally breathed 'unnatural passion in almost every line'.³⁰⁸ In what can be seen as a motion of defiance regarding the counsel's conclusion, Morgan positions an image of a naked man looking upwards to the article, holding a sombrero to conceal his genitals. The description of Wildeblood's 'unnatural love' presents the prosecuting party seeking to identify corruption in his character, alongside their sustained conclusion of homosexuality being an abnormality. The counsel's attempt to map the essential character of the homosexual finds likeness with tabloid exposés around this time,³⁰⁹ and this in turn affected public response, or at least the response as documented by the newspapers. In the final article from Scrapbook Twelve that reports on the trial, the *Glasgow Herald* describes a 'crowd of about 300, including women and children' waiting for Lord Montagu after sentencing, claiming that 'some booed and jeered as they jumped into a police

³⁰⁷ ASC MS Morgan C/12, 2247.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., C/12, 2249.

³⁰⁹ See: Douglas Warth, 'Evil Men' series in *Sunday Pictorial* (25 May 1952 - 8 June 1952).

car and drove away with a rug over their heads'.³¹⁰ The crowd's spectatorship was a response to 'the scandal and titillation' as reported by the press, whose 'commodification of queer scandal grew so lucrative [...] that it contributed to the creation of homosexuality as a public issue'.³¹¹

The public prejudice against homosexuality did nothing to ease the minds of gay men. In a recollection reminiscent of Morgan's 'double life', Wildeblood admitted in his personal account *Against the Law* (1955) that, before his imprisonment, living as a closeted homosexual man meant:

I was forced to be deceitful, living one life during my working hours and another when I was free. I had two sets of friends; almost one might say, two faces. At the back of my mind, there was always a nagging fear that my two worlds might suddenly collide.³¹²

As with Morgan, the public self is shown to be a matter of artifice, or at least one half of the whole. Having read Wildeblood's book, a BBC trainee Colin Thomas became interested in the subject matter and co-produced *Male Homosexual* (1965) with Michael Schofield for the BBC Home Service. In terms similar to those deployed by Morgan and Wildeblood, one of the six gay men interviewed for the programme explained that he lived 'a private life and a public life. There is this pressure of make believe, all the time. It is completely artificial'.³¹³ The legislation regarding homosexuality was certainly a primary factor for the necessary concealment of gay activity, but its public stigma was a further issue. Morgan suggests that, at this time, he felt there to be no one in his workplace with whom he could have been open about his homosexuality, emphasising that 'it was so much not a matter for discussion' (*NNGM*, 165). In post-war Britain, suspicion of homosexuality was linked to a Cold War paranoia about spies after two members of the Cambridge Five, a spy ring who supplied

³¹⁰ Ibid., C/12, 2261.

³¹¹ Justin Bengry, 'Queer Profits: Homosexual Scandal and the Origins of Legal Reform in Britain', *Queer 1950s: Rethinking Sexuality in the Postwar Years*, eds. Heike Bauer and Matt Cook (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 167-82, 168.

³¹² Peter Wildeblood, *Against the Law: The Classic Account of the Homosexual in 1950s Britain* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1957), 37.

³¹³ *Male Homosexual*, BBC Home Service (1965) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06c5c4v> [accessed 29.09.16].

Western information to the Communist cause, were accused of being gay.³¹⁴ Instead of leading a double life as a double agent, however, for the average homosexual man it was the ostracising nature of the law and the public stigma of homosexuality that led them to separate certain aspects of their lives. The duplicity of a public and private life stemmed from an awareness that fulfilling prohibited desires was not possible without transgressing lawful boundaries. If the individual wanted to exist freely in society, these transgressions had to be concealed.

Christopher Pullen suggests that the *Male Homosexual* interviews ‘display strong evidence of transgression and revolution’,³¹⁵ the programme exploring a homosexual narrative of personal desires in a time when gay identity was denied. However, the men’s anonymity illustrates the necessity of concealment for those disclosing their sexual identity. Wildeblood’s acknowledgement of his homosexuality while on trial left him in ‘the rare, and perhaps privileged, position of having nothing left to hide’,³¹⁶ allowing him to campaign publicly for gay rights. For Morgan in 1950s Glasgow, his life arguably resonated more with the disconnected voices broadcasted. Although the knowledge of the law did not actively inhibit behaviour, ‘it was at the back of your mind all the time’ (*NNGM*, 156).

Despite the media frenzy of the trial and its high-profile prosecutions, Weeks suggests that it served as ‘a catalyst which revealed the inherent problems in the situation of homosexuals’.³¹⁷ In post-war England and Wales, the number of indictable offences rose and police employed a number of problematic methods to suppress homosexuality. Police *agent provocateurs* were used to catch perpetrators, while premises were searched without warrant in the pursuit of damning evidence. In some cases, a promise of immunity was made to those accused if they testified against other homosexuals. Jennings argues that the ‘increasing discussion of sexual issues meant that public opinion was beginning to change in favour of reform’.³¹⁸ What

³¹⁴ Jennings, 295.

³¹⁵ Christopher Pullen, *Gay Identity, New Storytelling and the Media*, (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 22.

³¹⁶ Wildeblood, 7.

³¹⁷ Weeks, 164.

³¹⁸ Jennings, 296.

eventually came out of these initial debates was the Wolfenden Report, commissioned in 1954 and led by a committee made up of academics, doctors, lawyers, clergymen and politicians. Considering evidence from individuals and organisations, the committee's mandate was to examine the legislation in place regarding homosexuality and prostitution, recommending any changes they felt necessary to be made.

Delivered in 1957, the report states that homosexuality 'is a state or condition, and as such does not, and cannot, come within the purview of the criminal law'. It suggests that 'a distinction should be made between the condition of homosexuality [...] and the acts or behaviour resulting from this preference'.³¹⁹ Matters of private morality and matters of the law were argued to be distinct from each other. The report recommended that, between consenting males over the age of twenty-one, private homosexual acts should be decriminalised and an amendment should be made to the maximum penalties for homosexual offences. As Stephen Rooney points out, the stated aim of the report was 'not to condone homosexual activity but rather to regulate it more effectively', and it still condemned homosexuality as 'immoral and damaging to individuals'.³²⁰ A decade later, the 1967 Sexual Offences Act enacted the recommendations of the committee, but, significantly, they were only implemented in England and Wales.

In *Queer Voices*, Meek explains there was 'a tacit acceptance that, as private and consensual homosexual acts were rarely prosecuted north of the border, the demands to reform the law [in Scotland] were less pressing'.³²¹ He suggests that the Wolfenden Report 'immediately hindered' the revision of Scottish laws regarding the matter,³²² with Scotland only decriminalising private homosexual acts between consenting males in 1980. From his interviews with non-heterosexual men growing up in post-war Scotland, Meek suggests that there was an 'absence of discursive platforms', which in turn left them 'unaware of any

³¹⁹ Home Office Scottish Home Department, *Report of the Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution* (4 September 1957), 11-2.

³²⁰ Stephen Rooney, 'Wolfenden Report', *Gay Histories and Cultures: An Encyclopedia*, ed. George E. Haggerty (London; New York: Routledge, 2012), 960.

³²¹ Meek, 39.

³²² Ibid.

developments in Scottish queer politics'.³²³ Morgan, a decade or so older than those interviewed for Meek's study, reports being aware of 'little groups in Glasgow, before the SMG [Scottish Minorities Group] or SHRG [Scottish Homosexual Rights Group], as it later became, were established' (*NNGM*, 157). In his interview with Christopher Whyte, Morgan references the Bachelor Clan, described by Brian Dempsey as a group that 'operated purely as a contact organisation with no agenda for social change'.³²⁴ Although the Bachelor Clan was 'the first avowedly homophile organisation to come into existence in Scotland',³²⁵ Morgan recalls unofficial organisations existing concurrently that similarly refrained from any great campaign movement and leant instead towards 'a very general discussion about the whole matter' (*NNGM*, 157). The groups' reservation in driving for homosexual law reform arguably stemmed from several issues, including a comprehensive fear of public exposure. Unlike the Homosexual Law Reform Society in England, which began openly campaigning in 1958, Scotland's first organised homosexual rights group, established eleven years later, reportedly found no one 'willing to fight under the flag or banner of "homosexual"',³²⁶ and was instead named the Scottish Minorities Group.

The threat of criminality not only affected these groups but the individual as well. In Morgan's penultimate scrapbook, an excerpt from the *Glasgow Herald* reveals a further issue regarding the illegality of homosexuality in this era. It reports the trial of James Douglas Denovan and Anthony Joseph Miller who, in 1960, were accused of the capital murder of John Cremin in Glasgow's Queen's Park.³²⁷ It is an individually notable case in that one of the accused, Anthony Miller, was the last teenager executed in the United Kingdom, but it also offers a comment on the treatment of homosexual men in this era. Sheriff Irvine Smith Q.C., one of Miller's defence team, reports that:

[Denovan] had told the police that he and Miller had attacked many homosexuals in Queen's Park Recreation Ground. Their tactics were admitted: the young one

³²³ *Ibid.*, 83.

³²⁴ Brian Dempsey, *Thon Wey: Aspects of Scottish Lesbian and Gay Activism, 1968-1992* (Edinburgh: USG, 1995), 3.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

³²⁶ Meek, 90.

³²⁷ ASC MS Morgan, C/15, 3221-3.

was the decoy. He made contact with the homosexual and while he occupied the victim's attention Miller came behind to assault and rob.³²⁸

Cremin, who was struck over the head with a baton of wood in one of these attacks, suffered a subdural haemorrhage and fractured skull, and subsequently died. The case is particularly grisly, but the psychology behind Denovan and Miller's tactics further demonstrates the grim reality of gay men left open to target and intimidation because of their criminalised sexuality.

In “‘The bars, the bogs, and the bushes’: The impact of locale on sexual cultures’, Paul Flowers et. al argue that ‘the nature of interactions between gay men clearly varies according to the sexual space in which it occurs’.³²⁹ They suggest that, in comparison to gay bars or clubs that offer social interaction alongside the possibility of sexual proposition, in the public space of a park ‘men’s motivations are unitary and unambiguous; they are in search of sex’.³³⁰ In Scotland, the association of parks with gay cruising emerged in the late nineteenth century when ‘a small but thriving network of male prostitution’ was established in Glasgow, with a particular subsection of prostitutes found in spaces such as Queen’s Park.³³¹ As Flowers et. al’s study examines, cruising in parks remains prevalent in today’s society, but it was also accepted - albeit illegal - practice in the 1950s and 1960s. Scotland’s publicised clampdown on homosexual acts performed in public spaces potentially contributed to the idea that parks at night were loci with no alternative function than for sex. Regarding these domains, Keogh and Holland suggest that:

[T]here is no established set of socially pre-determined rituals which is common or acceptable to this environment, no ‘innocent’ behaviours which cover subversive ones. Instead, social organization is determined entirely by the primary function of the site (i.e. the sexual function).³³²

³²⁸ Irvine Smith, *Law, Life and Laughter: A Personal Verdict* (Edinburgh: Black & White Publishing, 2011), 135.

³²⁹ Paul Flowers, Claire Marriott and Graham Hart, ‘The bars, the bogs, and the bushes’: The impact of locale on sexual cultures’, *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, vol. 2, no. 1 (November 2010), 69-86, 73.

³³⁰ Ibid., 74.

³³¹ Meek, ‘Mapping Glasgow’s Queer History’, *Queer Scotland* (2013) <https://queerscotland.com/2013/08/08/mapping-glasgows-queer-history/comment-page-1/> [accessed 05.10.2016].

³³² Peter Keogh, Paul Holland, ‘Observing the Rules: An Ethnographic Study of London’s Cottages and Cruising Areas’, *Families and Communities Responding to AIDS*, eds. Peter Aggleton, Graham Hart and Peter Davies (London: UCL Press, 1999), 121-32, 128.

Just as the ‘vigorous campaign’ in Glasgow to eradicate cottaging determined public toilets as places of homosexual conduct,³³³ public parks at night were similarly established solely by their sexual function. The temporal shift from day to night is key; as Flower et. al establish in the interviews for their study, ‘men’s presence in the park at these times [night-time] was understood to be indicative of their desire for sex’.³³⁴ Given the clampdown on public acts of homosexuality, primarily due to Scots Law making it difficult to prosecute homosexual acts committed behind closed doors, it was unlikely that one without sexual intention would generally risk entering this locale for fear of being accused of such behaviour. For a space such as Queen’s Park to be determined this way means that a man entering the park would have been typically regarded as one seeking homosexual contact, and for Miller and Denovan this gave them access to easy targets. Not only could those attacked not report the assault due to the manner in which they made contact with the decoy, it was also unlikely that witnesses would be willing to come forward, given the desire for anonymity in this particular locale.

It seems reasonable to suggest that Morgan documented the trial of Miller and Denovan in the scrapbooks not just because of the case’s high-profile status but also due to the implications it raised on homosexual rights. Eight years after the trial, Morgan examined the park as a space for homosexual desire in his poem ‘Glasgow Green’ (1968). He describes the text as ‘a sort of gay liberation poem before there was such a thing’ (*NNGM*, 172), taking ‘Scottish poetry into areas it has normally shunned’³³⁵ by exploring a heinous incident of homosexual assault in its appeal for compassion and the chance to ‘reclaim, regain, renew’ (*CP*, 169, l. 54).

The poem opens with a night-time scene of Glasgow Green, which, from the nineteenth century, became one of ‘the most popular locations in Glasgow for non-heterosexual sexual activity’.³³⁶ The notion of concealment is prompted by the ‘moonless mist’ (*CP*, 168, l. 1) and the ‘river fog’ (*CP*, 168, l. 4) covering the park, with anonymity left intact as men disappear behind the glow of a cigarette. While the shadowed men are unidentifiable in the darkness,

³³³ Roger Davidson, Gayle Davis, *The Sexual State: Sexuality and Scottish Governance, 1950-80* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 45.

³³⁴ Flowers et al., 76.

³³⁵ Nicholson, *Poem, Purpose and Place*, 74.

³³⁶ Meek, 37.

Morgan personifies the street Monteith Row, which overlooked the green and ‘eventually developed into something of a “Red Light” district’.³³⁷ The Row ‘sweats coldly, crumbles, dies / slowly’ (*CP*, 168, ll. 5-6), acknowledging the gradual decline of the Calton area, but still, ‘All shadows are alive’ (*CP*, 168, l. 6). The obscuration of those lingering in the unilluminated park lends a nightmarish quality to the poem, heightened by a forced shout, ‘No!’, that leads to ‘nothing but silence / except the whisper of the grass / and the other whispers that fill the shadows’ (*CP*, 168, ll. 7-10). Roderick Watson suggests that ‘they are the shadows of violence; or perhaps of homosexual assignation; or of gang rape’.³³⁸ The park’s underworld is introduced, the shout of protest depicting the latter half of ‘the hunter and the hunted’ (*CP*, 169, l. 43).

While the cry of ‘No!’ is the only utterance in the poem from the attacked, the reader is offered insight into the identity of the aggressor. His coarse remarks that follow the protestation suggest that he is something of a Glasgow hardman: ‘I’m no finished with you yet. / I can get the boys t’ye, they’re no that faur away. / [...] Christ but I’m gaun to have you Mac / if it takes all night, turn over you bastard, turn over’ (*CP*, 168, ll. 13-8). The scene portrays a specific male aggression, emphasised by the attacker’s threats of retribution, and Morgan comments on the authenticity of the episode in interview with Whyte. The poet recalls being threatened in a similar manner by ‘a real kind of hard man, young, very good looking, but no expression’ who said, ‘if I didn’t do exactly what he wanted he would get the boys to me’ (*NNGM*, 171). In the poem’s repetition, emphasising there can be ‘no crying for help, / it must be acted out, again, again’ (*CP*, 168, 20-1), the attack becomes cyclical. The auxiliary verb ‘must’ denotes obligation, suggesting that those wanting to fulfil their sexual needs in the space of the park must repeatedly endure the unsought encroachment of those like the attacker in the poem. Just as Denovan and Miller took advantage of homosexuality’s illegal status to suppress their victims’ complaints, the male rape depicted in ‘Glasgow Green’ is left within the confines of the park, unreported. As Whyte comments in ‘Revelation and Concealment’, ‘it is crucial to remember that both participants in public sex of this kind are beyond the law.

³³⁷ Gordon Adams, ‘Monteith Row’, *East Glasgow History* (2005)

<http://www.glasgowhistory.co.uk/Books/EastGlasgowDictionary/EastGlasgowArticles/MonteithRow.htm> [accessed 10.03.2017].

³³⁸ Roderick Watson, “‘An Island in the City’ - Edwin Morgan’s Urban Poetry”, *Chapman*, vol. 64 (1991), 12-24, 18.

The victim [in 'Glasgow Green'] is a criminal even before the violence starts'.³³⁹

Morgan presents the park's dichotomy in its temporal shifts, contrasting the sex and violence of the night-time with an image of Glasgow Green 'where the women watch / by day, / and children run' (*CP*, 168, ll. 31-3). Morgan maintains that the night-time scene 'is life, the sweat / is real, the wrestling under a bush / is real, the dirty starless river / is the real Clyde' (*CP*, 169, 24-7). The poem's tragedy exists in the notion that the irresistible nature of desire encompassing the space of the park, the 'longing / longing' (*CP*, 169, ll. 55-61), is but a phenomenon of all human desire that, in this form, must remain concealed.

Although Morgan 'wasn't aware of any models at all' when he started writing love poetry in the 1960s, the writings of the Greek poet Cavafy were 'perhaps nearest to what I wanted to do [...] an everyday urban context, but unusual things going on in that context'.³⁴⁰ Christopher Robinson suggests that, in Cavafy's writings, 'nearly every poem is an expression, at some level, of issues of marginality, of the gap between individual and social persona',³⁴¹ and this, too, can be said of Morgan's work. In 'Glasgow Green', homosexuality is introduced through the context of the city and its underworld, one that is markedly different from the world inhabited by Morgan in his day-to-day life as an academic. Despite the disquieting context, Morgan suggests society's capacity for growth as he calls out to Providence to 'water it!' (*CP*, 169, l. 46), a rhetoric Whyte describes as a form of 'Protestant sermonizing to plead the case for homosexual love, even in its most unacceptable, brutal manifestations'.³⁴² Instructing his reader to 'water the wilderness, walk there, reclaim it!' (*CP*, 169, l. 53), Morgan offers hope amongst the darkness and isolation, emphasising the centrality of love and desire. Iain Crichton Smith argues that, even in poems such as 'Glasgow Green', Morgan remains 'hopeful and joyful', suggesting that while 'there must be casualties [...] the present and the future are more important than the past'.³⁴³

³³⁹ Whyte, 'Revelation and Concealment', 87.

³⁴⁰ Morgan, 'Gay Writing in Scotland', 139.

³⁴¹ Christopher Robinson, 'Cavafy, Constantine' in *Who's Who in Gay and Lesbian History Vol. 1: From Antiquity to World War II*, eds. Robert Aldrich, Garry Wotherspoon (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 91-3, 93.

³⁴² Whyte, 'Revelation and Concealment', 86.

³⁴³ Crichton Smith, 51.

The scrapbooks are often forward-looking, as shown in their final pages that document the Soviet desire for outer-space civilisation and the Surveyor spacecraft landing on the moon.³⁴⁴ Morgan's interest in science fiction and space travel recurs throughout the volumes, just as it does in his poetry, but what is equally prevalent are the multitudinous clippings, images and texts arranged by Morgan that hint at issues appealing directly to the private self. He weaves images relating to an aesthetic appreciation for the male body with a range of clippings documenting the controversial matter of homosexuality in mid-twentieth-century Britain, providing an abstract moral reflection on sexuality. For Morgan, the surrealistic collaging of his scrapbooks was a form for exploring avenues he felt unable to examine openly.

Dorothy McMillan suggests in 'Edwin Morgan's Scrapbooks' that 'scrap-collecting begins to seem a bit like an effort to ward off the monstrous, or contain it, or laugh it off, but the laughter is not always convincing, although it never quite dies away'.³⁴⁵ Although the scrapbooks often provide an air of dreamlike surrealism and whimsical humour, McMillan's statement certainly applies to Morgan's documentation of mid-twentieth-century Scottish society. By drawing attention to different moments from the century, such as Miller and Denovan's trial or the 'new and monstrous perversion' of transvestism,³⁴⁶ the difficulties and intolerance continually faced by those marginalised in society are emphasised. While a present-day reader of the scrapbooks may view the volumes as a kaleidoscopic exploration of a sometimes unfamiliar world, Morgan's experience was of a young man living directly within it. Reflecting on the period in *Footsteps and Witnesses*, Morgan writes that 'I don't think anyone really enjoys living with a secret life going on underneath'.³⁴⁷ He does, however, suggest that 'incidents which you know to be deplorable you store up in your mind and you may write about them in ways that you don't quite see at the moment'.³⁴⁸ The scrapbooks' cryptic nature suggests that they were a safe space for Morgan, just as they had been for people such as Monte Punshon and Carl Van Vechten. Illuminating the different ways in

³⁴⁴ ASC MS Morgan, C/16, 3630-3.

³⁴⁵ Dorothy McMillan, 'Edwin Morgan's Scrapbooks' in *The International Companion to Edwin Morgan* (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2015), 28-39, 33.

³⁴⁶ ASC MS Morgan, C/10, 2121-3.

³⁴⁷ Morgan, *Footsteps and Witnesses*, 23.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 23-4.

which ‘gay people expressed their forbidden desires and created spaces of freedom’³⁴⁹ in restricted periods, scrapbooks such as these reveal hidden histories of their makers and the societies in which they lived and loved. In his own volumes, Morgan could accumulate history and society’s deplorable moments amidst the great achievements of humanity simultaneously occurring, in a time before he felt able to write about them, or himself in relation to them, poetically.

The final Scrapbook, left half-finished, is dated ‘1961-66’. This was the decade defined by Morgan as ‘a new phase beginning’ that he felt to be ‘very liberating’,³⁵⁰ the Sixties bringing with it the publication of *The Second Life* and the ‘great love of [Morgan’s] life’ (*BTL*D, 9), John Scott. As McGonigal and Hepworth suggest, the scrapbooks provided ‘a creative outlet that [Morgan] could not finally give up until his poetry came into his own in the 1960s’.³⁵¹ The final volumes were left incomplete as Morgan’s poetry began to secure its acclaimed place in Scottish literature. The scrapbooks’ role as a creative output for Morgan before his literary success is of fundamental importance to his poetic development. Morgan would actively continue to draw from a range of material and references throughout his body of work, just as he had in the scrapbooks, and therefore the volumes arguably had an early influence on his creative method, or at least as prefiguring the methodology of his imagination in this process of poetic composition.

2.3. John Scott and *The Second Life*

Marking Morgan’s first complete poetic engagement with the contemporary world, Roderick Watson suggests that *The Second Life* evokes ‘a new sense of personal change, sexual identity and even rebirth, as experienced by a man in his forties’.³⁵² In his reflective poem ‘Epilogue: Seven Decades’, Morgan recalls that, in the Sixties, he suddenly found,

[...] there was love, heard a new beat, heard Beats [...]
knew Glasgow - what? - knew Glasgow new - somehow -
new with me, with John, with cranes, diffusion

³⁴⁹ Weinberg, 48.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 20.

³⁵¹ McGonigal, Hepworth, 6.

³⁵² Watson, ‘Messages and Transformations’, 172.

of another concrete revolution, not bad,
not good, but new.

(*CP*, 594, ll. 32-8).

The verse touches upon several influences felt by Morgan to be the source for his renewed energy and optimism of the era, with emphasis placed on Beatnik-inspired revolutionary freedom and Glasgow's changing urban cityscapes. Morgan also references John Scott, a man whom Morgan met in 1962 and to whom he would dedicate *The Second Life*. Although the reasoning behind his sense of rejuvenation and liberation is manifold, Morgan's own attestation that 'in 1962 a new phase began' after 'throbbing like a chrysalis but not quite out' (*NNGM*, 114) suggests that his new relationship drove his creative awakening.

Morgan met John in Green's Playhouse, an entertainment complex he describes as being 'famous as a place of gay resort for many years; people came to it from far and near, and on a foggy night, when you could hardly see the screen, anything could and did happen'.³⁵³ While the notoriety of Green's Playhouse presumes the likelihood of sexual trysts rather than sustained emotional connections, Morgan describes his relationship with John as 'both very physical and it was a love affair'.³⁵⁴ The couple never lived together, in part because John's job was in Lanarkshire and in part because Morgan felt unable to write with somebody in the same house,³⁵⁵ but they met regularly and holidayed together. Each of their families were aware of their friendship although, perhaps, not the extent of how close they truly were. A wedding invitation in Morgan's papers is kept among postcards from John,³⁵⁶ suggesting that they attended the occasional formal gathering together despite gay relationships still taking place 'in an atmosphere of secrecy, of deception and pretence and machination'.³⁵⁷

Combining 'love and sexual transgression, cross-class engagement and anti-sectarian defiance',³⁵⁸ their relationship extended over sixteen years and inspired much of Morgan's

³⁵³ Edwin Morgan, 'Transgression in Glasgow: a poet coming to terms' in *De-centring Sexualities: Politics and Representations Beyond the Metropolis*, eds. David Shuttleton, Diane Watt, Richard Phillips (Routledge: London; New York, 2000), 278-91, 281.

³⁵⁴ Morgan, *Footsteps and Witnesses*, 17.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ ASC MS Morgan, DS/2: wedding invitation addressed to Morgan.

³⁵⁷ Morgan, 'Transgression in Glasgow', 281.

³⁵⁸ McGonigal, 'The Once and Future Pilot', 21.

love poetry, both before and after John's death in 1978. The tender and romantic poetry from *The Second Life*, epitomised in poems such as 'Strawberries', 'From a City Balcony', and 'When You Go', portrays their relationship's blossoming beginnings in a form described as 'designedly traditional',³⁵⁹ demonstrating the absorbing nature of new love alongside the interconnection of the emotional and physical. Despite Morgan employing established tropes of romantic love and, at times, reverting to conventional Petrarchan structure, his love poetry explores that which was decidedly unestablished in the 1960s: a sexual and emotional relationship existing between two men. Therefore, just as it is in the scrapbooks, the dualism of the private and public self in the collection is a fundamental element to consider. Gender ambiguity is a conspicuous component of the love poetry from *The Second Life*, and Morgan attributes it partly to an 'apprehension about the consequences of speaking very directly' (NNGM, 176). While Morgan's relationship with John provided renewal and stability, the legally enforced social conventions regarding homosexuality still drove the need for concealment and double meaning. As Christopher Whyte suggests, 'Doubleness is the rule in *The Second Life*. The urge to speak out, whatever the consequences, grapples with the poet's need to protect his social person, the person he is when not writing or being read'.³⁶⁰

2.3.1. Elegies

The Second Life embarks on a journey of new beginnings, not just in the realms of love but in space-travel, urban renewal, and poetic form. Significantly, Morgan begins the collection with endings. *The Second Life* opens with a group of elegies concerning figures from the twentieth century, all of whom died at the start of the decade in which Morgan affirmed his poetic voice: Ernest Hemingway, Marilyn Monroe, and Edith Piaf. Morgan documented each of their deaths by way of newspaper clippings in his scrapbooks,³⁶¹ and the three figures arguably held a personal significance. Morgan's examination of their suffering offers a clear sense of empathy, suggesting that they represent Morgan's own battle with adversity in the lead up to the 1960s. The elegies extend beyond their initial examination of Hemingway, Monroe, and Piaf, allowing the poet to bid farewell ceremoniously to his own hardship before embracing new life and love in the remainder of the collection.

³⁵⁹ Ian Gregson, 'Edwin Morgan's Metamorphoses', *English*, vol. 39 (1990), 149-64, 153.

³⁶⁰ Whyte, 'Revelation and Concealment', 84.

³⁶¹ ASC MS Morgan, C/15, 3316; C/16, 3382-3; C/16, 3466.

‘The Old Man and the Sea’ opens with ‘a white mist’ (CP, 145, l. 1) that is ‘cold, cold as nothing is cold’ (CP, 145, l. 3) and the ‘smoke from the sea’ that ‘hovered in the sunless morning’ (CP, 145, ll. 16-7). These elemental layers cover a North American landscape, in which truck drivers and lumbermen live and work within the oppressive sea mist that rolls across the land- and seascape. It is, however, the solitary figure of ‘a white-bearded man like an old sea-captain’ (CP, 145, l. 26) to whom the poem turns. Morgan merges Hemingway with the image of Santiago, the aging fisherman and protagonist of Hemingway’s novella, *The Old Man and the Sea* (1951). His conflation of the two figures is meaningful. From the outset of the novella, Santiago is marked by struggle and defeat in his role as a fisherman, and as the text follows his attempt to catch a giant marlin off the coast of Florida, death is found to be an inescapable force. Hemingway, battling not with nature but with himself, discovers this too.

As documented in the scrapbooks by a newspaper article announcing ‘Ernest Hemingway Dies in Shooting Accident’,³⁶² the writer’s death was not initially reported as suicide. However, five years after his death, Hemingway’s wife admitted it was self-inflicted and attributed it to his struggle with severe depression and delusions.³⁶³ With the unrelenting permeation of mist and smoke, ‘The Old Man and the Sea’ arguably alludes to Hemingway’s state of mind as he depicts ‘that daybreak with no sun’ (CP, 145, l. 29), the sea-captain realising that ‘it was too late to fight the sea’ (CP, 145, l. 33). By personifying the morning as ‘insulted’ by ‘the shot / [...] crude and quick’ (l. 35-6), the unsympathetic disposition of nature intensifies the solitude of suicide. The reader is left with the ‘silence of the inhuman valleys’ (CP, 145, l. 43), the omnipresence of death in the absence of sunrise, and the gun-smoke left ‘marrying the seamist’ (CP, 145, l. 42), the latter described by Erik Frykman as ‘an ironic final effect in a poem about loneliness’.³⁶⁴

The solitude of the self, enveloped in the impenetrable mist, lends a sense of oppression to ‘The Old Man and the Sea’ and its characterisation of Hemingway, while ‘The Death of Marilyn

³⁶² ASC MS Morgan, C/15, 3316.

³⁶³ Harry Gilroy, ‘Widow Believes Hemingway Committed Suicide’, *The New York Times* (23 August 1966).

³⁶⁴ Erik Frykman, ‘Loneliness in Edwin Morgan’s Poetry’, *In Other Words: Transcultural Studies in Philology, Translation, and Lexicology, presented to Hans Heinrich Meier on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday*, eds. J. Lachlan Mackenzie and Richard Todd (Dordrecht: Foris Publications Holland, 1989), 145-50, 146.

Monroe' examines the claustrophobic effects of fame on the American actress. The poem suggests that the extortionate world of Hollywood provoked Monroe's death, and Morgan's litany of questions and exclamations in the poem accentuate the consternation of celebrity as 'an inquisition and a torment / [...] the blur of incomprehension and pain' (*CP*, 146, ll. 7-10). In a tone of saddened incredulity, Morgan personifies Death and conceives him to be 'the only protector' (*CP*, 146, l. 5) of Monroe. Death shields the actress from 'the many acquaintances, the autograph-hunters, the / inflexible directors, the drive-in admirers' (*CP*, 146, ll. 8-9), just as death shielded Hemingway from himself. While Death seeks to protect, his precursor, 'lonely Uncertainty', provokes Monroe's vulnerability as he 'limps up, grinning, with / bewildering barbiturates' (*CP*, 146, ll. 11-2), the drugs by which Monroe overdosed. Death and Uncertainty are the only figures who respond to Monroe, and in this Morgan emphasises not only the faceless chasm of America as an audience silently watching Monroe's suffering, but also the actress' desperation to cling onto something that feels genuine in its existence. While Monroe's death was confirmed as suicide, Edgecombe suggests that the poem hints at collusion. with the 'white hearse' referencing the 'White House' and therefore implying 'presidential complicity',³⁶⁵ the actress rumoured to have been conducting affairs with the Kennedy brothers. It is, however, Los Angeles, an embodiment of America, to whom Morgan specifically calls at the end of the poem, condemning Hollywood society by asking pointedly: 'Will it follow you around? Will the slow / white hearse of the child of America follow you around?' (*CP*, 146, ll. 32-33).

Written as a dramatic monologue, 'je ne regrette rien' does not engage with Edith Piaf's death but instead reflects on the singer's relationship with love. Just as Morgan explores the vulnerability of Hemingway and Monroe, Piaf's own fragility is acknowledged in the description of her as 'tiny as a sparrow' (*CP*, 147, l. 11). It references her stage name, 'La Môme Piaf', the Parisian slang for 'The Waif Sparrow'. Despite her physical fragility, Morgan's characterisation of Piaf depicts her as 'a woman who resiliently embraced whatever life dealt her',³⁶⁶ standing with firm resolution 'under the lamp' to 'turn up my collar / in a circle of rain / and wait for you' (*CP*, 147, ll. 13-6). Despite Piaf's hardship, she asks

³⁶⁵ Edgecombe, *Aspects of Form and Genre*, 113.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 114.

derisively ‘Do you want me to start counting tears? / Count what? The cost? What cost? I won!’ (CP, 147, ll. 39-40). In her world, the triumph of living engulfs the suffering, articulated by the frequent repetition of ‘beginning’ throughout the poem. Morgan suggests that Piaf embraces love and life as a cyclical series of new starts, abandoning past burdens as she ‘strike[s] a match to my memories / they light a fire and disappear’ (CP, 147, ll. 48-9). Significantly, the man with whom she ‘sway[s] in the rain’ (CP, 148, l. 66) is anonymous and the men ‘that had me go their ways’ (CP, 147, l. 41) are left nameless. The identity of Piaf’s lovers is insignificant compared to the ‘lightning of the love’ (CP, 148, l. 72) and the rapture it brings with each renewal.

Morgan extends both admiration and empathy to the figures, likely sympathising with their moments of loneliness and anguish having experienced both in the 1950s. Although each figure displays vulnerability, the three poems evoke a certain strength, this balance later found in the collection’s love poetry. For Morgan, *The Second Life* was ‘in a way, my own recovery from a period of self-doubt, and (precarious though such recoveries always are!) the sense of release, of change, and also the pain of change, make it very much a book of feeling’.³⁶⁷ The title inherently emphasises the idea of endings transformed into renewed life. Therefore, while the elegies deal with the depths of human suffering, to which Morgan was no stranger, there is an underlying suggestion that in death they, too, will be part of that revival.

While Hemingway’s death lingers in the ‘silence of the inhuman valleys’ (CP, 145, l. 43), Morgan’s identification of Hemingway with Santiago leaves elements of the novella to exist concurrently. Therefore, despite the pensive nature of the poem, the essential cycle of nature as focused upon in *The Old Man and the Sea* still exists and promotes the promise of new life, highlighted in the novella by the crucifixion imagery used to connect Santiago with Christ. Similarly, although the final imagery of Monroe is of the ‘slow / white hearse of the child of America’ (CP, 146, ll. 32-3), an anticipatory spirit is hinted at in Monroe’s final words: ‘There is now -- and there is the future. / What happened is behind’ (CP, 146, ll. 26-7). Out of the three poems, the essence of renewal at its most explicit is arguably found in ‘je ne regrette rien’, as Piaf focuses upon the cyclical recurrence of love in her final lines: ‘What could I

³⁶⁷ Edwin Morgan, qtd. in *Beyond the Last Dragon*, 329.

regret / if a hundred times / of parting struck me / like lightning if this / lightning of love / can strike and / strike / again!’ (CP, 148, ll. 68-75). Morgan’s decision to focus on love over death in the final elegy in turn emphasises a belief in rejuvenation after hardship, demonstrated in the collection’s title poem which asks, ‘is it true that we come alive / not once, but many times?’ (CP, 180, ll. 35-6). Just as Piaf finds that ‘the fire begins / the stars come out’, that at ‘forty-five / it begins again’ (CP, 148, ll. 51-5), Morgan embraces the second life extended to him in the light of a new decade and new love.

2.3.2. Love Poetry

The elegies’ arrangement, both in the collection and in each poem’s singular position within the trio, indicates further meaning beyond their content. This is characteristic of *The Second Life*. A deliberate arrangement by sequence is implied not only in its concrete design but also in relation to the poems’ meanings. The collection maps out a structure; distinct thematic groups are categorised together and divided by three separate arrangements of concrete poetry. Glasgow, science-fiction, and love are three examples of the collections’ categories and they would prove to be central subjects to which Morgan would return throughout his life.

The multifarious nature of *The Second Life* was considered an issue in the initial first drafting, with the editorial team from Jonathan Cape rejecting the collection on the grounds that it was ‘too varied and just misses being sufficiently strong in one direction’ (BTLD, 193). Morgan refuted this argument, suggesting that,

[P]eople like to have a thematic centre, like to know where they are [...] But I would like to defend what I do [...] I have always had the sense that I should do different things, both in subject and in form [...] The very fact that one person is responsible for all these poems means that there’s some sort of unity about them.³⁶⁸

Writing *The Second Life* in a decade in which culture, technology, and science underwent significant revolutions, Morgan’s desire to explore different avenues of thought in his poetry encompasses the same progressive thinking that occurred in the rest of the arts during this period. By embracing the Sixties’ challenging sense of transformation through the diversity of

³⁶⁸ Edwin Morgan, ‘Interview with Edwin Morgan’, interviewed by S. Andrews for the Stirling University student newspaper, *Brig* (October 1977).

the collection, Morgan's poetry may have been 'the answer to the failure of Scotland to be fully part of the modern world'.³⁶⁹ Not only do the poems open up boundaries by creating a dialogue between the imaginative and the local, the aesthetic of the physical text is demonstrably modern. The production of *The Second Life* depicts Morgan's innovative vision, highlighted most clearly by the concrete poems. Printed on grey paper and arranged in clusters, they create a physical divide between the thematic groups. They lend to the collection a sense of balance existing between traditional verse and the celebration of non-linguistic typographical effect. David Kinloch suggests that the visual effects of *The Second Life* were 'bold and tenacious decisions taken by a forty-plus poet who had fought for years to understand his own nature and trajectory',³⁷⁰ and arguably this same determination extends to Morgan's defence of his eclecticism.

The multifarious nature of *The Second Life* extends not just to the umbrella themes of each arrangement, but also to the poems within each specific grouping. The twelve poems that make up the collection's section on love cannot be defined singularly, attuning instead to dimensions of love such as absence, transience, and romantic sensualism. They are, however, all written with deliberate ambiguity. Christopher Whyte argues that 'a reading of Morgan's love poetry which fails to take account of its doubleness, of the extra space it provides, has limited value', suggesting that the poems' 'general' appeal as determinedly ungendered elevates a heterosexual reading over a homosexual one.³⁷¹ Heterosexuality holds a conventionally dominant position in society meaning that, unless non-heterosexuality is specifically defined, heterosexuality is typically presumed and enforced. The forthright homosexuality in Morgan's later work suggests that the all-inclusive nature of this early love poetry is, in part, a product of the restrictive society in which it was published. However, the universality of the early work is still a fundamental aspect of Morgan's underlying message in his love poetry. For Morgan, love is one of the great universal themes, 'a story as old as war or man' (*CP*, 183, l. 47). It is important to recognise the context in which the poems were created and their relationship to Morgan's own life, but their ambiguity allowed Morgan, in what was

³⁶⁹ Cairns Craig, 'Edwin Morgan's Poetry from Scotland', *The International Companion to Edwin Morgan*, 59-86, 59.

³⁷⁰ David Kinloch, 'Full Flourish: Major Collections from the 1960s and 1970s', *The International Companion to Edwin Morgan*, ed. Alan Riach (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2015), 40-58, 43.

³⁷¹ Whyte, 84.

a restrictive era, to create a space for both hetero- and homosexuality to exist in stable equilibrium. Just as censorship plays a part in his writing and should therefore be addressed when analysing the poetry, so, too, does the universality of love play its part. As Morgan states, his poetry is meant for ‘anybody who takes it up to get what she or he can out of it’ (*NNGM*, 185).

The opening poem in the collection’s section on love, ‘The Second Life’, can be read as a prelude testament to the love and renewed life on which the remaining poems are built. The text is all-encompassing in its revelation of ‘that rising spirit / all things are possible’ (*CP*, 180, ll. 9-10), with Morgan forming a connection between Glasgow and America as he turns his optimistic gaze outwards and to the future. Reimagining the platitude that ‘life begins at forty’ by merging Glasgow’s changing cityscape with Morgan’s own partial ‘coming out’, the poem’s celebratory tone illustrates the period’s significance for the poet, who suggests that ‘a great place and its people are not renewed lightly’ (*CP*, 181, l. 53). Morgan, who experienced society’s deep-rooted structures working against homosexuality, demonstrates an understanding that a necessary change of attitude takes time. In this generation of revolution, ‘it is time’ to ‘slip out of darkness’ (*CP*, 181, l. 61), the repetition of the modal verb ‘will’ in the final stanza implies definite future transformation.

The poem demonstrates a pronounced sense of release and yet the ‘unspoken love’ (*CP*, 181, l. 51) lingers beneath the verses, a reminder that any articulation of the homosexual love that inspired this rejuvenation must remain concealed. Symbolising obscuration, ‘the caked layers of grime’ are laced with the expectation that one day ‘they will be dislodged / and men will still be warm’ (*CP*, 181, ll. 54-7), just as ‘the snake that hides a shining one / [...] will push that used-up matter off’ (*CP*, 180, 39-40). The pattern of emergence in these images engages with a specifically masculine presence, and Whyte suggests that the shift from ‘people’ (l. 53) to ‘men’ (l. 57) ‘hints at a tenderness that is between males, rather than being general and ungendered’.³⁷² The poem demonstrates that only through coded communication can Morgan reference the specifically male love that informs his renewed life.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 87.

Compared to the collection's remaining love poems, 'The Second Life' focuses on society as well as the individual. Morgan deploys the collective pronoun 'we' to imply mutual inclination between a group of people rather than directing his words at a specific 'you', the second-person pronoun found throughout many of the other love poems. With emphasis on social change rather than details of personal significance, arguably there is little need for extensive revelation regarding the nature of Morgan's relationship with John Scott. However, as Morgan writes in *And Thus I Will Freely Sing*, 'the stage we want to reach is the one where we can make our own individual choice whether to be frank or not'.³⁷³ The remaining love poems in the collection suggest that Morgan writes within a specific set of limitations, in which candour is inconceivable.

This sense of imposed boundary is further evidenced in the poem 'The Quarrel', written in 1966 but excluded from the collection. It relates a dispute and its aftermath between a couple on holiday who are divided by their class differences. The poem evokes Morgan's relationship with John, with McGonigal suggesting that 'holidays together after much of the year apart did create a certain tension' (*BTLD*, 162) between the two men. Class difference, too, was a factor of this tension. Morgan describes John as a working-class man from Carlisle in Lanarkshire who was raised in a large Catholic family (*NNGM*, 172), a different world from that of Morgan's own upbringing as the 'son of church-going Protestant and conservative middle-class business people' (*BTLD*, 33). McGonigal writes that John had taught Morgan 'to be more honest, to avoid wrapping himself in a "cloak of class" instead of getting to the truth of who he was' (*BTLD*, 267). A recognition of their class division is apparent but John appears to have understood it with a degree of open acceptance, having told Morgan that if the poet 'ever met someone he preferred, from his own sort of background, then [John] would understand' (*BTLD*, 134).

This idea, that a person may be more appropriately matched with one from their own social background, provokes the argument in 'The Quarrel'. The speaker of the poem, having been 'avoided [...] all that day' (*DON*, 39, l. 4) by his partner, demands reasoning for the other's evasion, not realising what effect the truth might have: 'What I didn't understand / I made

³⁷³ Morgan, *And Thus I Will Freely Sing*, 13.

painful, saying / it had to be known' (*DON*, 39, ll. 5-7). In the stairwell outside their accommodation, raw emotion spills from the speaker's partner, who demands the key before admitting, 'I know I'm common as dirt. / Go on with your fancy friends / I know I'm nothing. Go on / I'm nothing, you don't need me -' (*DON*, 39, ll. 11-14). This heartfelt burst of despondency, emphasised by the repetition of 'I'm nothing', suggests an ingrained sense of inadequacy specifically linked to social class. The speaker 'didn't go / but I didn't speak' (*DON*, 39, ll. 15-6), his lack of reassurance suggesting that the couple avoids speaking about their class disparity. The emotionally driven quarrel is contrasted with a scene outside their window of 'four drunks [...] white shirts with blood' (*DON*, 39, ll. 22-4). The overview of an internally fractured relationship, vulnerable to external factors beyond the couple's control, demonstrates a greater pain than that found in physical altercation. The tension is resolved somewhat through unspoken action, with the speaker turning to see that, instead of his partner leaving, he is 'mending / a tear in my coat'. The poem ends with a heartfelt acknowledgment that:

[W]e are both unfaithful
to what joins us like fire,
and we should forgive each other
as we love, in fear and trembling
when you put down the coat and came to me.

(*DON*, 40, ll. 43-7).

The repetition of the collective pronouns 'we' and 'us' highlights the couple's unification and their mutual desire for reconciliation, but as McGonigal suggests, the poem is 'a touching reminder of the realities of differences that no amount of love or passion could wash away' (*BTL D*, 162). In these final lines the class issue remains unresolved, inferred by the partner's adoption of a submissive role in which he mends the other's coat and is left to '[come] to me'.

Confessional and uncensored, 'The Quarrel' is separate from the love poems of *The Second Life*, which tend to disguise the specific details of Morgan's private life. The homosexual element of 'The Quarrel' is not overt, but the distinct details of the event, complete with dialogue, invite biographical inference in a way that the love poetry from the 1968 collection does not. Greg Thomas suggests that the love poems from *The Second Life* 'tend to open out

into broader thematic panoramas obscuring the nuggets of memory they came from'³⁷⁴ and, by doing so, veils Morgan from the reader. By contrast, the domestic realism of 'The Quarrel' exposes a specific situation, giving way to contextualising detail and personal admission that Thomas suggests came about more fully in Morgan's poetry from the mid-1980s, with 'the shift partly to do with his more open admission of homosexuality after Scotland decriminalised it'.³⁷⁵ McGonigal suggests that the poem is 'too sentimental perhaps, or not fully realised enough in its final lines' (*BTL*, 162) to have been collected before its appearance in *Dreams and Other Nightmares* (2010). However, the tension that existed between the public and private self for Morgan in the 1960s is critical when examining 'The Quarrel' in relation to other works from the same period.

The Second Life explores various aspects of love, but it is worth examining the role that absence plays. Unlike 'The Quarrel', which explores an emotional disruption between two people that exists despite their physical proximity, the love poems from *The Second Life* often explore a physical absence. This absence, which is either occurring or has the potential to occur, is then aligned with a celebration of love that simultaneously exists. Whyte argues that 'doubleness is the rule' in the love poetry from *The Second Life*, and while his argument refers to gender ambiguity, doubleness also plays out through the theme of absence. In each scene depicting the lover's absence, or indeed presence, another layer simultaneously exists in which the lover disappears, or reappears, temporarily or permanently.

A presumed absence creates the poignant tone of 'When you go'. The speaker highlights the soft intimacy between himself and his lover, recalling 'the time / you fell asleep in my arms / in a trust so gentle' (*CP*, 184, ll. 5-7). The speaker remains awake in the tranquillity of the 'darkening room', waiting for sleep or until 'the new rain / lightly roused you awake' (*CP*, 184, ll. 8-11). In this snapshot of a memory the couple exist in private, joined together in seclusion from the world in a picture of 'stability and tenderness' that McGonigal attributes to John (*BTL*, 132). The sleeping figure's open vulnerability in the arms of the protective speaker implies a particular trust and affection existing between them, the latter highlighted in

³⁷⁴ Greg Thomas, 'From Edinburgh to Saturn: The Edwin Morgan Archive at the Scottish Poetry Library', *Scottish Literary Review*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2012), 53-74, 61.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

the final lines by the sleeping figure's unconscious declaration: 'I asked if you heard the rain in your dream / and half dreaming still you only said, I love you' (*CP*, 184, ll. 12-3).

The poem is an idyllic depiction of the speaker's relationship with his lover, as well as that which R.S. Edgecombe defines as 'the redemptive power of love'.³⁷⁶ Yet, the title and the first line suggest that the speaker voices his feelings from a place in which the possibility of abandonment still exists. By using the adverb 'when' in the opening line, 'when you go', the speaker suggests the future action of the lover leaving is inevitable. A momentary retraction of meaning occurs in the following line, in which the speaker substitutes 'when' for the conditional 'if', but the initial employment of 'when' in the title and the first line suggests that the speaker's inherent fear of the lover's eventual departure overshadows the otherwise tender scene. This potential future absence of the lover is presumably believed to be one of permanence, if the impassioned reaction of the speaker is accounted for: 'When you go / [...] and I should want to die' (*CP*, 184, ll. 1-3). In contrast, the speaker never imagines leaving the lover, believing that only he will be deserted. This suggests that he perceives himself to be more dedicated than his lover to the relationship, demonstrating the vulnerability he feels from the magnitude by which he loves. The sense of imbalance implied haunts the scene from the periphery.

This potential future absence of the lover is transformed into a definitive physical absence in 'One Cigarette', and yet the glimmers of despondency established in 'When you go' do not occur here. Instead, the sensuous memory of the lover evoked through the smoke of a cigarette invites an erotic quality to the poem, with the speaker left in enamoured memory of the absent person. While most of the love poems from *The Second Life* veil any identifying feature of the unnamed lover, emphasising the possibility for interpretation regarding both gender and identity, 'One Cigarette' provides a direct link to John. McGonigal describes John as a 'fairly heavy smoker', attributing the erotic charge of the poem to him (*BTL D*, 132). Although Morgan did not smoke in his post-RAMC years, he describes the act of smoking and the smell of a cigarette as 'very loaded with with all sorts of feelings and emotions which were quite strong, and positive, not anti' (*NNGM*, 178-9), and McGonigal reports that Morgan's table

³⁷⁶ Edgecombe, 'The Poetry of Edwin Morgan', 677.

‘always had cigarettes in a hand-painted Russian box [...] even after John’s death’ (*BTL*, 132). Of course, the link to John can only be made through knowledge of identifying habits; as a stand-alone poem, ‘One Cigarette’ retains ambiguity, particularly regarding the couple’s gender. Whyte suggests in interview with Morgan that ‘by focusing on the objects around the lovers, you can avoid having to be explicit about their sex’, although suggests that smoking infers a masculine presence (*NNGM*, 178-9).

The poem opens with a proverb, altered to refer specifically to the relationship between the speaker and his lover: ‘No smoke without you, my fire’ (*CP*, 185, l. 1). The original proverb suggests that reason dictates rumour, and from this Whyte argues that the opening line ‘warns us that what appears in the poem is a mere adjunct of what cannot be shown or seen’,³⁷⁷ suggesting the significance of the lover’s identity as being actively concealed. Like many of Morgan’s love poems, gender pronouns are consciously absent from ‘One Cigarette’, although Whyte draws attention to the ‘phallic nature of the cigarette’³⁷⁸ as evidence of homosexual undertones. Whyte notes in interview with Morgan that women also smoke, but Morgan highlights his own unconscious belief in the masculinity of the act, aided by the personal connection he makes between smoking and John (*NNGM*, 178-9).

With the lover having already departed, the speaker questions who would believe the fading smoke of the stubbed-out cigarette as having signalled ‘so much love’, and the following description of him smiling suggests that he revels in the furtive mystery of ‘One cigarette / in the non-smoker’s tray’ (*CP*, 186, ll. 6-7). The lingering traces of the cigarette are synonymous with the lover’s lingering presence whose absence is only physical, the figure inhabiting the poem through the speaker’s sense memory. Despite the frailty of the smoke’s ‘last spire’ as it ‘trembles up’, the power sparked in the speaker’s memory from the cigarette leads him to believe that ‘you are here again, and I am drunk on your tobacco lips’ (*CP*, 186, ll. 8-12). The short imperative command, ‘Out with the light’ (*CP*, 186, l. 13), adds a further layer of concealment to the poem as the speaker and his desires are left hidden in the darkened room. The poem’s erotic charge, however, is prevalent still as the speaker relives ‘your last kiss’ (*CP*, 186, l. 17) until the traces of the cigarette are completely gone. While there may be a

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 86.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

certain necessity in absenting the lover from the scene, particularly given the period of publication and if a homosexual reading of the poem is to be undertaken, the concealment of the lover's identity allows for the eroticisation of an otherwise everyday object and scene. Unlike the permanent absence hinted at in 'When you go', which lends itself to the potential of an all-consuming sadness, the absence in 'One Cigarette' is temporary and allows the speaker to savour moments shared with his lover through the object of the cigarette.

Iain Crichton Smith describes Morgan as 'a poet who wears masks [...] but beyond the masks there persists the human being who reveals himself in flashes, who [...] is at times naked and desolate'.³⁷⁹ The sequence from *The Second Life* captures fragments of a love that captivates and fulfils, epitomised in poems such as 'Strawberries' and 'The Picnic', but as Crichton Smith suggests, at the sequence's perimeters Morgan battles with love's darker aspects. While 'When you go' hints early in the sequence at the potential for devastation if - or when - a relationship breaks apart, 'Without It' articulates the full impact of loneliness in this event. Unlike the forward-looking regeneration and achievement that Morgan usually attributes with space and technology, it becomes here a metaphor for the emptiness of being without love, contrasted in the poem with a parenthesised reminiscence of a relationship in which he 'never dreamed / there could be such pleasure' (*CP*, 188, ll. 23-4).

Like 'The Unspoken', 'Without It' explores love as the unnamed thing. Rather than focusing on love's extraordinary transformation of the everyday, however, 'Without It' depicts the isolated suffering when faced with the loss of love. While Morgan cautiously predicts in 'When you go' that 'I should want to die' (*CP*, 184, l. 3) in the event of the relationship's end, 'Without It' lends itself to that bleak actuality and edges further still into darkness:

Without it
 there is nothing, an emptiness that's broken
 by a nail scraping, a drum, you cower in the hole of the drum
 screaming, no one hears you, sees you,
 the space is empty to the eaves, the eaves to the stars,
 an electronic yelling from Andromeda
 hits the dish, how you subsist, the waves hideous to your hunger bang [...]
(*CP*, 187-8, ll. 1-7).

³⁷⁹ Crichton Smith, 49.

Compared to joyous scenes of love's delight in the sequence's earlier poems, the opening to 'Without It' reverberates despair as the person at whom the poem is directed is shown 'screaming' and to 'cower', and space is depicted as both 'empty' and filled with 'an electronic yelling from Andromeda'. The enjambed twenty-line opening stanza employs alliteration and repetition to emphasise in its breathlessness the figure's desolation, who is 'cast in cries, / and no one hears, or sees, and the stars / sends, and sends, and sends' (*CP*, 188, ll. 14-6). The speaker unwillingly descends into the bleak emptiness of space, consumed by the reality of love's bitter end.

In a pastoral scene of halcyon days, the poem relives a memory of 'diving in the pool together, flashing through the dapple / with the leaves trailing' (*CP*, 188, ll. 21-3), juxtaposing the isolation echoing through the previous stanza. The scene is reminiscent of 'The Picnic', situated two poems before 'Without It' in the sequence. The pool in the parenthesised scene becomes a possible reason as to why the lover in 'The Picnic' may have been 'shaking only your wet hair' (*CP*, 187, l. 9), while the 'thunderstorm [that] scattered the flying heels' (*CP*, 188, l. 26) in 'Without It' corresponds as a later account of the 'curtains of a summer rain / dropped around us' (*CP*, 187, ll. 11-2) from 'The Picnic'. The memory of that 'enchanted place' (*CP*, 187, l. 10) in 'The Picnic' commemorates their love, leaving the reader with only a bucolic snapshot of an unspoiled relationship. In contrast, the fragmented memory from 'Without It' deploys a litany of life's dulling effects on that same, seemingly idyllic, love: 'trains and letters and bad faith and time / corrupted the heart, and one day there was nothing / as if, like the old stories, it had never been' (*CP*, 188, ll. 27-9).

The poignancy of the parenthesised scene is abruptly brought back to desolation as the final stanza opens with the exclamations, 'Grinding rotor! Grave of dreams!' (*CP*, 188, ll. 30). War is an inherent force as children 'play on the sands you plunge through' and poppies are pictured 'blowing long' (*CP*, 188, ll. 31-4). Despite being amid warfare and death, the dystopian scene is haunted by the arcadian dream of the past relationship. The speaker maintains that everything, still, 'is in its place, the pinch of clover / from a summer field could break the heart' (*CP*, 188, ll. 36-7). Just as one who is left apprehending the next attack must 'subsist in iron, and wait' (*CP*, 188, l. 38), so, too, must the broken-hearted subsist while awaiting the waves of grief for love lost.

Unlike most of the love sequence, 'Without It' does not employ first-person pronouns or collective pronouns. Instead, Morgan employs the second-person pronoun 'you', separating the poet from the figure in question, who is shown 'revolving / with no hand in yours on either side of the slipping wall' (*CP*, 188, ll. 9-10). As Crichton Smith suggests, Morgan as a poet values privacy, and therefore the switch from first- to second-person pronoun may stem from a desire to not directly associate himself with 'the darkness [that] strengthens [...] as the love poems proceed'.³⁸⁰ It could also be a covert statement that Morgan felt separated from the poem's bleak nature at the time of writing the text. Although Morgan faced a certain darkness in the preceding decade, the 1960s sparked a sense of renewal that was a far cry from the 'hard black drum wall' (*CP*, 188, l. 8) introduced in 'Without It'.

Significantly, Morgan chooses to position 'Without It' as the penultimate poem of the sequence. Just as the impact of 'Without It' is enforced by its contrasting pastoral scene, so do preceding poems such as 'From a City Balcony' and 'The Picnic' emphasise its desolation, juxtaposed with the hope and vitality provoked by reciprocated love. In these poems, the reader glimpses the world Morgan entered after meeting John. Although Morgan's love poems are not limited to those from *The Second Life*, the sequence represents his relationship with John most fully. On the genesis of the love poetry from *The Second Life*, Morgan states that 'most of them did come out of things that actually happened [...] though in some cases a bit of imagination comes into it. These are all about John Scott' (*NNGM*, 177). However, if the tender, hopeful love poems of the sequence represent Morgan's relationship with John in the 1960s, the mournful loneliness of 'Without It', preceded by the restless anxiety of 'Absence', becomes something of a premonition for Morgan's personal life a decade after the collection's publication.

In 'Absence', the speaker lies 'cold / in the early light in my room high above London' (*CP*, 187, ll. 3-4), the cold and solitude of the bedroom indubitably separate from the warmth and intimacy depicted in 'When you go'. The speaker states that 'without fire / only the wind blew' (*CP*, 187, ll. 8-9), the line linking the poem back to 'One Cigarette' and its opening proverbial statement. However, the lover's absence is not uplifted by a wistful reminder such

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 52.

as the cigarette. Roderick Watson suggests that although ‘the wind is a long-established symbol of the soul and inspiration [...] it is also an epigram for futility’,³⁸¹ and this sentiment underlies the remainder of the poem. While the speaker directs the poem at the lover in ‘Absence’, suggesting that a relationship still exists between them, an inherent ‘fear’ (CP, 187, l. 5) lingers at the surface. The speaker wakes from a dream in which ‘you / came running through the traffic, tugging me, clinging / to my elbow, your eyes spoke / what I could not grasp-’ (CP, 187, ll. 10-3). Even with the closing line, in which the speaker ‘throw[s] back the sheets’ (CP, 187, l. 21) as if in anticipation of the lover, the anxiety-ridden dream lingers. Arguably the speaker fears very readily what is described in ‘Without It’, the permanent absence, and that which would come in 1978 with the death of John Scott.

2.4. ‘The Moons of Jupiter’

In 1970, Morgan turned fifty. As he recalls in ‘Epilogue: Seven Decades’, ‘I began to have bad dreams / of Palestine, and saw bad things to come’ (CP, 595, ll. 41-2). Compared to the ‘swinging sixties’, the seventies brought political and economic malaise to the United Kingdom and personal hardship for Morgan. Coyle and McGonigal note that Morgan’s ‘creative emergence was continued and confirmed in this decade’,³⁸² but a certain bleakness resonates in a selection of his work, with one review describing Morgan’s *Instamatic Poems* (1972) as ‘set out to prove that the world of the early 1970s is a pretty ghastly place’.³⁸³ In ‘The New Divan’, the reader is subjected at points to similarly bleak landscapes of war and the newly-dead. Morgan is obscure in ‘The New Divan’, his personal memories becoming inextricably intertwined with Eastern contexts and history’s shifting layers. Morgan distances himself again from poetic content in the final sequence of his final collection from the seventies, ‘The Moons of Jupiter’ from *Star Gate: Science Fiction Poems* (1979).

Published one year after John Scott’s death, Morgan battles with loss through the science-fiction genre. The spaceman of the sequence embodies Morgan’s isolation and grief but is still somewhat separate from the poet himself. While this could suggest Morgan’s unwillingness at

³⁸¹ Watson, ‘An Island in the City’, 19.

³⁸² Coyle, McGonigal, 244.

³⁸³ *Times Literary Supplement* (1972), qtd. in *Beyond the Last Dragon*, 217.

this time to write about the situation candidly, the repression of autobiography in the sequence also allows for a certain sense of release. Although it refuses the explicitly confessional, the sequence explores feeling through extended science fiction metaphor that can be particularised by biography, enabling Morgan to express personal grief in a universal context.

In 1977, in a summer described by Morgan as ‘distracting and depressing’ (*BTL*D, 252), he travelled to Tenerife with John on what would be their last holiday together. A quarrel, perhaps along the lines of those written about in ‘The Quarrel’ or ‘A Coach Tour (J.G.S)’ (1991), spiralled at the end of the trip following a 24-hour travel delay, evoking ‘the kind of quarrel that really comes out of nothing. Just blows up. Each person says things ... really terrible things ... you feel you’ll never get back on an even keel again’.³⁸⁴ In the following year, at the age of sixty, John was diagnosed with lung cancer that spread to his liver. He never informed Morgan of his diagnosis and the two men never reconciled. Two days before John’s death, Hugh MacDiarmid passed away from bowel cancer. Morgan had agreed to contribute in a radio programme dedicated to MacDiarmid’s life and work but had to cancel, finding himself incapable of separating the two bereavements:

I thought I would be able to deal with it. I find I can’t. It is partly because the two funerals were so close together that whenever I think of MacDiarmid I think of John. And we were more than friends, so the physical separation is very hard.

(*BTL*D, 255-6)

Morgan travelled to Lanarkshire for John’s funeral at the invitation of his ‘very affectionate family’ (*NNGM*, 173), the scrawled directions to which were permanently kept by Morgan amongst John’s numerous postcards and letters to him.³⁸⁵ Morgan had been ‘accepted [...] very readily’ into John’s family, his sisters once visiting the men in Glasgow ‘to see how their brother’s friend lived’ (*BTL*D, 134). Although Morgan was not aware of the family having ever openly spoken about his relationship with John, at the funeral they ‘gave me a cord to hold, which normally would only be the family circle, so they must have reckoned that this

³⁸⁴ Morgan, *Footsteps and Witnesses*, 22.

³⁸⁵ ASC MS Morgan, DS/2, directions (undated).

was something that they accepted' (*NNGM*, 173). Morgan's welcome from John's family into the Catholic service did little to prevent his encompassing feelings of grief and guilt, with Morgan writing in *Footsteps and Witnesses* of how 'the man dies and you can't say how sorry you were about it all. That was the one bad thing, bitter thing about the last year'.³⁸⁶

'The Moons of Jupiter' captures Morgan's anguish following John's death, but the preceding text, 'The Clone Poem', is also worth mentioning in this context. In comparison to the sequence, the complete lack of the personal or confessional in 'The Clone Poem' separates Morgan even further from his subject. However, the poem's interlocking clichés offer insight into his emotional condition. Although their forms and content outwardly differ, the glimmers of grief and pain hinted at in the poem are recognised more fully in the sequence. 'The Clone Poem' effectively acts as a prologue to 'The Moons of Jupiter', which 'sets personal grief against the cosmos' (*BTL D*, 256).

At first glance, 'The Clone Poem' is a repetitive and monotonous litany of proverbs and truisms, McGonigal describing them as 'clichés which human beings use to get by in the world' (*BTL D*, 256). This notion of 'getting by' creates the first context in which Morgan can be connected personally with the trite remarks that form the poem. John's death came at the end of a decade in which three other figures important to Morgan passed away: his mother, his young friend and fellow poet Veronica Forrest-Thomson, and the 'father' of the Scottish Renaissance, Hugh MacDiarmid. With each death having affected Morgan on a personal level, it seems plausible that he may have been made subject to these adages by others in response to his grief. Using sound-poem techniques, Morgan distorts the phrases and renders them meaningless, insinuating perhaps their own unhelpful place in the stages of loss. A certain sense of self-referentiality exists, which emphasises through repetition the monotonous banality of the phrases. Morgan deploys truisms such as 'plus ça change plus c'est la même chose' (the more it changes the more it is the same thing), 'semper idem' (always the same), and 'when you've seen one you've seen them all' (*CP*, 390, l. 9; l. 11; l. 32). Because of the poem's form, the tone is not immediate. However, Morgan's biography supplies it, just as his personal narrative dictates the tone of the concrete poem 'Message Clear' (1967), which

³⁸⁶ Morgan, *Footsteps and Witnesses*, 22.

emerged ‘almost [...] involuntarily’ (*NNGM*, 60) under a ‘strongly emotional impulse’ (*TML*, 374) when his father was dying of cancer in 1965.

‘The Clone Poem’ opens with two familial proverbs: ‘like father like son like father like son like son like son like son / a chip off the old block the old block a chip a chip off chip off’ (*CP*, 389, ll. 1-2). The relationship between Morgan and his own parents lacked a shared understanding, his mother having held ‘no greater sympathies with his poetry and books than his father had’ (*BTLT*, 206). Following his father’s death, his mother’s death five years later released in Morgan ‘a variety of emotions that were difficult to deal with’ (*BTLT*, 205). The conservatively minded, Protestant attitudes of Morgan’s parents arguably created a barrier between themselves and their son, his lifestyle being remarkably different from theirs. However, it seems reasonable to suggest that Morgan still felt the grave impact of having lost, with the exception of his aunt, his final close familial tie. The opening phrases of ‘The Clone Poem’, which depict identity as inherited from family, do not just highlight Morgan’s detachment throughout his life from his own family unit. They further imply isolation through the realisation that an inherent familial connection could now never be fulfilled, emphasised by McGonigal’s conclusion that in old age Morgan ‘came to regret his own emotional distance from his father when younger’ (*BTLT*, 158), alongside the ‘re-bereavement’ Morgan felt for his mother as depicted in ‘At the Last’ (1997). The sense of solitude in the opening proverbs finds poignancy in other repeated phrases from the verse, each of them drawing upon collected groups of people: ‘birds of a feather flock together birds of a feather together flock’ (*CP*, 389, l. 5), ‘as alike as peas in a pod peas in a pod as alike as peas peas peas’ (*CP*, 390, l. 13), and ‘the more the merrier merrier merrier more more more’ (*CP*, 391, l. 24).

Following the two opening familial truisms, the phrase ‘no smoke without fire no smoke no smoke without’ (*CP*, 389, l. 3) brings ‘The Clone Poem’ back to John, the proverb originally employed in the opening of ‘One Cigarette’. Positioned between two phrases emphasising family and the collective, this reference serves as a reminder of Morgan’s own solitariness following John’s death. Despite John’s family extending their welcome to Morgan at the funeral, McGonigal writes that the poet ‘felt alien to their culture’ (*BTLT*, 254), the Catholic family-filled affair different from his own upbringing. Isolation stems not only from the grief

of having lost John, but the impression of distance Morgan may have felt from the collective grieving of John's family.

John's death continues to surface in 'The Clone Poem' as Morgan employs the French proclamation 'le roi est mort vive le roi vive le roi mort mort' (*CP*, 390, l. 22) as one of the poem's central phrases: 'the King is dead, long live the King'. In the poem's final two expressions, Morgan's grief appears most evidently. Following the bleak repetition of 'semper idem', Morgan ends 'The Clone Poem' with two interconnecting notions: 'you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear out of a sow's ear [...] / you can have too much of a good thing too much of a good thing too / much you can have too much [...]' (*CP*, 390, ll. 33-8). While the former phrase concedes that you cannot make something good out of something bad, the latter suggests that you can have too much of something that you value. Placing this in a personal context, Morgan perhaps felt unable to take anything positively from John's death, while also being offered a late reminder that 'the more intense the love, the emptier life can feel once that person has gone' (*BTLTD*, 256). These realisations would have been made harder by the fact that the two men never reconciled. Morgan draws on this poignantly in the decade's stanza in 'Epilogue':

At sixty I was standing by a grave.
The winds of Lanarkshire were loud and high.
I knew what I had lost, what I had had.
The East had schooled me about fate, but still
It was the hardest time, oh more, it was
the worst of times in self-reproach, the will
that failed to act, the mass of good not done.
Forgiveness must be like the springs that fill
Deserted furrows if they wait
Until - until -

(*CP*, 595, ll. 51-60).

Here Morgan references fate learnt in an academic context but suggests that learning and experiencing are inconsistent with each other, with his studies on and experience of the East having not prepared him for the extent of his bereavement. His own sense of culpability in not rectifying the situation with John is also evident, finding himself facing 'the worst of times in self-reproach, the will / that failed to act, the mass of good not done'. This self-criticism would resurface in the later poem 'After a Death' from *Sonnets from Scotland* (1984), as well as in

‘The Moons of Jupiter’.

Like much of Morgan’s science-fiction work, ‘The Moons of Jupiter’ engages with multiple cosmic realities, assimilating art and science in a twentieth-century context. An examination of the human condition structures the sequence, highlighting Morgan’s own desire for the poet ‘to set up his camp on other worlds than this, and to bring back what he can in the way of human relevance’.³⁸⁷ Against the backdrop of Amalthea, Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto, Morgan engages with the past and future, the internal and external. He voices his mourning ‘in places with no solace but / his own’ (*CP*, 392, ll. 55-6), integrating the future of space-travel with his own personal reflections on loss and grief. Colin Nicholson suggests that the sequence ‘engage[s] alterity in unfamiliar spaces’.³⁸⁸ This impression of otherness stems not just from the cosmic backdrop of ‘gigantic bright-rayed craters’ (*CP*, 393, l. 88), but also the protagonist’s sense of separation, both from his environment and from his fellow scientists. Although he becomes part of ‘the old-fashioned earthly lot’ (*CP*, 392, l. 58) who appear at the forefront of scientific discovery, the speaker’s restrictive despondency in the opening poem lingers.

‘Amalthea’ presents the singular figure trying to occupy himself with art against the backdrop of the moon: ‘I took a book with me to Amalthea / but never turned a page’ (*CP*, 390, ll. 1-2). Reading, a solitary activity, emphasises the speaker’s lone position on Amalthea, a moon whose own history within astronomical discovery invites solitude when compared to its neighbouring celestial bodies. The four remaining moons referenced in the poem-sequence were discovered by Galileo in 1610. In these poems, Morgan employs the collective pronouns ‘we’ and ‘our’, identifying the speaker as part of the moons’ scientific community and their mission of discovery. Amalthea, however, was discovered separately by Edward Emerson Barnard in 1892. Its counterpart poem relies on first-person pronouns to depict the figure’s sense of isolation, engaging exclusively with the speaker himself who is pictured ‘listlessly / reading, staring, rereading listlessly / sentences that never came to anything’ (*CP*, 390-1, ll. 4-6). Here, the depression of grief is re-orientated from John’s grave in ‘the winds of

³⁸⁷ Morgan, ‘From Glasgow to Saturn’ in *Poetry Book Society: the first twenty-five years*, ed. Eric W. White (London: Poetry Book Society, 1979), 51.

³⁸⁸ Nicholson, *Inventions of Modernity*, 128.

Lanarkshire' to that 'bent moon, / pulled down and dust-bound, flattened, petrified by gravitation' (CP, 391, ll. 8-10). No mention is made of the moon's distinct red colour, the figure instead using its 'flattened' landscape to mirror the self as he sits with his book 'like a grey image / malleted into the rock' (CP, 390, ll. 3-4). The tone is disconsolate as the figure repeats himself, remarking on sentences 'that never came to anything' (CP, 391, l. 6; l. 12) and the feeling that his 'very memory lay paralysed' (CP, 391, l. 7; l. 15), his difficulty in concentrating or sustaining thought displaying the intrusive effects of depression. The mind's inertia is transposed onto the body in a physical response to the speaker's mental state, who describes his tongue that 'lay like a coil of iron' (CP, 391, l. 13) and his knees that 'were tombs' (CP, 391, l. 20).

The book, which like the speaker's memory has 'gone too' (CP, 391, l. 16), is left unnamed. However, a line in the poem, 'The local train, with its three coaches, pulled up / at Newleigh Station at half-past four...' (CP, 391, ll. 18-9), opens David Lindsay's 1923 novel, *Sphinx*. The speaker does not occupy himself with the book any further than this first line, but Morgan's choice of text as a point of reference is significant. The life of Lindsay, a relatively obscure Scottish author, presents a man familiar with writer's block, the condition proposed by Colin Nicholson to affect the speaker of 'Amalthea'.³⁸⁹ While it is arguably the art of reading by which the speaker wishes to be distracted rather than writing, Lindsay's creative block aligns somewhat with Morgan's own writing at this time. Lindsay's life and works have been defined as 'unfashionable adventure that prevented his books from ever being popular',³⁹⁰ and Murray Ewing suggests that as Lindsay 'found it more difficult to get published, he found it more difficult to write'.³⁹¹ Unlike Lindsay, Morgan as a celebrated writer found little difficulty in getting published at this time but the loss of John 'had its effect on his work rate' and he found 'he could not really move forward until he had looked back' (BTLD, 256; 259). Although stemming from separate problems, the creative and mental block experienced by the two writers transfer onto the 'Amalthea' speaker, who is left unable to engage with 'the tons of

³⁸⁹ Nicholson, *Inventions of Modernity*, 128.

³⁹⁰ J. B. Pick, E. H. Visiak & Colin Wilson, *The Strange Genius of David Lindsay: An Appreciation* (London: John Baker, 1970), 3.

³⁹¹ Murray Ewing, 'The Haunted Man: the strange genius of David Lindsay' in *Around the Outsider: Essays Presented to Colin Wilson on the Occasion of His 80th Birthday*, ed. Colin Stanley (Winchester; Washington: OBooks, 2011), 174-87, 176.

pages' that 'never moved' (CP, 391, l. 20). Art is not only altered by the external effects of space, a satellite shown as having 'engulfed the book in dust' (CP, 391, l. 28), but also by the internal dilemmas of the mind.

Morgan's sequence finds more likeness in the interstellar journey of Lindsay's most well-known novel, the science fiction text *A Voyage to Arcturus* (1920), than the earthbound world of *Sphinx*. However, the latter reflects on mortality and unconscious reality with a poignancy perhaps not lost on Morgan following John's death. In *Sphinx*, Nicholas Cabot moves to the fictional village of Newleigh with the intention of inventing a deep-sleep dream recorder. With Evelyn, one of the daughters of his landlord, Nicholas debates the meaning behind the mythical creature, the sphinx:

'Surely the Egyptian Sphinx was a personification of Nature?' she said, not looking at her sister, but at Nicholas. 'The question which she asks, and which no one can answer, is, "Why are you living in the world?" As none of us can answer it, we all have to die.'³⁹²

Evelyn's interpretation of the sphinx symbolising nature and its enduring cycles, with death being an infallible certainty for the living, is one accepted and yet resented by the speaker of 'Amalthea'. He acknowledges that 'the stupid moon goes round' (CP, 391, l. 23), just as 'slow Jupiter' (CP, 391, l. 21) revolves, but his frustrated tone suggests that its cyclical motions are a reminder of that which does not prevail. In his lecture 'Saturn and Other Rings', Morgan references an idea from the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico, who 'looked back at history and saw it as a spiral of recurring but not identical cycles or phases, *corsi e ricorsi*, over huge stretches of time'.³⁹³ Vico's theory about the different ages of time, in which there is progress, diminishment and ultimate collapse before the *ricorso*, or the 'return', is described as having 'abandoned all remnants of the idea of cosmological determination and of the identical repetition inherent in such variants of vitalistic renewal ideology', such as the Renaissance idea of rebirth.³⁹⁴ Instead *ricorso* brings an entirely new beginning, which then follows the

³⁹² David Lindsay, *Sphinx* (London: Xanadu, 1988), 39.

³⁹³ Morgan, 'Saturn and Other Rings' in Chapman, ed. Joy Hendry, no. 64 (Spring/Summer 1991), 1-10, 2.

³⁹⁴ Gerhart B. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of Fathers* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004), 23.

same motions of progress, diminishment and collapse, highlighted in Morgan's collection *Sonnets from Scotland* and its examination of the patterns in past and future time. In the context of loss, Vico's trope offers a greater sense of tragedy than if it defined simple regeneration. The speaker's resentment of the 'stupid moon' and its cycles suggests that he recognises this. For the grieving, a time will come in which one will find acceptance and move forward from their loss, inviting the stage of progress, but nothing will bring back the certain moments or people now gone.

In contrast to Evelyn, Nicholas believes the sphinx to be a goddess of the 'dreams we dream during deep sleep and remember nothing of afterwards',³⁹⁵ but this description contrasts with the 'Amalthea' speaker's experiences. His statement that 'the stupid moon goes round' implies restlessness, a sentiment highlighted in 'Europa' when the speaker suggests that 'lightly / it sleeps, the imagination. On that smooth moon / men would be driven mad by many dreams' (*CP*, 392, ll. 49-51). Sleep is shown only to echo humanity's regrets and losses, with dreams seen to be an unconscious reality in which 'a curtain could be drawn / to let the living see even the dead' (*CP*, 392, ll. 54-6). Battling with grief and the *corsi e ricorsi* of time, sleep does not offer the speaker the cessation of pain. Instead, dreams are haunting reminders of loss.

The speaker describes being 'rescued [...] with magnets, plucked [...] up / like dislocated yards of groaning mandrake' (*CP*, 391, ll. 26-7). The scientific community with whom he continues his intergalactic journey physically pull him away from his seclusion on Amalthea and his paralysing state of grief. Michael Wink describes mandrakes as 'massive roots that often have human shapes and [...] hallucinogenic properties',³⁹⁶ and the speaker's comparison with the root suggests that he is affected by visions similar to those caused by mandrakes. The Bible references the mandrake in terms of its supposed aphrodisiacal qualities (Song of Solomon 7:13), but the speaker's solitude on Amalthea, described as 'dislocated' and 'groaning', suggests that the pain of lost love affects him.

³⁹⁵ Lindsay, 33.

³⁹⁶ Michael Wink, 'A Short History of Alkaloids' in *Alkaloids: Biology, Ecology and Medicinal Applications*, eds. Margaret F. Roberts, Michael Wink (New York: Plenum Press, 1998), 11-44, 34.

In the poem's final line *Sphinx* is left behind, with the satellite having 'engulfed the book in the dust' (CP, 391, l. 28). While this may symbolise the speaker's desire to move on from his debilitating sense of loss, entering his *ricorso* as he moves deeper into Jupiter's orbit with a new band of supporters, Lindsay's text offers a final point. Bernard Sellin suggests that 'the only glimmer of hope in this sombre book was the reunion in death of the lovers who had been separated in life'.³⁹⁷ Although the speaker willingly leaves the book and its theories of dreams behind, the certainty of death remains. With that, however, the belief of a reunion in death exists as a possibility. *Sphinx* does, then, offer hope amidst the poem's depiction of the hollowing effects of loss, and is arguably a carefully chosen reference for the sequence's opening poem.

Just as the pronouns become collective in the sequence's following poem, 'Io', so too does the depiction of grief. Io's futuristic landscape is reminiscent of 1970s industrial Scotland, the speaker remarking that 'the sulphur mines were on strike / when we arrived. I can't say I'm surprised' (CP, 391, ll. 29-30). Here the moon's alterity responds to Scottish political contexts, the sequence written in a decade in which miners were forced to strike against the inadequacy of government pay. On Io, the strikes are due to unsafe work environments, the speaker stating that 'seventy-five men had just been killed / in the fiercest eruption ever seen there' (CP, 391, ll. 31-2). Despite the different contexts, this link to an earthly reality presents the moon's scientific community as human despite their physical location, demonstrated further in their response to the catastrophe.

The funeral rites performed are described as 'empty / though not perfunctory' (CP, 391, ll. 389), the emptiness highlighting the collective feeling of desolation following the eruption from which 'not a body was found' (CP, 391, l. 40). Having just landed on Io, the speaker's community watch as their fellow scientists endure the process of grief, the imagery mirroring death's ceremony on earth: 'we saw / the men huddled in knots, or walking slowly / with bent heads over the pumice beds, or still / and silent by the bank of the red lake' (CP, 391, ll. 45-8). McGonigal suggests that 'Io' depicts almost an 'archetype of hell',³⁹⁸ and yet in Morgan's hell

³⁹⁷ Bernard Sellin, *The Life and Works of David Lindsay*, transl. Kenneth Gunnell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 211.

³⁹⁸ McGonigal, 'Gay Writing in Scotland', 149.

there is still humanity. Although the speaker remarks on the ‘strange art’ of the ‘planetman’s flute’ (*CP*, 391, ll. 41-2) played in tribute to the dead, Io’s otherness does not alter the humanity still existing in a hostile environment, the collective description of ‘friends in grief’ portraying the emotional connection of human relationships. Morgan writes in ‘The Clone Poem’ that ‘you can have too much of a good thing’, but here the speaker remarks on how ‘the best sulphur’s the most perilous’ (*CP*, 392, l. 53). The two lines differentiate, complementing each other but highlighting different aspects of Morgan; while the former identifies the rational and deliberate side to Morgan, the latter recognises risk as an essential part of human life. Both lines can be read as Morgan’s understanding of John’s death and of human relationships. While the measured approach suggests that in experiencing love so deeply the absence of it hurts all the more, Morgan’s description of the ‘most perilous’ as ‘the best’ suggests there is exhilaration to be taken from emotional exposure, that to love without reserve is worth the risk of what may come.

In ‘Europa’, the speaker and his group identify as ‘an old-fashioned earthly lot’, the water-ice moon offering them a chance ‘to skate and ski, use snowshoes, / fish through ice-holes though not for fish’ (*CP*, 392, ll. 58-61). An element of rejuvenation is felt by the scientists experiencing the ‘infinite / play and glitter of watery Europa’ (*CP*, 392, 63-4) after the industrial horror of ‘Io’. However, Europa’s environment is arguably symbolic, and, beyond its playful allure, a bleak reality lies in its ‘waters of crust ice, waters of deep ice, / waters of slush, of warm subcrustal springs, / waters of vapour, waters of water’ (*CP*, 392, ll. 65-7).

Perceiving the water and its multiple states as symbolic might prompt a link between the poem and Jung’s theory of the collective unconscious in which

[W]ater is the commonest symbol for the unconscious. The lake in the valley is the unconscious which lies, as it were, underneath consciousness [...] regarded as a sort of encapsulated fragment of our most personal and intimate life.³⁹⁹

Additionally, through baptismal immersion and re-emergence, water is a familiar symbol of rebirth. In ‘Europa’, which depicts the speaker’s community after the tragedy on Io, the waters

³⁹⁹ Carl Gustav Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, trans. R.F.C. Hull, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 18-20.

of the planet could signify both the unconscious and rebirth. The scientists, dealing with the catastrophe's emotional impact, may not just desire the revival of the dead but also of themselves.

Initially the group on Europa are removed from the event on Io, both physically and mentally, repressing memory with no acknowledgment of the 'roaring, sheeted, cruel' (*CP*, 391, l. 38) landscape of Io and the deaths of men. However, the speaker recalls that,

One day, and only one, we drilled right down
to something solid and so solid-hard
the drill-head screamed into the microphone
and broke, the film showed streaks of metal shards
whizzing across a band of basalt or
glimmery antediluvian turtle-shell
or cast-off titan miner's helmet or -
it must have been the metal scream that roused
our thought and fear and half desire we might
have had a living scream returned

(*CP*, 392, ll. 68-77).

The unknown nature of the scientists' discovery lying solid beneath the water-ice surface releases a rush of emotion amongst the group. The possibility of it being a 'cast-off miner's helmet' presents their collective unconscious responding to the disaster on Io, rousing in them the 'half desire' for the men who have haunted them to be returned to life. However, the scientists' decision to drill into Europa's surface on 'one day, and only one' of their trip suggests that they collectively desire to repress the memories that Europa's waters ignite. However, as the speaker explains, this is not an easy task: 'lightly / it sleeps, the imagination. On that smooth moon / men would be driven mad with many dreams' (*CP*, 392, 77-9).

Conventionally, dreams are believed to convey the unconscious, and the dreams occurring on Europa suggest the inevitable resurfacing of repressed memories. On the 'smooth moon', in which the symbol of water and the delirium of dreams collide, the conscious and unconscious mind battle after an inflicted trauma. As they sleep, the group hear 'the boat's engine chug the dark / apart, as if a curtain could be drawn / to let the living see even the dead' (*CP*, 392, ll. 81-3). Here the boat, a vehicle of water, enables the dead's revival but only in the dreams of those still living. The group's unconscious repression hides their sense of loss as they realise

that, while new moons may resurge in them a sense of ‘excitement’, ‘power’, and ‘illumination’ (CP, 393, ll. 98-9), for the people lost on Io there can be no rebirth. In the height of grief, this sense of finality and recognition of one’s own mortality may haunt the bereaved, as it perhaps did for Morgan following John’s death.

In contrast, the penultimate poem of the sequence, ‘Ganymede’, offers a more consoling perception of death through its mythological connection with the eternal. The speaker declares that ‘Galileo would have been proud of Ganymede’, before asking, ‘who can call that marbled beauty dead?’ (CP, 392, ll. 85-6). This time the moon, rather than the speaker’s fellow humans, is marred by death, but the scientists note the prospect for development on Ganymede, stating that ‘we would be back’ (CP, 393, ll. 110-11). Ganymede appears alive with colour, the speaker noting the ‘gigantic bright-rayed craters, vestiges / and veils of ice and snow, / black swirling grey, / grey veined with green, greens diffused in blues, blue powdered into white’ (CP, 393, ll. 88-91). The perception of the moon links it to another ‘marbled beauty’, the divine Trojan hero who is described in Homer’s *Iliad* as ‘godlike Ganymedes’, the ‘loveliest born of the race of mortals’ caught by the gods ‘to be Zeus’ wine-pourer / for the sake of his beauty, so he might be among the immortals’.⁴⁰⁰ This story of a beautiful man removed from the transient human world by Zeus, the Greek equivalent of Jupiter, and made immortal is described as ‘the ancient myth told to account for the origin of homosexuality’.⁴⁰¹ Zeus and Ganymede are described as ‘an image of the *coniunctio oppositorum*, opposite psychic polarities brought together into a state of balanced tension’.⁴⁰² In a sequence that establishes Morgan’s personal grief against the solar system, the myth of Ganymede becomes inextricably intertwined with the death of John, whose relationship with Morgan was ‘an attraction of opposites, with both the sense of fulfilment and the tensions that this phrase implies’ (BTLD, 132).

The myth celebrates the physical side of love, emphasised in Goethe’s poem ‘Ganymed’

⁴⁰⁰ Homer, *The Iliad*, transl. Richard Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), Book XX, ll. 2325.

⁴⁰¹ Vittorio Lingiardi, *Men in Love: Male Homosexualities from Ganymede to Batman*, transl. Robert H. Hocke and Paul A. Schwartz (Chicago: Open Court, 2002), 26.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, 29.

(1774) that depicts the sensual urgency existing between the god and his lover: ‘you cool the burning / Thirst of my bosom, / Lovely breeze of the morning / Through it the nightingale calls / Lovingly for me from the misty valley. // I come! I come!’⁴⁰³ This unification of passion and nature resonates in Morgan’s poem, ‘From a City Balcony’ (1968), written about John with its imagery of ‘white butterflies about your hand in the short hot grass / [...] Your breast and thighs were blazing like the gorse / I covered your great fire in silence there’ (*CP*, 183, ll. 8-13). Both poems embrace the physical intimacy present in the two relationships, demonstrating the different dimensions of love that existed in Morgan’s relationship with John. In referencing Ganymede, Morgan highlights the physicality of their relationship in a sequence that primarily explores his emotional state following John’s death.

The speaker, rather than any of his collective group, succumbs to dreams and the unconscious mind, having ‘drowsed off, dropped my notes, / with the image of Ganymede dancing before me’ (*CP*, 393, ll. 106-7). It is predominantly he who longs to reach the moon, and while this could evoke the same sense of isolation found in ‘Amalthea’, ‘Ganymede’ does not dwell on self-pity. Instead, the image of the dancing moon highlights the frivolity in which the Greek and Romans gods are often shown partaking. The speaker continues his excursion through the solar system in a progressive state of self-examination: ‘Is it excitement, / or power, or understanding, or illumination / we take our expeditions for?’ (*CP*, 393, ll. 98-100) The myth highlights Morgan’s own mortality and yet the tone is not bereft. John assumes the role of Ganymede through which he is eternally placed amongst the stars, the concept offering solace to those left behind. The question from the opening lines, ‘who can call that marbled beauty dead?’, suggests that the moon is alive despite the fact that the scientists ‘never landed, only photographed / and sent down probes from orbit; turbulence / on Jupiter was extreme’ (*CP*, 393, ll. 93-5). John, like the moon, is beyond reach and yet still endures.

The longevity of the intergalactic expedition means that it will continue for generations, with ‘our sons or our sons’ sons / [...] on Jupiter, and their sons’ sons / at the star gate’ (*CP*, 393, ll.

⁴⁰³ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, ‘Ganymed’, *Selected Poems*, transl. John Whaley (Northwestern University Press: Evanston, 1998), 15.

103-5), but an eventual end is inevitable. The final line, ‘had it gold and asphodel?’ (CP, 393, l. 112), leads the reader back to Homer, whose *Odyssey* describes Hades’ meadows of asphodel as ‘the dwelling-place of souls, the disembodied wraiths of men’.⁴⁰⁴ Compared to ‘Io’ or the haunting dreams of ‘Europa’, ‘Ganymede’ and its surrounding mythology is not a lamentation of death, emphasised by Marshall Walker who states that ‘only Ganymede is possibly benign’⁴⁰⁵ out of the moons from Morgan’s poem-sequence. Instead life is presented as eternal, the asphodel described in Greek literature as an everlasting flower.

Callisto is also associated with Greek mythology, named after the nymph whose name ‘rooted in the Greek Kalliste, means “most beautiful”’.⁴⁰⁶ Paul Schenk explains that, despite the moon’s ‘mesmerising unearthly beauty’ from afar, ‘her gossamer beauty give[s] way to a more haggard appearance’ on approach.⁴⁰⁷ Morgan’s poem describes Callisto as a ‘scarred, cauterized, pocked and warty face’ that seems to taunt the scientists, shown to ‘grin and gape and gawk and cock an ear / at us with craters, all blind, all deaf, all dumb’ (CP, 393, ll. 113-5). Despite the hostile environment of the ‘brown and cold’ (CP, 393, l. 116) moon, Morgan presents humanity’s tenacity in the face of the unknown, with the speaker stating that:

even the greatest crater,
gouged as if a continent had struck it,
circled by rim on rim of ridges rippling
hundreds of miles over that slaty chaos,
cannot forbid our feet, our search, our songs.

(CP, 393, ll. 126-30).

The repeated plural pronouns highlight the community in the sequence, with the speaker part of a wider band of explorers. However, the solitude of ‘Amalthea’ prevails. Just as the planet-man on Io ‘must shoulder sorrow, great sacks / of pain, in places with no solace but / his own’ (CP, 392, ll. 54-6), the speaker distances himself from the camaraderie on Callisto and states, ‘I did not sing’ (CP, 394, l. 131).

⁴⁰⁴ Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. E. V. Rieu (London: Penguin, 2003), Book XXIV, ll. 13-4.

⁴⁰⁵ Marshall Walker, ‘The Voyage Out and the Favoured Place: Edwin Morgan’s Science Fiction Poems’, *About Edwin Morgan*, ed. Robert Crawford and Hamish Whyte (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), 54-64, 63.

⁴⁰⁶ Paul Schenk, *Atlas of the Galilean Satellites* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 29.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

Despite the distance between the 'toadback moon' (*CP*, 393, l. 116) and the speaker's home planet, the poem makes an association between the two. The 'mounds and pits' in the 'slaty chaos' of Callisto resonate with 'one grave long ago, / on earth' (*CP*, 393-4, ll. 129-32), the landscape a physical reminder of the speaker's loss alongside the singing of his fellow explorers, which alights the memory of a funeral chorus. The alterity of the moons, with their extraordinary landscapes and surrounding mythologies, forms a barrier between reality and the imagination, the sequence focusing on loss but with little confessional aspect. By leaving death unspecified throughout the sequence, Morgan explores grief's universality. The singular reality of his own bereavement is, however, developed in this final poem on Callisto's desolate landscape. From the 'elephant-hide seas' (*CP*, 393, l. 117) of the moon, the reader is brought back to earth as the speaker recalls 'a high Lanarkshire wind' that 'whipped out the tears men might be loath to show, / as if the autumn had a mercy / I could not give myself' (*CP*, 394, ll. 133-6), the same scene referred to in 'Epilogue: Seven Decades'. Morgan deploys the Old-English derivative 'loath', which in this context 'derives from an Old English root that means "unwilling" but also "disgust" or "hatred"' (*BTL*D, 257), emphasising his self-reproach and inability to forgive himself. Unlike the funeral rites on 'Io', which are 'empty but not perfunctory' (*CP*, 391, ll. 38-9), the speaker recalls 'the perfunctory priest' on earth, and 'my thoughts that left us parted on a quarrel' (*CP*, 394, ll. 137-8). Employing the same word in the speaker's description of the two funerals suggests that the speaker's own personal earthly loss subconsciously exists with him amidst the communal grief on Io.

Although his earthly 'shame' (*CP*, 394, l. 136) lingers with the speaker, mirroring Morgan's guilt about John that he would be 'haunted by [...] for the rest of his life' (*BTL*D, 252), the sequence's final poem offers closure. The speaker believes that 'these / memories, and love, go with the planet-man / in duty and in hope from moon to moon' (*CP*, 394, ll. 138-40). His human experiences of love and loss become a part of his identity that help him to forge a new path, mirroring Vico's phase of progress. By suggesting that he will continue his quest for knowledge within the cosmos, the speaker's experiences are shown not to irreparably damage him but instead make him 'frail and tough as flags', allowing him to 'furnish out / the devastation' (*CP*, 393, ll. 125-6). The speaker embodies the human side of discovery and interrogation of new environments, demonstrating Morgan's belief that 'science must investigate, but man must be a judge of what is relevant to him as a human being' (*E*, 9).

The elegiac sequence shifts between grief, loss, and self-torment, but with an end focus on 'duty' and 'hope' that is forward-looking. It suggests a degree of acceptance for what has occurred on earth, resonating with Morgan's poem 'After a Death' from *Sonnets from Scotland*. As in 'The Moons of Jupiter', Morgan separates himself from 'After a Death', which is written from the point of view of time-and-space travellers who explore Scotland in its various geological movements and time periods. Following their examination of historical figures such as James Hutton, Robert Burns and Thomas de Quincey, the travellers reach the twentieth century where they find an unnamed writer mourning 'his friend' who he lost 'five years ago' (CP, 449, ll. 1. 3). The writer, whose 'pencil races, pauses, crosses out' as he 'struggles through a different fable' (CP, 449, ll. 2-4) without his companion, represents Morgan, pictured contending with the same creative block portrayed in 'Amalthea'. The short statement, that 'the one who died, he is the better one' (CP, 449, l. 5), highlights Morgan's own self-loathing that followed John's death, emphasised further by the litany of his own perceived character failings: 'The other one is selfish, ruthless, he / uses people, floats in an obscure sea / of passions, half-drowns as the livid sun / goes down, calls out for help he will not give' (CP, 449, ll. 6-9). Erik Frykman suggests that 'a deep sense of loss pervades "After a Death", in style a soberly intense poem in a book which is otherwise full of exciting, imaginative dramatizations of incidents from Scottish myth and history'.⁴⁰⁸ However, the poem follows the sequence's depiction of other historical figures, who are shown empathy despite their flaws.

Prefixing the examination of these figures is 'The Mirror', which suggests that mistakes of humankind and the misrecognition of the self is a fundamental condition of humanity. The title may bring to mind Jacques Lacan's theory of 'the mirror stage', which dwells on the false connections made by the ego and the subsequent misrecognition of the self. Lacan suggests that 'the ego is constituted by an identification with another whole object, an imaginary projection [...] the image in which we first recognise ourselves is a misrecognition'.⁴⁰⁹ The mirror is used throughout literature as a symbol of both physical and spiritual reflection, but one which projects antithetical themes of reality and false appearance and the clarification and

⁴⁰⁸ Frykman, 149.

⁴⁰⁹ Madan Sarup, *Jacques Lacan* (Hertfordshire: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 66.

distortion of truth. The travellers suggest that a person's perception of themselves is illusory, caught in a mirror stage that 'only we can see' (CP, 440, l. 1) from their outside perspective. They suggest that the mirror phase, a moment of self-delusion, extends throughout a person's lifetime. The speaker emphasises that 'the multitudes of the world cannot know / they are reflected there' (CP, 440, ll. 5-6), the term 'multitudes' implying that humans are continually enthralled with an illusion of themselves of which they are not aware. In the poem's final lines Morgan quotes Calgacus, the Caledonian confederacy chieftain: '*ubi solitudinem / faciunt pacem appellant*' (CP, 440, ll. 12-3). The line is taken from a speech in which Calgacus states that: 'to ravage, to slaughter, to usurp under false titles, they call empire; and where they make a desert they call it peace'.⁴¹⁰ By including this line, humankind is argued to suffer from the misrecognition of itself, with wars and devastation being perceived as confirmation of capability and strength. Lacan's theory suggests that humankind is rooted in debility, inherently attempting to create false connections and explain away reason behind action.

When read singularly, 'The Mirror' presents a somewhat bleak perception of humanity, but Morgan does not adopt Lacan's pessimistic evaluation of humankind. By placing the poem before the sequence's examination of historical figures, he suggests that the mirror stage is a universal condition by which everyone is affected, and from this pathos resonates. Morgan offers understanding to those about whom he writes, with Crichton Smith's comment about *The Second Life* arguably relating to later verses as well: 'they are not poems of ideas but of empathy and suffering'.⁴¹¹ In turn, when writing about his own experiences, Morgan allows himself respite. In 'After a Death', Morgan faces self-reality, defining himself unforgivingly as callous and self-seeking. The exclamatory command to 'examine yourself!' (CP, 449, l. 10) suggests that he previously suffered from personal misrecognition. It is a harsh critique, portraying a self-loathing derived from his regret of 'the mass of good not done' (CP, 595, l. 57). It is, however, followed by a volta, and the poem's final lines offer encouragement to the vilified, embodying the same understanding Morgan extend to others throughout the sequence despite their downfalls. Just as he removes Lady Grange from her dismissed footnote in history as James Erskine's deranged wife and offers her a voice, and focuses on the flight of

⁴¹⁰ Attributed to Calgacus by Cornelius Tacitus in *The Works of Tacitus: The Oxford Translation, Revised with Notes, Volume 2* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1872), 372.

⁴¹¹ Crichton Smith, 42.

John Damian at Stirling Castle rather than his subsequent fall, Morgan does not abandon his own story and leave himself as the ‘selfish, ruthless’ one previously described. Instead, the speaker witnesses the writer’s confrontation of himself despite the pain it causes, evoking pathos as the travellers recall seeing him ‘look / into that terrible place, let him live / at least with what is eternally due / to love that lies in earth in cold Carluke’ (*CP*, 449, ll. 11-4). Morgan suffers from the same flaws found in the rest of humanity, but an understanding lingers. We are, as the compassionate theologian states in ‘Pelagius’ (2002), ‘only human’ (*C*, 11, l. 7). The poet, after self-examination, is left to cultivate the good that remains from his relationship with John, highlighted in his later poem ‘The Glass’ (1997):

Lanarkshire holds you, under its grim grass.
But I hold what you were, like a bright glass
I carry brimming through the darkening pass.

(*VOR*, 64, ll. 4-6).

The 1960s embodied Morgan’s belief that ‘when writers become aware of the changing society round about them, or of the wider sense in which “the times they are a-changin”, [...] certain themes, and indeed literature itself, may snap into life’.⁴¹² Roderick Watson writes that ‘*The Second Life* marks Morgan’s arrival as a mature writer’,⁴¹³ his poetry depicting ‘a world of contemporary surfaces’⁴¹⁴ examined through the three main themes of the collection: Glasgow, science fiction, and love. *The Second Life* possesses ‘the first clutch of Glasgow poems that were to establish Morgan’s reputation’, demonstrating a contemporary reawakening as Morgan gazes ‘straight at the disfigurements of Glasgow: the sectarianism, poverty, alcoholism; homosexuality driven underground, turned violent’.⁴¹⁵ It is, however, poetry of social observation rather than participation. This establishes Morgan’s approach to the city for the next decade, with *Instamatic Poems* (1972) and ‘Glasgow Sonnets’ (1973) examining Glasgow from a critical, but still a spectator’s, perspective. In contrast, the poems of science fiction and

⁴¹² Edwin Morgan, ‘Introduction’ in *Identities: An Anthology of West of Scotland Poetry, Prose and Drama*, ed. Geddes Thomson (Heinemann Educational Books: Oxford, 1990) ix - xix, x.

⁴¹³ Watson, ‘Messages and Transformations’, 172.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁴¹⁵ Robyn Marsack, ‘Morgan and the City’ in *The International Companion to Edwin Morgan*, ed. Alan Riach (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2015), 101-15, 106-7.

love are entirely engaged, participating, and personal, and they remain so throughout Morgan's trajectory. Watson describes the science fiction poems of *The Second Life* as 'an expression of complex feeling experiences' that contain 'shards of contemporary experience and pain',⁴¹⁶ and *Star Gate* accentuates this further as it integrates the science fiction trope with Morgan's personal encounters of love and loss. Science fiction is, as Morgan suggests, 'bound up with the very quickly evolving relation of man to his environment', but furthermore to 'what the mind and heart might learn from it' (*E*, 14-5), an idea most fully realised in 'The Moons of Jupiter' sequence.

This idea similarly affects *Sonnets from Scotland*. The science fiction theme transitions and demonstrate a commitment to Scotland rather than to the entirely personal, but the sequence still communicates love. The sonnets establish the love and admiration Morgan feels for his home country and further demonstrate the 'feelings of fastidiousness and love for the Other' as experienced by the time-and-space travellers.⁴¹⁷ They are left appreciating the ability and possibility of humankind, with Morgan suggesting that, in their departure, 'they take with them perhaps a kind of love'.⁴¹⁸ Additionally, the sequence reconnects the themes of Glasgow, science fiction, and love in the poem 'After a Death'. Here the time-and-space travellers are made witness to Morgan's intimate life, the reproachful self-reflection of the verse grounded in the poet's home city. Morgan continued to link Glasgow and the personal in his poetry, demonstrated by *Love and a Life* in which 'he evokes old loves rather than old places [...] but a hidden Glasgow peeks through'.⁴¹⁹

The balance between optimism and vulnerability is a key component of Morgan's love poetry from the 1960s and 1970s, with Roderick Watson suggesting that it shows 'great tenderness and yet poignant isolation'.⁴²⁰ In these variants, the reader finds the 'sense of release, of

⁴¹⁶ Watson, 'Messages and Transformations', 182.

⁴¹⁷ Marco Fazzini, 'Alterities from Outer Space: Edwin Morgan's Science-Fiction Poems' in *Resisting Alterities: Wilson Harris and Other Avatars of Otherness*, ed. Marco Fazzini (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), 225-42, 238.

⁴¹⁸ Lesley Duncan, 'Poet's place for looking out at the universe', *Glasgow Herald* (1 December 1984).

⁴¹⁹ Marsack, 114.

⁴²⁰ Watson, 'An Island in the City', 19.

change, and also the pain of change' that Morgan identifies in *The Second Life*, making it 'very much a book of feeling'.⁴²¹ Morgan experienced the full reciprocation of love with John Scott in an era in which homosexuality was condemned. Therefore, while the 'pain of change' relates to him singularly, it also extends into social comment and Morgan's recognition of the need to push the boundaries. 'Glasgow Green', albeit a coded poem, invites conversation about the oppressive legislation regarding homosexuality in mid-twentieth-century Scotland, the writing of the poem considered by Morgan to be 'a bold thing to do in the early 1960s' (*NNGM*, 144). This journey of a slow-building but compelling outspokenness has been suggested as one that is 'determined to survive',⁴²² with Morgan's poetry challenging the treatment of the discriminated homosexual in an era in which 'you just had to hope that what you were doing would work out' (*NNGM*, 145).

The concealment of sexuality in *The Second Life* can be perceived as a regrettable necessity for Morgan, but it carries an important legacy. As Christopher Whyte states, Morgan's coded manner meant that it did not 'provoke a suppressive reaction' and therefore younger generations 'can find the gay elements in a very central, very accessible place in Scottish literature' (*NNGM*, 187). Morgan argues that 'the more specific reading is an extra, a bonus, something that is there' (*NNGM*, 186), and his ungendered approach to poetry at this time ultimately allows for a universal reading, in which love, in all its forms, is inclusive to all.

While absence plays a key role in the love poems from *The Second Life* and 'The Moons of Jupiter', as it does throughout the literature of love, Morgan combines it with the assurance that something worthwhile prevails alongside it. The pain of absence is recognition of the triumphant love that must exist, or did exist, for there to be anguish. Morgan writes in 'The Unspoken' of how '[we] did the common things that in our feeling / became extraordinary' (*CP*, 183, ll. 41-2), and here the relevance of his love poetry is defined. These poems often depict relationships that are not exploited on the page because they are recognisably unexceptional, with Morgan re-telling 'a story as old as war or man' (*CP*, 183, l. 47). Despite these quite ordinary relationships and stories, Morgan urges their preservation. Experiences being both unique to the individual but common to humanity desentimentalises them. Like

⁴²¹ Morgan qtd. in *Beyond the Last Dragon*, 329.

⁴²² Whyte, 'Revelation and Concealment', 93.

‘The Unspoken’, other love poems from *The Second Life* often obscure singular memories and subsequently extend into broader thematic explorations of love. Although Morgan captures a particular grief in ‘The Moons of Jupiter’, the sequence also responds universal feelings of love and loss. Its science fiction element places love in a futuristic context, but the speaker’s return to earthly memories and pain that still exist for him in the cosmos, alongside his fellow scientists’ experience of loss, highlights Ian Gregson’s suggestion that Morgan’s employment of love in different temporal contexts ‘emphasise[s] continuity rather than change - to insist that that the underlying experience is the same’.⁴²³

⁴²³ Ian Gregson, 154.

3.1. Introduction

Morgan's final three decades were defined by transformation, with wider social contexts affecting Morgan as a writer and as an individual. Although Morgan did not publicly declare his sexuality until the end of the 1980s, Scotland's societal shift that began with the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1980 propelled Morgan to embrace a biographical openness previously avoided in his writing. Beginning with direct references to a male lover in *Themes on a Variation* (1988) and culminating in *Love and a Life* (2003), Morgan's first collection to be ostensibly and completely unreserved in its autobiographical mode, Morgan's writing covertly responds to Scotland's changing attitudes. Transformation comes, too, in translation and adaptation, with Morgan re-imagining classic texts to incorporate elements that respond to his own society.

Perceptions of homosexuality in Scotland will be examined throughout this chapter, highlighting the attitudes that changed and remained in different sections of society after 1980. In terms of Morgan's life, his relationship with Malcolm T. will be explored, his first significant relationship after John Scott and crucial in its demonstration of Morgan's poetry embodying more candid biographical reflection. Morgan's new role as a public gay figure will be analysed, the poet contributing to Scotland's shift towards a more inclusive society despite backlash from certain political or religious bodies. Gay subtexts emerge in Morgan's translations of *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1992) and *Phaedra* (2000), which will be considered in relation to the themes of shame, guilt and desire, the texts responding to the cultural and political spheres in which they were published and performed. While Morgan's translations remain faithful to their original texts despite emphasis placed on themes particularly relevant to personal contexts, Morgan's adaptations allow for broader interpretation of the original material. *A.D.: A Trilogy of Plays on Jesus Christ* (2000) and *The Play of Gilgamesh* (2005) will be analysed, Morgan's adaptations of two foundational texts of, respectively, western civilisation and global literature bearing personal significance. Diagnosed with cancer in 1999 and yet demonstrably revitalised by a new relationship, Morgan's biography guides the texts' explorations of love, religion, and mortality. Finally, the titular figure of 'Demon' (1999) will be analysed as an embodiment of energy, representing Morgan's fundamental celebration of

life despite circumstances of ill health. In *A.D.*, *The Play of Gilgamesh*, and ‘Demon’, the interconnection of energy, creation, and love is crucial. Morgan’s texts ultimately respond to his own question asked in the introduction of *Gilgamesh*: ‘what lasts, what changes, what survives? Is anything immortal?’⁴²⁴

3.2. 1980s Scotland

As James McGonigal and John Coyle remark in *The Midnight Letterbox*, ‘the 1980s seem a to-and-fro decade [for Morgan], opening with a retiral and closing with a “coming out”’ (*TML*, 324). The failed 1979 Scottish Devolution Referendum incited Morgan’s creative effort to demonstrate that Scotland ‘was there, was alive and kicking’ and that ‘one mustn’t write it off just because the Assembly had not come into being’ (*NNGM*, 141). Morgan’s collection *Sonnets from Scotland* evidences the ‘unprecedented explosion of creativity’⁴²⁵ by which Scottish literature from this era came to be defined, alongside texts such as Alasdair Gray’s *Lanark* (1981) and Tom Leonard’s *Intimate Voices* (1984). The sequence, which crosses metaphysically-challenging temporal dimensions from Scotland’s geological beginnings to its imagined futures, is a physical embodiment of Morgan’s desire to ‘make this “nevertheless” feeling quite tangible and palpable’.⁴²⁶ Morgan reimagines the sonnet’s traditional thematic rendering of romantic love to encompass his own hopeful vision of Scotland. The nation responds to the shifts of history and geology in which humankind is inextricably present, the opening vision of prehistoric Lewis as ‘thunder / and volcanic fires’ awaiting the ‘memory of men’ (*CP*, 437, ll. 2-3; 11). As in *Star Gate*, Vico’s theory of *corsi e ricorsi* is at play in *Sonnets from Scotland*, the concept suggesting that Scotland will always return revitalised after a period of collapse: ‘in thistle days / a strengthened seed outlives the hardest blast’ (*CP*, 457, l. 14).

The element of play through masquerade, first developed by Morgan in the 1960s, is reapplied in the sequence through a national vision but one that is not confined to a nationalist agenda. Love of the nation is realised through the ‘polyvocality’ of *Sonnets from Scotland*, the range of

⁴²⁴ Edwin Morgan, *The Play of Gilgamesh* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2005), vi.

⁴²⁵ Duncan Petrie, *Contemporary Scottish Fictions: Film, Television and the Novel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 2.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*

voices ‘contribut[ing] to the reconstruction of Scottish identity by telling their own episode, a fragment of their life’.⁴²⁷ Each poem’s viewpoint establishes Scotland’s worth as a nation, determined through the depiction of poets, scientists, and philosophers, amongst others. Morgan’s vision of Scotland is, however, not a totality. By selecting only parts of Scotland’s history, the collection creates and opens lines of national and international connection. Tropes of what has been and what could still be are continually at play, demonstrating Morgan’s preoccupation with possibility that extends throughout his career.

Christopher Harvie describes the 1980s Scottish literary revival as ‘culturally comparable not only with the 1920s but with the high years of the Scottish Enlightenment’.⁴²⁸ Morgan notes the work of Gray and Leonard alongside that of James Kelman and Liz Lochhead as demonstration of it being ‘a surprisingly good decade from that point of view’ (*BTLD*, 258). From another perspective, however, the 1980s were not so optimistic. Morgan wrote in 1982 of the decade’s lasting inequalities that were gaining momentum in Scotland and the political fringe groups that ‘never seem to be pro anything except capital punishment’. He suggests that ‘there’s something ominous about the Eighties, so much hatred boiling and swilling about near the surface of society’ (*TML*, 346).

In the same year that Morgan retired as Titular Professor of English from the University of Glasgow, Scotland decriminalised private homosexual acts between consenting males in the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1980. This partial liberalisation was a breakthrough for Scotland’s gay rights, but fundamental issues remained. Jeffrey Meek suggests that, while the changes to homosexual rights had been institutionally inspired in England, ‘the drive for law reform [in Scotland] came from LGBT citizens themselves, tired of the silences, weary of the prejudices, keen to invoke a lost radical tradition and reshape the tired, dogmatic stereotype of traditional values’.⁴²⁹ Despite the legislation, internal prejudices remained in certain institutions. As Meek notes, the 1980 publication of the Grampian Police handbook highlights

⁴²⁷ Slawomir Wacior, ‘From Slate to Jupiter: Poetic Patterns of Edwin Morgan’s *Sonnets from Scotland*’ in *Scottish Literary Review*, vol. 5, iss. 1 (May 2013), 47-57, 50.

⁴²⁸ Christopher Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707 to the Present*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 1998), 200.

⁴²⁹ Jeffrey Meek, ‘Before the enlightenment: The battle for LGBT rights in Scotland’, *The Herald* (29 November 2015).

the entrenched prejudices and practices that still worked against homosexuals.⁴³⁰ The handbook defines gay men as ‘moral degenerates’ and ‘persons of manifestly lewd dispositions’,⁴³¹ further correlating homosexuality with child molestation. Although the force’s Chief Inspector argued that the handbook was published before the legislation had gone through, the vehemence of the text’s discriminatory statements made against homosexuals suggests that established attitudes against homosexuality remained. Despite lifting restrictions on private acts of homosexuality in Scotland, the police were still instructed to suppress public displays of homosexuality, with one of Meek’s interviewees for *Queer Voices* describing police attitudes in the early 1980s as ranging from ‘guarded contempt to open hostility’.⁴³²

Derision towards the homosexual community in the 1980s can be found elsewhere. In 1983 the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) undertook their first annual survey, focusing on British social attitudes. In an unweighted group of 1,761 people, 50% of participants believed that sexual relationships occurring between two adults of the same sex was ‘always wrong’. This percentage rose each year, before peaking in 1987 at 64%.⁴³³ As NatCen note, ‘although opinion on premarital sex became progressively more liberal throughout the 1980s, this was a decade during which attitudes to homosexuality hardened’,⁴³⁴ arguably incited by the 1980s AIDS crisis. National media headlines declared the ‘Spread of the Gay Plague’ (*Mail on Sunday*, 1 May 1983) and announced that the ‘Gay Plague May Lead to Blood Ban on Homosexuals’ (*Daily Telegraph*, 2 May 1983). Edinburgh, which became known as the AIDS capital of Europe, was declared to be on the brink of a health catastrophe by 1987, a statement sensationalised by popular media amid a moral panic about homosexuality.

⁴³⁰ Meek, *Queer Voices*, 101.

⁴³¹ Alan Forbes, ‘Police Book Angers Homosexual Group – Handbook for Police a “Smear” on Homosexuals’, *The Scotsman* (20 September 1980).

⁴³² Meek, *Queer Voices*, 102.

⁴³³ National Centre for Social Research, ‘Homosexuality’, *British Social Attitudes*, <http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/latest-report/british-social-attitudes-30/personal-relationships/homosexuality.aspx> [accessed 10.03.2018].

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

Unsurprisingly, Morgan found that it still ‘took a long time for me to risk being unguarded’.⁴³⁵ Attitudes towards homosexuality were compromised by the media’s homophobic representations of the AIDS crisis and incited further by the Conservative Party’s anti-homosexual rhetoric. Their introduction of Section 28 to the Local Government Act 1988 prohibited local authorities from ‘promoting homosexuality by teaching or by publishing material’, stating that no local authority could ‘promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship’.⁴³⁶ The legislation was segregating, seeking to repress the growing confidence of the LGBT community.

Morgan remained guarded about his sexuality throughout the 1980s, his caution replicated in other people’s experiences from the era. Berthold Schoene, who moved to Glasgow from Freiburg in 1990, writes of how, ten years after the liberalisation of laws against homosexuality, his university’s Gay and Lesbian society still had to meet ‘in complete secrecy to avoid homophobic abuse’⁴³⁷. He recalls the ‘buzzing gay-subculture’ of Glasgow but describes it as one that was ‘strictly confined behind closed doors’.⁴³⁸ Having been in an openly gay relationship in Germany before moving to Scotland, Schoene found that he had to move ‘back to leading a double life, with my gaydar switched to highest alert level lest I misjudged my company and naively assumed too much of a tolerant attitude’.⁴³⁹ While Morgan’s poetry from the 1980s incorporates a specifically homosexual element, its clandestine nature indicates his apprehension of publicly addressing his sexuality, identifying here with Schoene.

Despite the oppression and discrimination faced by the gay community, the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1980 meant that venues in Glasgow could now openly permit non-heterosexual customers. Prior to the partial decriminalisation, a selection of venues had allowed heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals to mix, documented in Meek’s interactive historical map

⁴³⁵ Edwin Morgan, ‘Zest and Grit’, interviewed by Sarah Crown for *The Guardian* (26 January 2008).

⁴³⁶ Local Government Act, Section 28; 2A (London: HMSO, 1988), 27.

⁴³⁷ Berthold Schoene, ‘Foreword: This Queer Affinity’ in *Out There: An Anthology of Scottish LGBT Writing*, ed. Zoe Strachan (Glasgow: Freight Books, 2014), 11-8, 11.

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 12.

of Glasgow's queer places and spaces.⁴⁴⁰ Non-heterosexuals could meet a potential partner, providing that a certain amount of discretion remained. Following the Criminal Justice Act, venue explicitly catering for a gay crowd opened in the city. Established in 1888, the Waterloo Bar is Glasgow's oldest surviving gay pub, officially from 1980 onwards although it reportedly accepted homosexuals from the 1960s onwards.⁴⁴¹ Bennet's, reported as Glasgow's oldest gay club before its closure in 2011, is described by social commentator Damian Barr as being 'like Xanadu' when it opened in 1981, recalling that 'to walk into a room and see all these men dancing together and kissing, I actually thought something bad was going to happen'.⁴⁴² These were unprecedented times for homosexuals in Scotland, in which an underlying fear of repercussion remained.

As McGonigal notes, Morgan's diaries from the 1980s 'show regular meetings with various men who enter, depart and re-enter his life across the years' (*BTL*D, 267), the Lorne Bar and the Horseshoe Bar reported as two places in which Morgan would meet his partners. Neither establishment was recognisably gay-friendly, highlighted by their absence from Meek's LGBT historical map. Although Morgan sustained 'more or less casual relationships' (*BTL*D, 265) with certain men, he did not proclaim his sexuality by inhabiting openly LGBT-friendly public houses, although this may simply indicate a matter of preference regarding particular establishments. Despite this separation of public and private life, many of Morgan's friends were aware of his sexuality. Tom Leonard 'jaloused what was happening', asking him at a party in the 1970s, 'you're gay, aren't you?',⁴⁴³ while Tom McGrath 'saw straight away' that Morgan's love poems 'were in fact gay poems'.⁴⁴⁴ Their understanding did not alter the repression prevalent throughout Morgan's pre-1990 writing, perhaps because Morgan did not perceive repression to be completely negative. He states that 'creative activity of any kind is not hindered by pressures and difficulties [...] it's often helped by these things' (*NNGM*, 162), suggesting that private tensions offered his writing the capacity to explore emotions and

⁴⁴⁰ Meek, 'Mapping Glasgow's Queer History', August 8 2013, <https://queerscotland.com/2013/08/08/mappingglasgows-queer-history> [accessed 10.03.2018].

⁴⁴¹ Peter Ross, 'The Pink Round - A wee visit to Glasgow's oldest gay pub', *The Scotsman* (19 March 2011).

⁴⁴² BBC Scotland, *Coming Out: The fabulous history of gay Scotland* (November 30 2015), <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06qsv9r> [accessed 23.03.2018].

⁴⁴³ Morgan, 'Gay Writing in Scotland', 142-3.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 142.

relationships at another level. He speaks of the power held by unspoken feelings, remarking that ‘if they were declared, you might lose some of your power’ (*NNGM*, 160).

In the 1990s, Morgan began writing overtly about his homosexuality. ‘Head’ from *Sweeping out the Dark* (1994) is written in first-person, ‘about an incident that did, in fact happen’.⁴⁴⁵ Morgan challenges the reader to acknowledge the explicitly sexual relationship between himself and another man as he recalls ‘explod[ing] / in his mouth’ (*SOD*, 16, ll. 1-2), the line break emphasising the act. From the same collection, the narrator of ‘Eros’ anticipates the arrival of a male lover who will ‘jump on me, warm, thighs, arms, / lastly lips, - and that will be my happiness’ (*SOD*, 15, ll. 26-7), while the narrator of ‘In a Bar’ from *Virtual and Other Realities* (1997) relays a time in which ‘my leatherman [...] drew me / a hot bubble bath, stepped in and blew me / through a slit in his rubber suit’.⁴⁴⁶ Colin Nicholson suggests that these poems, amongst others, ‘negotiate a change in post-war attitudes and trace the difficult emergence of a self-aware gay strain in Scottish poetry’.⁴⁴⁷ ‘The New Divan’ marked the first significant emergence of the ‘self-aware gay strain’ in Morgan’s poetry, followed over a decade later by *Themes on a Variation* (1988). In this collection, the second-person pronouns that lend gender ambiguity to many of Morgan’s texts are, in certain poems, replaced by first-person pronouns addressing a specifically male lover.

Morgan states that he is not ‘tremendously attracted’ to the idea of a specifically gay sensibility, as ‘a great many things seem to me to have a general appeal, even though they have a special appeal as well’ (*NNGM*, 185-6). Morgan frequently responds to love’s universality but the gradual emergence of a definitively gay poetry bears significance, demonstrating Morgan’s belief that it was ‘strangely liberating [...] to talk about things I hadn’t talked about in that way before’ (*TML*, 384). Morgan responds here to his ‘coming out’ interview with Christopher Whyte, but his statement also applies to his poetry. Morgan’s poetry connects to his feeling ‘that a continued public silence on his homosexuality would be a “nothing” that would likely be taken as giving a very loud message’ (*BTL*, 312), despite believing in the power of the unstated. Morgan’s poem ‘To the Queen’ (1987) arguably stems

⁴⁴⁵ Morgan, *Footsteps and Witnesses*, 23.

⁴⁴⁶ Edwin Morgan, ‘In a Bar’, *Virtual and Other Realities* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1997), 94, ll. 7-12.

⁴⁴⁷ Nicholson, *Inventions of Modernity*, 106.

from his own understanding that, although a 'lack of frankness' is sometimes 'the very power the poem thrives on',⁴⁴⁸ the continued concealment of one's own identity can become problematic.

Based on Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poem written in celebration of Queen Victoria, 'To the Queen' is one of a number of texts remodelled by Morgan and Peter McCarey for their sequence 'Rehabs and Reconstructions' (1987). McCarey's sections, the 'Rehabs', exist alongside Morgan's 'Reconstructions', and together they challenge perceptions surrounding the original texts on which the new poems are based. McCarey's initial work on a poem was followed by Morgan 'countering with his own contribution',⁴⁴⁹ the sequence displaying independent approaches to the translation of texts and figures into new contexts.

Reconstruction is employed as an act of defamiliarisation, with both poets using the form to conflict with existing perspectives by transforming contexts and conceptions of the original texts. Unlike McCarey's 'rehab' of 'To the Queen', which addresses the same monarch glorified by Tennyson, Morgan's 'reconstruction' confronts the entertainer Liberace and his public denial of his homosexuality. The title employs the contemporary slang definition of the word 'queen', referring to a 'gay, flamboyant, and/or effeminate man'.⁴⁵⁰ Rather than celebrating the titular figure's public image as Tennyson does, Morgan's poem reverts to Liberace's private life, questioning how the entertainer's concealment of his sexuality will affect his place in history.

In comparison to the celebratory manner of the original text, the opening line of Morgan's 'To the Queen' is inquisitive, questioning Liberace's public denial of his homosexuality is questioned before suggesting its inevitable 'reveal[ing] in death' (*CP*, 527, l.1). As in the original poem, the titular figure's name is not included until the opening line of the second stanza, lending dramatic impact to the opening verse. However, the question mark used, 'O Liberace?' (*CP*, 527, l. 5), suggests a degree of hesitancy in accepting Liberace's revered

⁴⁴⁸ Morgan, *And Thus I Will Freely Sing*, 13.

⁴⁴⁹ Peter McCarey and Edwin Morgan, 'Rehabs and Reconstructions', *Verse*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1987, 10.

⁴⁵⁰ David Campos, *Understanding Gay and Lesbian Youth: Lessons for Straight School Teacher, Counselors, and Administrators* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2005), 109.

image. While Queen Victoria's 'greatness' and 'care'⁴⁵¹ is similarly attributed to Liberace who 'stretched out for all, such love, such care' (CP, 527, l. 9), this does not conclude how future debate will regard him. Instead, the poem shifts back to Liberace's denied sexual identity.

Liberace is directly addressed throughout the text. Therefore, Morgan's order of 'Sir or Madam' to 'take [...] this quick song' (CP, 528, l. 17) relays the ambiguity of Liberace's gender classification, the entertainer's infamous cross-dressing exemplifying 'queer camp' and depicting 'category crisis' in relation to gender.⁴⁵² Liberace's extravagant outfits on stage, including a pink feathered Fabergé egg costume and a rhinestone-trimmed mink cape, embodied the theatricality and appropriation often associated with queer camp. In turn, he appeared to break down the binaries of gender, inhabiting instead 'a space of possibility structuring and confounding culture'.⁴⁵³ Liberace's performances suggest a subversive individual, embracing the camp mode that 'has strong, even foundational, ties to gay male culture'.⁴⁵⁴ However, Liberace's vocal denial of and objection to homosexuality demonstrates his inherent discomfort with being linked to the homosexual community.

Tennyson attributes faults to his own poetry, described as 'thick as dust / in vaulted chambers'.⁴⁵⁵ Morgan reconstructs the line, addressing the marked disparity of Liberace's private and public life. The 'vaulted chambers' become 'well-closed closets' (CP, 528, l. 19), the latter phrase referencing a non-heterosexual who has not declared their sexuality to others. While Tennyson imagines the 'children of our children'⁴⁵⁶ recalling Queen Victoria's purity and serenity, Morgan's verse employs the voices of parents 'telling their children [Liberace was] gay' (CP, 528, l. 23). Tennyson's glorification of Queen Victoria's reign and the 'lasting good'⁴⁵⁷ of her decisions implies that she will remain a renowned figure throughout time.

⁴⁵¹ Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 'To the Queen', *Tennyson's Poetry*, ed. Robert W. Hill Jr. (New York; London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 292, l. 9.

⁴⁵² Ivan Raykoff, 'Transcription and the (Pro)Creative Urge' in *Queer Episodes in Music and Modern Identity*, ed. Sophie Fuller, Lloyd Whitesell (University of Illinois Press, 2002), 170.

⁴⁵³ Marjorie B. Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York; London: Routledge, 2011), 17.

⁴⁵⁴ Ann Cvetkovich, 'Camp', *Encyclopedia of Lesbian and Gay Histories and Cultures*, ed. Bonnie Zimmerman (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2000), 141-42, 141.

⁴⁵⁵ Tennyson, 'To the Queen', ll. 18-9.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, l. 23.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, l. 24.

Conversely, Morgan's explanatory parental voice suggests that Liberace's decisions will have an impact on his legacy, declaring that 'better far this wasted queen / should have a shroud of truth' (*CP*, 528, ll. 28-9). Liberace's decree, 'which struck her throne and raked her till / of tokens of the people's will', meant that 'she had to go' (*CP*, 528, ll. 34-5). Here Morgan references the pianist's proclamation that homosexuality 'offends conventions and it offends society',⁴⁵⁸ publicly rejecting those whose sexual identity aligned with his own.

Although Liberace denied his sexuality in a way that Morgan never did, the poem's focus on societal judgement may have felt pertinent to the poet. Morgan's work and interviews do not suggest that he felt self-reproach regarding his sexual identity, especially considering the numerous poems in which he addresses his gay relationships, albeit in a coded manner, and his confirmation of his homosexuality to certain friends. However, as McGonigal suggests, Morgan possibly felt his public silence would be misconstrued to mean that he was 'ashamed of his own nature' or that he 'still feared the public criticism that might follow from discussing this openly' (*BTLD*, 191). As Schoene's experiences suggest, a fear of intolerance rather than criticism likely guided Morgan's silence on the matter. However, although fundamental differences exist between the actions of Morgan and Liberace, 'To the Queen' recognises that history and society may perceive Morgan's intentions differently.

3.3. Malcolm

The 1980s were a successful decade for Morgan's career, being awarded an OBE in 1982 and Saltire Society Scottish Book of the Year Award for *Poems of Thirty Years* in 1983. He developed working and personal relationships with a group of younger Scottish poets, including Richard Price and Robert Crawford, and his retirement improved his opportunity to tour, lecturing on and performing his poetry across the world. His personal life, in comparison, was not as stable. McGonigal writes in *Beyond the Last Dragon* of Morgan's 'unsettling private life' in the 1980s, which centred on 'more or less casual relationships' (*BTLD*, 265). He suggests that 'after a profound emotional loss, the mind and body often cast around for sources of distraction or oblivion' (*BTLD*, 265). In this period, Morgan's trysts with often

⁴⁵⁸ Wladziu Liberace, cited in *The Encyclopedia of Gay and Lesbian Popular Culture*, ed. Luca Prono (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2008), 173.

much younger men arguably related to this sense of needing preoccupation away from the self following John Scott's death.

In a stanza from 'The New Divan', published a year before John's death, grief is depicted as a bare desert garden in which 'time is / the drooping shadow on the vine' that 'scrapes like a dragging kite' (*CP*, 299, ll. 151-55). The stagnancy of loss is illustrated, with the life left behind shown to be prolonged and onerous. The narrator's bereft isolation is poignant, but the poem duly recognises the necessity of continuing despite the loss, the stanza closing with the reminder that 'you left me to get on with the job' (*CP*, 299, l. 159). Later in the sequence, the 'wailing of a mother / with ashes on her head' calls out to 'Make do! Make do!' (*CP*, 325, ll. 1188-90), mirroring Morgan's portrayal of his mother in 'The Coals', in which she teaches him to 'keep the waste and darkness back / by acts and acts and acts and acts and acts' (*CP*, 421, ll. 10-11). The recurring notion in these poems, of the necessity to carry on despite hardship, was instilled in Morgan from an early age, with his family having held the expectation that one should 'cope without tears or complaint' (*BTLD*, 207). The knowledge of this perhaps provokes McGonigal's concern. He suggests that Morgan's attempt at coping by returning to transient affairs was 'a reversion to the bleak 1950s' (*BTLD*, 265), in which Morgan sought meaningless relationships to manage feelings of isolation after the war. Morgan, however, did not perceive his relationships in the 1980s negatively. He returned to his favoured archetype of 'dark, gallus, working-class Glaswegian males' (*BTLD*, 266) like John. McGonigal suggests that these relationships, however transient they might have been, 'did affect [Morgan's] understanding of the world in which he lived' (*BTLD*, 266), providing an insight into lives and backgrounds separate from his own.

Morgan's middle-class roots are touched upon in Alan Spence's play *No Nothing* (2015), which imagines Morgan meeting trade unionist Jimmy Reid in the afterlife, the two men having died within a few days of each other in 2010. Spence portrays them sharing a fundamental optimism that existed at the core of their beliefs. Despite their mutual rage against Thatcherite politics and the exploitation of the working class, the two men embody

‘the ideals of equality, fraternity, and love’.⁴⁵⁹ Spence echoes the sentiments relayed after their death by Robert Davidson from Sandstone Press, who spoke of the two men as having taken ‘the best of this great city's intellect, feeling and fighting spirit into the world and made their marks for us all’.⁴⁶⁰

Although Reid’s character admires Morgan and embraces their shared ideals, he draws attention to their contrasting circumstances:

JIMMY: So I’m down there manning the barricades, and you’re up in your
ivory tower being dialectal...

EDDIE: They also serve...

JIMMY: Aye, right!

EDDIE: I got a lot of that. Critics taking me to task for being too ... detached.

JIMMY: Well...

EDDIE: What?

JIMMY: You weren’t exactly poor. And maybe folk thought you shouldn’t be
writing about the slums if you didn’t live in them.⁴⁶¹

The class disparity between Morgan and Reid is undeniable. The son of a docker, Govan-born Reid energised the working-class consciousness when leading the ‘work-in’ at the Upper Clyde shipyards in the early 1970s. In contrast, Morgan was ‘the son of church-going Protestant and conservative middle-class business people’ (*BTL*D, 33), remaining predominantly within a middle-class, academic circuit throughout his life. Robyn Marsack suggests that Morgan’s circumstances should create a distance between the poet and ‘the voices of the urban dispossessed’.⁴⁶² However, Morgan’s early affinity with Mayakovsky’s revolutionary spirit and his own urgency for social transformation aligns him with Reid. Morgan frequently channels a socialist spirit in his writing, but his relationships with working-class men and their effect on him is an important element to consider. They ‘created a necessary empathy that would not otherwise have existed’, and McGonigal suggests that the ‘Glaswegian themes in his poetry were thus deeply connected with these working-class

⁴⁵⁹ Joyce McMillan, ‘Preface’, *No Nothing* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 2015), xi.

⁴⁶⁰ Robert Davidson, qtd. in ‘Scotland’s poet Edwin Morgan dies’, *The Scotsman* (19 August 2010).

⁴⁶¹ Alan Spence, *No Nothing* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 2015), 8.

⁴⁶² Robyn Marsack, ‘A Declaration of Independence: Edwin Morgan and Contemporary Poetry’ in *About Edwin Morgan*, eds. Robert Crawford and Hamish Whyte (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), 25-38, 31.

relationships' (*BTL*D, 266-7). Morgan gained a deep appreciation of lives perhaps not often encountered by those from his own social circuit, offering his poetry authenticity despite any removal Morgan may have had from the situations at hand. In *Love and a Life*, Morgan references a selection of the working-class men he had relationships with, including 'G.' who 'canny say Ah love ye but' (*LL*, 46, l. 1), and Harry 'the vanman' with whom Morgan 'lit out for the Blackpool Illuminations / instead of trolling the Med' (*LL*, 31, ll. 7-8). Of these, it was Malcolm T. to whom Morgan dedicated *Themes on a Variation* (1988) and with whom he sustained his most significant relationship since John Scott.

Thirty-eight years younger than Morgan, Malcolm initially contacted the poet in 1986 to send him a sample of short stories he had been writing for a Glasgow writing group. Morgan and Malcolm's relationship developed after their initial meeting, but Morgan felt hindered by Malcolm's relationship with another gay partner. The love poetry from *Themes on a Variation* portrays Morgan's dissatisfaction with their arrangement. His frustration is conveyed in a letter to Hamish Whyte in which he writes of his 'ration' of Malcolm's time as 'one evening a week plus the very occasional weekend',⁴⁶³ comparing their relationship to Graham Greene's short story involving homosexual infidelity, 'May We Borrow Your Husband?'. *Themes on a Variation* expands on Morgan's grievances and the 'conflicted early stages of the relationship as it developed through their first dark November and winter' (*BTL*D, 294). Rather than the class imbalance that surfaces in a small selection of poetry about John, Morgan reflects on an imbalance of feeling in his poems about Malcolm.

The sequence 'Stanzas' aligns with the love poems from *The Second Life* that 'draw their strength from directness and simplicity'.⁴⁶⁴ Opening with a frustrated tone, the speaker asks 'How can I love you, is there any way?' (*CP*, 507, l. 1) in a rewriting of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's sonnet of an all-encompassing love, 'How Do I Love Thee' (1850). The question implies the speaker's readiness to adapt for the lover but, as Nicholson suggests, this is 'one-

⁴⁶³ Morgan qtd. in *Beyond the Last Dragon*, 294.

⁴⁶⁴ Gregson, 'Edwin Morgan's Metamorphoses', 153.

sided desire in a divided relationship'.⁴⁶⁵ The speaker willingly endures the lover's passivity, the lover having 'let' the speaker kiss him with 'silent arms / [...] by your side' (*CP*, 507, ll. 6-7). The speaker counters the apparent indifference of the lover by claiming that 'what I wrap is warm / and does not struggle there' (*CP*, 507, ll. 6-8), but in this the lover's power over the speaker is emphasised. The speaker acknowledges that 'I ought to be content' despite the 'lack / love feels' (*CP*, 507, ll. 14-5), suggesting that their arrangement leaves him wanting. The speaker's feeling of deficiency is countered by the 'love itself [...] fed / from your eyes', the 'something hidden' shown to 'haunt my unresisting days' (*CP*, 507, ll. 16-20), but the speaker remains conscious of the existing imbalance.

The second stanza specifically references Morgan's relationship with Malcolm through the lovers' age difference: 'I was thirty-eight when you were born. / You think I want a son?' (*CP*, 508, ll. 26-7). McGonigal writes that the age gap that often existed between Morgan and his partners perhaps symbolised 'the creative artist's search for new experiences in a changing world' (*BTL*, 265), suggesting that younger men instilled in Morgan a sense of rejuvenation. Although the lover's categorisation of himself as the son implies a power imbalance, the speaker emphasises 'that's not it, / not it at all' (*CP*, 508, ll. 28-9). Instead feelings guide the speaker's actions, who testifies that 'I'd rather have your scorn / than you should never know what runs me through--' (*CP*, 508, ll. 29-30). The lover is portrayed through the metaphor of 'the blade', the speaker urging him to cut 'imagined age to shreds, and doubts / from veins' (*CP*, 507, ll. 31-3). Age is rendered insignificant as the speaker turns to 'eternity' (*CP*, 508, l. 35) and the elements, where the lover and speaker will survive like the 'songs / as tough as tundra, sails / tearing doldrums apart like white-hot thorns' (*CP*, 508, ll. 37-9). Nature imagery persists in the speaker's reference to 'the chrysalis of rights' (*CP*, 508, l. 40) that will exist in their eternity, the transitional state of the chrysalis proposing beginnings and possibility. The speaker compares himself to 'a flower, sunned, / turning, glowing' (*CP*, 508, ll. 43-4), the discourse of organic growth symbolic of their love, which will allow them to 'soar if we should want to soar, / or make a marigold of the whole air' (*CP*, 508, ll. 46-8). The speaker's impetus is the anticipation of this essential connection, but the collective pronoun and the

⁴⁶⁵ Nicholson, *Inventions of Modernity*, 105.

conditional phrase, 'if we should want to', tempers it, emphasising the necessity for mutual consent and unified expectation.

Three principles open the following stanza: 'to be simple, to be clear, to be true---' (*CP*, 508, l. 51). The lover adheres to these, while the speaker finds that to say 'what is true / is harder, just a little, I confess, / except that happiness was hovering near' (*CP*, 509, ll. 73-5). The 'hovering' of happiness suggests its impermanence and, again, the poem returns to the elements. Morgan employs pathetic fallacy in a scene in which 'you go home to him, and I to me' (*CP*, 509, l. 85), describing 'a vicious intermittent frequent sleet / turning to rain, not snow, / thickens from the low gloomy array / of cloud' (*CP*, 509, ll. 77-80). Unlike 'The Second Life' that presents Morgan and John's 'unspoken love' forming in the city, here the city embodies love's frustrations and one-sided desire, the 'ring road buses' shown to 'hiss and lurch through slush / churn kerbside mud and camouflage the street / with lumbering zebra'd drab' (*CP*, 509, ll. 86-8). A link can be made here with August von Platen's Venetian sonnets, which Morgan translated in the late 1970s having 'valued the way in which the expression of sexual desire is embedded within an urban cityscape' in Platen's work.⁴⁶⁶ As Morgan writes, Platen's life and career were 'punctuated by more or less unhappy homosexual affairs, which are often dealt with in his poetry in a surprisingly lightly coded way' (*CT*, 308). From this Morgan arguably takes inspiration when illuminating on the 'conflicted early stages' of his relationship with Malcolm. The speaker asks, 'how can the sun and this earth ever meet' (*CP*, 510, l. 97), highlighting both division and his desire for unification. His vulnerability is accentuated in the heavy realisation that 'I need you more and more' (*CP*, 510, l. 103). He turns to elemental imagery as if to persuade the lover of their natural connection: 'if you would come to me [...] / we would ourselves be in a ring of joy / and rainbow the rough waters bright above / the earth as under it' (*CP*, 510, ll. 112-8).

'Stanzas' concludes with the premise of the unknown, the speaker stating, 'how the story will end, I cannot see' (*CP*, 511, l. 132). The personified year urges the speaker to 'take stock, take stock!' (*CP*, 511, l. 133), the speaker's litany of completed tasks suggesting the necessity of distraction, mirroring Morgan's own desire for male distraction following John's death. The

⁴⁶⁶ Schonfield, 129.

speaker's depth of feeling removes protective layers 'I thought I needed, when / all I needed was to see it gone' (CP, 511, ll. 137-40). In making himself vulnerable, the speaker recognises that 'the truth's in feeling, and the openness / feeling must give at last' (CP, 511, ll. 147-8), his exposure highlighted in the final line: 'Have you not tried my heart? It has no lock' (CP, 511, l. 155). Crichton Smith suggests that in 'Stanzas' the reader is presented with 'tantalising glimpses of the Morgan concealed behind the mask',⁴⁶⁷ the typically self-contained poet presenting a vulnerable self rarely seen. The poem articulates a singular longing for an all-encompassing and fulfilling love, instead of one defined by its restrictions.

As in 'Stanzas', 'Dear man, my love goes out in waves...' employs city imagery to display 'the same darkness',⁴⁶⁸ the latter poem 'evoking personal feeling, absence and the vulnerable individual in the city'.⁴⁶⁹ The speaker commands himself in a despairing tone to 'be satisfied with it, / the gravel and the grit / the struggling eye can't lift' (CP, 513, ll. 16-8). Just as the speaker knows he 'ought to be content' (CP, 507, l. 14) with the situation in 'Stanzas', 'Dear man' deploys a modal verb to suggest that 'simply to be / should be enough, in the same city' (CP, 513, ll. 13-4). Despite this, the lover's absence leaves the speaker facing discontent and restlessness. As in 'Stanzas', cautionary habits continue and yet the lover is never fully present. When the speaker instructs the lover to 'press close to me at midnight' (CP, 513, l. 21), he is conscious of the lover's impending departure. Alone in his darkened room, having watched the lover go 'into the frost' (CP, 513, l. 24) outside, the speaker's vulnerability is amplified by his argument that it is 'better to shake unseen / and let real darkness screen / the shadows of the heart / the vacant part- / ner, husband, wife' (CP, 513, ll. 26-30). Roderick Watson highlights the 'spiky ambiguous grammar' that evolves in the text, the 'oddly broken line endings' expressing 'the tensions of commitment and evasion raging with the poem'.⁴⁷⁰ The interruption of the word 'partner' in the closing lines emphasises this, the truncated word mirroring the relationship that the lover's arrangement with another partner disrupts.

⁴⁶⁷ Crichton Smith, 48.

⁴⁶⁸ Morgan, *Footsteps and Witnesses*, 22.

⁴⁶⁹ Watson, 'Edwin Morgan's Urban Poetry', 20.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

The darkness of these two poems extends throughout the collection, prompting Richard Price to question whether Morgan was less optimistic at this stage of his life. In reply, Morgan wrote that:

I don't think I'm at bottom less optimistic, but of course the 80s are not the 60s, and the unease which one reviewer detected in the volume is doubtless there. Love and war: the two ancient subjects: they return and return.⁴⁷¹

Morgan's relationship with Malcolm is significant as the love that returns, more so than any other experienced by Morgan. Following their relationship in the 1980s, the pair reunited romantically in 1994. Although this did not develop further, they remained friends until Morgan's death, with Malcolm speaking 'movingly and humorously' at Morgan's funeral (*BTL D*, 444). The poems about Malcolm hold a significant place in Morgan's trajectory, shifting towards a literary openness about his sexuality. Instead of the ungendered relationships that define Morgan's poetry prior to the 1980s, the poems about Malcolm directly reference a male lover, signifying a crucial shift in Morgan's dialogue with love. Morgan writes love poetry for the whole of humanity, described by McGonigal as 'inclusive: men and women can read themselves into it'.⁴⁷² However, the specification of gender in *Themes on a Variation* and later collections establishes 'a directness of utterance which establishes a very different relation to his audience',⁴⁷³ accentuating the homosexual element of Morgan's poetry as a definitive, rather than possible, factor.

In the year that *Themes on a Variation* was published, Morgan initiated his 'coming out' in two interviews with the openly gay writer Christopher Whyte. Amid the debate surrounding the repeal of Section 28, Whyte wrote in *The Scotsman* of his own experiences as a homosexual man, explaining that 'the double burden of negotiating my own nascent, and hugely mysterious to me, sexuality, as well as keeping it a secret from family, friends and teachers, became more than I could bear'.⁴⁷⁴ The mental weight described by Whyte, along with his desire for 'self-

⁴⁷¹ Morgan, qtd. in *Beyond the Last Dragon*, 311.

⁴⁷² McGonigal qtd. by Sarah Crown, 'Zest and Grit'.

⁴⁷³ Whyte, 'Revelation and Concealment', 84.

⁴⁷⁴ Christopher Whyte, 'Repealing Section 28 is only the start - we need to go further', *The Scotsman* (21 January 2000).

expression without shame or stigmatisation',⁴⁷⁵ mirrors Morgan's own experience before his public declaration. In a letter from 1989, Morgan attributes the ease with which he found himself able 'to talk about things I hadn't talked about in that way before' to Whyte (*TML*, 384). The interviews affirmed that Morgan 'had, in his quiet and unobtrusive way, been a positive role model for gay people in Scotland', having 'confounded the all too familiar narrative, in life and in literature, of the gay character who dies with promise unfulfilled' (*BTL*, 312-3). Although a conflated version of these interviews was not published until 1990, the year in which Glasgow was named City of Culture, this first step towards an open declaration of his homosexuality marked Morgan's shift from the private to public self. Brian Dempsey wrote in 2009 of how Scotland 'would have lost something important if Morgan had not been prepared to be open about his sexuality',⁴⁷⁶ suggesting that Morgan's life and work are integral to Scotland's homosexual narrative.

In *Footsteps and Witnesses*, Morgan remarks that 'it was fairly widely known that I was gay but, nevertheless, I had never properly declared the fact'.⁴⁷⁷ With the struggle for gay rights in Scotland facing new obstacles, such as the Criminal Justice Bill proposing to make various categories of homosexual behaviour into serious crimes,⁴⁷⁸ Morgan moved into the new decade with the intention of being 'completely open', publishing poems that he deemed to be 'perfectly straightforward in their declaration'.⁴⁷⁹ As explained in his final stanza for 'Epilogue: Seven Decades', Morgan felt that he had finally 'come through / [...] to something that was shadowy before' (*CP*, 595, ll. 61-3). By declaring his sexuality publicly, having concealed it for seventy years, Morgan was able to 'go forward' and 'switch the whole thing / right on' (*CP*, 595, ll. 66-8).

3.4. Coming Out

Christopher Whyte suggests that Morgan's announcement 'was something of a first in Scottish literature, a thoroughly destabilising manoeuvre because he had already gained a place at the

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ Brian Dempsey, 'They were a bit, ken, "thon way"', *History Scotland*, vol. 9, no. 5 (Sept/Oct 2009).

⁴⁷⁷ Morgan, *Footsteps and Witnesses*, 22.

⁴⁷⁸ Sue Wilson, 'Clause Out!', *The List*, no. 141 (February 1991).

⁴⁷⁹ Morgan, *Footsteps and Witnesses*, 22.

very centre of his culture from which it would be extremely difficult to dislodge him'.⁴⁸⁰ The secondary education teaching of Morgan's love poetry was 'hastily revised in view of this new identity' (*TML*, 386), a significant demonstration of public acceptance despite the government restriction of teaching homosexuality in schools. The positive reception may have also been strengthened by his universal response to love. As Tom Pow acknowledged in his response to the 'moral panic' surrounding homosexuality in 2000, the predominantly ungendered nature of love in Morgan's poetry leaves it impervious to any accusations of proselytising. Instead, what remains are essential lessons for humanity: 'pointing out injustices, extending sympathy for the unfortunate, playing with our imaginations, teaching us the great compensations of love'.⁴⁸¹

In his new public role as a gay figure, Morgan became involved with numerous events such as University of Glasgow's 'Gay Awareness Day' and the Lesbian and Gay Glasgow events for Mayfest in 1990, alongside appearances at the arts festival Glasgay!. The latter in particular allowed for a 'collectivization of "sexual minorities" [that] served to render them present in the whole city, rather than ghettoized in the "scene",'⁴⁸² with Morgan contributing to the festival's appeal for inclusion. As documented in 'A Visitor's Guide to Glasgay!', the festival's founders, Cordelia Ditton and Dominic D'Angelo, encountered fundamental challenges provoked by Section 28. It stipulated that an authority could not 'intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality'.⁴⁸³ In 1992, a year prior to Glasgay!'s official opening, Strathclyde Regional Council included a homosexual clause in its funding applications for arts groups, who were asked to sign statements to say they were 'not intentionally promoting homosexuality'.⁴⁸⁴ Ditton reports 'having to attend many Council meetings and bearing witness to homophobic reasons as to why the Council would or could not meet Glasgay!'s funding needs'.⁴⁸⁵ Despite this, support from the LGBT campaign group Stonewall and an anonymous businessperson who financially

⁴⁸⁰ Christopher Whyte, 'Introduction', *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*, ed. Christopher Whyte (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), ix-xx, xvii.

⁴⁸¹ Tom Pow, 'Lessons in how to avoid moral panic', *The Scotsman* (22 January 2000).

⁴⁸² Deidre Heddon, 'A Visitor's Guide to Glasgay' in *Alternatives within the Mainstream II: Queer Theatres in Post-War Britain*, ed. D. Godiwala (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press), 339-361, 360.

⁴⁸³ Local Government Act 1988, c. 9, s. 28.

⁴⁸⁴ Ann Coltart, 'Strathclyde adds homosexual clause for arts groups', *The Herald* (6 May 1992).

⁴⁸⁵ Heddon, 341.

underwrote the risk of supplying funds to Glasgay! enabled the festival's debut in October 1993. Glasgay! rejected the repression of liberal reform regarding sexual identity, with its 'dual and imbricated strategy of celebration and revelation [...] located in a cultural context of invisibility and of a certain backlash against sexual minorities'.⁴⁸⁶ Representations of Scottish gay and lesbian subjects within the theatrical frame were a rarity in the early 1990s, and Glasgay! attempted to 'redress that balance', having 'placed the gay and lesbian subject firmly within various real and representational frames'.⁴⁸⁷ With Glasgow chosen as European City of Culture in 1990, Glasgay! built on the ECC's established idea of the arts being an instrument for regeneration, the festival committed to changing Scottish attitudes about sexuality. In the 1993 Glasgay! magazine, the contributors wrote that:

Glasgow is, like Scotland, changing for the better, but it is still a city of cultural apartheid when it comes to sexuality: little islands of tolerance existing in the West End, the Tron, where it is easier to be out, while the general culture of the city remains reactionary and exclusionary. Glasgay! throws a challenge to this, existing across boundaries and genres and in somewhere called straight Glasgow.⁴⁸⁸

Morgan helped to fulfil the festival's aim to 'provide positive role models for a marginalised community that is persistently discriminated against by the dominant culture'.⁴⁸⁹ Morgan joined Glaswegian poet Jackie Kay and Italian writer Aldo Busi for a reading at the 1993 festival, presenting a paper for the First Day Conference on Gay and Lesbian Studies in Scotland.⁴⁹⁰ In the festival's second year in 1995, Morgan performed 'Poem a Day'. For this seven-day event Morgan recited poems specifically highlighting homosexuality, such as 'A Memorial' and 'Dear man...', alongside texts inclusive of other LGBT identities, including 'Chorus of Transvestites' from Morgan's then unpublished text, *The Play of Gilgamesh* (2005).⁴⁹¹ One performance was held at the Citizens Theatre for 'A Show for Glasgay!', a production presented by Stonewall and directed by Sir Ian McKellen. The actor, who had been

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 340.

⁴⁸⁷ Deidre Heddon, 'Performing Lesbians: Constructing the Self, Constructing the Community', *Auto/Biography and Identity: Women, Theatre and Performance*, eds. Maggie B. Gale, Viv Gardner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 217-38, 218.

⁴⁸⁸ ASC MS Morgan, N: 'Glasgay!' (1993-1996): Glasgay! magazine (1993).

⁴⁸⁹ Heddon, 'A Visitor's Guide to Glasgay!', 360.

⁴⁹⁰ ASC MS Morgan, N: 'Glasgay!' (1993-1996): *Evening of Edwin Morgan, Jackie Kay, Aldo Busi* (1 Nov 1993).

⁴⁹¹ ASC MS Morgan, N: photocopied list of poems for performance at *Poem A Day*.

‘very keen to involve [Morgan] last time in his Citz show’,⁴⁹² had publicly declared his homosexuality during a BBC Radio 3 debate about Section 28 with journalist Peregrine Worsthorpe, an open critic of homosexual activity during the 1980s.

Glasgay! and wider LGBT activism marked the slow transformation of social attitudes regarding homosexuality. However, Morgan’s collection of newspaper clippings on the topic of homosexuality from the 1990s demonstrate Scotland’s ingrained prejudices. In an article from 1990, Peter Tatchell suggests that Britain is ‘the least tolerant country in Europe’.⁴⁹³ He cites the subjection of imported homosexual literature to ‘much stricter censorship than comparable heterosexual material’, the denial of objective and sympathetic counselling to homosexual school pupils, and the frequent dismissal of gay service personnel from the armed forces.⁴⁹⁴ In the 1991 AGM for the Scottish Homosexual Rights Group, for which Morgan was an honorary Vice President, the group documented ‘our bleak position in a nutshell’.⁴⁹⁵ According to their figures, ‘5000 gay people were arrested in 1989 for consenting same-sex behaviour and acts of affection’ alongside the murder of fifty-five homosexual men in a four-year period, ‘with many of these murders involving an anti-gay motive’.⁴⁹⁶ Repressive perceptions of homosexuality also remained. In a 1994 opinion piece for *The Herald*, the author argues that, by lowering the age of consent for non-heterosexuals, teenagers ‘will be liberated into a movement that is profoundly atheistic, unnatural, anti-family and contrary to reason, anatomy and common sense, immoral and wrong’.⁴⁹⁷ Morgan’s newspaper file suggests that the era’s defining reaction to homosexuality was a convoluted mix of acceptance and condemnation, despite the efforts to dispel the homophobic attitudes that pervaded the 1980s.

Morgan responded to the era’s divisive rhetoric through his writing. Certain poems from the period are explicit in their message of acceptance and openness, as seen in ‘A Memorial’

⁴⁹² Ibid., N: letter from Tom, a Glasgay! organiser (undated).

⁴⁹³ Ibid., L/6: *Tribune* (19 June 1990).

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., L/6: SHRG letter (7 January 1991).

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., L/6: ‘A license to live life unnaturally’, *The Herald* (18 January 1994).

(1991) and ‘Persuasion’ (1991), while Morgan’s translations from the period engage with themes relevant to his own experiences: forbidden love, concealment, the value of friendship and benevolence. *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1897; 1992) was the first of Morgan’s translations to be published after he declared his sexuality, with Edmond Rostand’s nineteenth-century play described by Morgan as having a ‘very interesting gay subtext’.⁴⁹⁸ Eight years later, Morgan published his translation of Jean Racine’s *Phèdre* (1677; 2000), the original described by Christopher Whyte as being ‘ripe for reinterpretation in homosexual terms, especially where stringently repressive conditions obtain’.⁴⁹⁹

3.5. *Cyrano de Bergerac and Phaedra*

Morgan suggests in ‘The Translation of Poetry’ (1976) that ‘when states are anxious to establish their national identity and to prove the virtues of their language, they have very often in history indulged in widespread translation from other cultures’ (*NNGM*, 234). From the 1980s onwards, new emphasis was placed on Scots translations of canonical and contemporary plays, complementing the country’s broadening cultural and political nationalism. The failed devolution referendum encouraged a cultural revival, proving that ‘fruitful literature is made from reaction to unpropitious cultural circumstance’.⁵⁰⁰ Regarding Scottish drama, Bill Findlay suggests that there was a ‘new-found confidence [in] the validity of Scottish voices on our stages in performing non-Scottish plays’, a crucial development when considering that ‘no contemporary foreign play had been translated into Scots before the 1980s’/⁵⁰¹ The rise in Scots theatre demonstrated the language’s capacity and diversity. It disproved the notion that Scots could only be employed in a Scottish context and established its ability to encompass the shared human experience. Findlay suggests that the Scots translations from this era:

[D]emonstrate the value of the linguistic options that translators in Scotland have available, being able to draw not just on Standard English and ‘Scottish

⁴⁹⁸ Morgan, *Footsteps and Witnesses*, 23.

⁴⁹⁹ Christopher Whyte, ‘Queer Readings, Gay Texts: From Redgauntlet to the Prime of Miss Jean Brodie’ in *Resisting Alterities: Wilson Harris and Other Avatars of Otherness*, ed. Marco Fazzini (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2004), 159-75, 162.

⁵⁰⁰ Gerard Carruthers, ‘The construction of the Scottish critical tradition’ in *Old Alliances: Scottish Studies in European Contexts*, eds. Neil McMillan and Kirsten Stirling (Glasgow: Cruithne, 1999), 52-65, 61.

⁵⁰¹ Bill Findlay, ‘Talking in Tongues: Scottish Translations 1970-1995’, *Scottish Theatre Since the Seventies*, eds. Randall Stevenson, Gavin Wallace (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 186-97, 192.

English’ but on varieties of Scots, whether urban or rural, regional or ‘standardised’, historic or contemporary, literary or experimental.⁵⁰²

Morgan emphasises Scots’ linguistic diversity in his translations of poetry and drama, underlied by his ‘missionary aim’ to bring ‘this range of other European writers into the Scottish awareness’ (NNGM, 82). He further demonstrates his desire to prove that ‘Scots [is] flexible enough to stretch to the demands’ of foreign languages.⁵⁰³ Translation offered Morgan the opportunity to prove the capabilities of Scots when challenged with incorporating the linguistic variety of other languages. Regarding the theatrical employment of Scots, Morgan wrote in the 1970s that there was ‘a great deadlock to be broken in the theatre’, arguing that ‘directors and managements seem to be hypnotized rigid by the polarity of Received Standard versus Costume Scots -- neither of which any Scotsman actually speaks’ (*E*, 163). His translations of *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Phaedra* demonstrate the potential of a modern demotic, rather than synthetic, Scots in theatre. They challenge the limitations often placed on the language, particularly in relation to the literary genres that Scots has typically been chosen to represent.

Morgan’s introduction to *Cyrano* explains that his linguistic decision to employ an urban Glaswegian Scots ‘would offer the best basis, since it is widely spoken, can accommodate contemporary reference [and] is by no means incapable of the lyrical and poetic’.⁵⁰⁴ While many characters speak demotic Scots, including Cyrano and Roxane, Standard English remains for characters in conflict with Cyrano, such as Count de Guiche and Montfleury. This incorporation of two contrasting mediums of language allows Morgan to capture ‘the range of tones and tongues’ of the original text,⁵⁰⁵ the play shifting from comedic linguistic play to poignant lyricism. Lindsay Paterson argues that ‘it would be difficult to think of a vehicle better able to display the scope of Scots than *Cyrano de Bergerac*’, highlighting the ‘great

⁵⁰² Ibid., 192.

⁵⁰³ Edwin Morgan, ‘Poet puts a new nose on an old tale’, interviewed by A. Heavens for *The Scotsman* (7 August 1992).

⁵⁰⁴ Edwin Morgan, *Cyrano de Bergerac* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1992), xi.

⁵⁰⁵ ASC MS Morgan, K/8/4: Introduction to the programme for the 1992 production of *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Comunicado Theatre Company.

variety of rhetorical registers' employed in Morgan's translation: 'action, politics, religion, but above all love and death'.⁵⁰⁶

While *Cyrano de Bergerac* delivers moments of pathos amidst raucous comedy, the original text of *Phèdre* is almost exclusively anguished in its delivery, the play described as 'the profoundest of Racine's tragedies'.⁵⁰⁷ In 'Translating *Phèdre*: A Round Table', a discussion panel with Morgan, director Kenny Ireland, and Professors of French and French Literature, Peter France and Alain Viala, Morgan suggests that 'the whole Scots tradition in poetry has leaned towards comedy rather than tragedy'.⁵⁰⁸ The 'high-risk strategy' of translating a classical tragedy into Scots culminated in the 'strong emotional impact' that Morgan's *Cyrano* had on its audiences, encouraging Morgan to showcase the capability of Scots in incorporating the dramatic tragedy of *Phèdre*.⁵⁰⁹ Morgan's translation of Racine's classic text alludes to both English and Scottish literature, employing a range of tones that highlight not just the story's tragedy but also its moments of black comedy. Peter France suggests that Morgan's verbal poetry 'is arguably an equivalent for the more discreet poetic effects of the French', his 'virtuoso writing' becoming 'a homage to the poetic potential of the Scots language'.⁵¹⁰ The employment of a Glaswegian-based Scots enabled Morgan to revitalise the tragedy in a new era, hoping in turn 'to find out what there is in this most remarkable play that survives and transcends a jolt into an alien register'.⁵¹¹

Morgan speaks in 'Translating *Phèdre*' of deliberately translating rather than adapting the original text. Neither *Phaedra* nor *Cyrano de Bergerac* are transposed to modern-day Scotland, the two translations situated in the original texts' respective French and Greek settings. Employing Scots, therefore, localises the two plays, with Peter France suggesting that

⁵⁰⁶ Lindsay Paterson, 'Language and Identity on the Stage', *Scottish Theatre Since the Seventies*, eds. Randall Stevenson, Gavin Wallace (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 75-83, 81.

⁵⁰⁷ Arthur B. Coffin, *The Questions of Tragedy* (San Francisco: EMTText, 1991), 211.

⁵⁰⁸ Peter France, Kenny Ireland, Edwin Morgan and Alain Viala, 'Translating *Phèdre*: A Round Table', *Translation and Literature*, vol. 9, no. 2 (2000), 200-212, 211.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 211; 204-5.

⁵¹⁰ Peter France, 'The Poet's Phèdre: Recent Translations by Ted Hughes and Edwin Morgan', *Drama Translation and Theatre Practice*, eds. Sabine Coelsch-Foisner, Holger Klein (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2004), 195-211, 204.

⁵¹¹ Edwin Morgan, *Jean Racine's Phaedra: a tragedy: a new verse translation of Phèdre* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2000), 8.

the language used in *Phaedra* means we are ‘at once in ancient Troezen and in modern Greenock or East Kilbride’.⁵¹² The language employed connects the key thematic strands of the two original texts and the place in which the translations were published and performed. Morgan suggests that *Phaedre* inhabits ‘the Scottish thing we’ve mentioned with *Cyrano*, the possibility of some kind of link between the anguished self-examination in *Phèdre* and what one might find in parts of Scotland’.⁵¹³ Morgan’s assessment of the two original texts highlights their modern-day appeal. The ‘extremity of feeling’ felt in the faults and passions of *Phèdre*, which has ‘come across very strongly to audiences in the last half-century’,⁵¹⁴ finds similarities with the poignancy and vulnerability of *Cyrano* who ‘unlocks the play’s powerful current of feeling’ (*Cyrano*, x).

In both *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Phaedra*, love is the essential theme to which the texts and characters respond. When considering Morgan’s *oeuvre*, these translations mark a fundamental shift in his expression of, and engagement with, love. While Morgan’s love poetry is customarily personal and subjective, written from a singular perspective and published to be read in private, in his stage translations love is presented to an audience, exhibited through the actions and dialogue of the characters and highlighted as a connecting, or disruptive, force between people. This external presentation of love through the medium of theatre came at a time when Morgan had become more outspoken about his own sexuality and experiences of love. For Morgan, the translation of poetry ‘involves a process of imaginary identification and projection but one which is rooted in empathy and affinity’, creating an ‘emotionally charged process’,⁵¹⁵ and this arguably extends to his stage translations. Although the lives and poetry of individuals translated by Morgan, such as Platen or Mayakovsky, may offer more discernible parallels with his work and life than the classical French dramas of *Cyrano de Bergerac* or *Phèdre*, an empathy for and an affinity with the protagonists and their stories in the two plays remains. The facet of love experienced by the titular characters of the texts, one that is forbidden and suppressed, is of great relevance both to Morgan and to the society in which his translations were published. James McGonigal suggests that in *Phaedra*,

⁵¹² Peter France, ‘The Poet’s *Phèdre*’, 203.

⁵¹³ Ibid.

⁵¹⁴ Morgan et. al, ‘Translating *Phèdre*’, 201.

⁵¹⁵ Schonfield, 117.

‘as in *Cyrano de Bergerac*, [Morgan’s] own emotional life may be thought to underpin the emotion and language’ of the play (*BTL*, 362). Focusing on love forced to be concealed, the plays are particularly pertinent to Morgan’s pre-1990 life. Although Morgan had been forthright about his homosexuality by the time *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Phaedra* were written and performed on stage, institutional homophobia was still a notable facet of Scottish society.

One year after the first performance of Morgan’s *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Bob Cant commented in *The Herald* on the Church’s unchallenged homophobia, attempting to deny people ‘the right to express their love and desire for each other purely on the grounds that they are of the same sex’.⁵¹⁶ Seven years later, at the turn of the new century and the year in which *Phaedra* was first performed, Scotland repealed the prohibition of ‘promoting’ homosexuality in schools, yet it was met with great opposition. In an open letter of personal support to Brian Souter, the transport magnate who privately funded the ‘Keep the Clause’ political campaign, the head of the Roman Catholic Church Cardinal Thomas Winning stated that ‘it pains me to use the word “perverted” when discussing the homosexual act but that is what it is’.⁵¹⁷ Media outlets like *The Herald* rallied support for the campaign, with one edition kept by Morgan employing the campaign’s message on a double page spread: ‘PROTECT OUR CHILDREN - KEEP THE CLAUSE’.⁵¹⁸ Other newspapers reported the effects of the campaign on society, with *The Glaswegian* declaring that ‘Glasgow’s gay community is under siege from brutal bigots in the wake of the Clause 28 debate’.⁵¹⁹ These attacks are highlighted in an open letter to Cardinal Winning published in *The Scotsman* from ‘Dr S. T.’, a man assaulted and left unconscious due to his presumed sexuality:

One of the first news programmes I watched following my release from hospital contained the sight of yourself describing gay sexual acts as being ‘perverted’. The people who attacked me inferred my sexuality from the venue I was leaving at the time, their attack had nothing to do with a revulsion about specific acts [...] Were they to have had questions of gay, straight and celibate sexuality discussed in an

⁵¹⁶ Bob Cant, ‘Kirk’s Homophobia’, *The Herald* (18 September 1993).

⁵¹⁷ Cardinal Thomas Winning, qtd. in ‘Winning Fuels Section 28 by thanking “brave” Souter’, *The Scotsman* (May 15 2000).

⁵¹⁸ ASC MS Morgan, L/6: *The Herald* (2 February 2000).

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., L/6: ‘Gay Bashing is on the Increase’, *The Glaswegian* (25 May 2000).

intellectually informed environment at school, perhaps attacks such as mine would occur less frequently.⁵²⁰

Dr S. T's testimony echoes Cant's statement in the second edition of *Footsteps and Witnesses*. Commenting on the political friction occurring in this era, he writes that 'most of the new contributors to the second edition [...] describe how they were made to feel like second-class citizens in their own country', suggesting that 'the newly emerging Scotland had agreed to become an inclusive society - but only just'.⁵²¹ Morgan's *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Phaedra* do not solely respond to the era's sexual and political contexts, but they are important factors to consider when examining the texts. In 'Translating *Phèdre*', Morgan states that 'the idea of something forbidden as regards to sex is very much in the play, and very much to the taste of twentieth-century audiences'.⁵²² His foreword to *Cyrano de Bergerac* outlines the historical figure of Cyrano de Bergerac as 'a freethinker, and gay (which could offer the theme of frustrated love an added resonance)' (*Cyrano*, x). In the texts, love is forced to be suppressed either because of how it is perceived by society and religion, as in *Phaedra*, or by the effect of society's conventions on the inner self, as in *Cyrano de Bergerac*. While Morgan is faithful in his translator role, gay subtexts emerge rooted in the themes of shame, guilt, and suppression. The two protagonists' anguish, accentuated by the necessity to conceal their inner desires, arguably transcends the frameworks of the original texts and engages with the cultural and political sphere in which the translations were published and performed.

3.5.1. *Cyrano de Bergerac*: Shame and Suppression

In 1999, Alec Finlay requested from Morgan a love poem for *Love for Love: An Anthology of Scottish Poets in Love* (2000), edited by Finlay and John Burnside, alongside one written by another poet. Morgan submitted Emily Dickinson's 'Wild Nights - Wild Nights!' (1861) alongside his poem 'The Persistence of Love', later published in *Cathures* (2002) as 'The Sandal'. The Ancient Greek poet Sappho is his subject: 'O she is all fragments' (*C*, 73, ll. 13-4). Here Morgan references Sappho's body of work, which other than the completed text, 'Ode to Aphrodite', only exists in fragments. The exclaimed assertion at the end of the poem,

⁵²⁰ Ibid., L/6: *The Scotsman* (4 January 2000).

⁵²¹ Bob Cant, 'Introduction' in *Footsteps and Witnesses: Lesbian and Gay Lifestories from Scotland*, ed. Bob Cant, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Word Power Books, 2008), 1-10, 9.

⁵²² Morgan et al., 'Translating *Phèdre*', 202.

‘There she is though!’, suggests the surviving lyric fragments express the full range of love and desire, despite their incomplete form. Regarding Dickinson’s poem, an expression of longing for an unfulfilled desire, Morgan writes that:

Whatever sort of love the Dickinson poem celebrates, I love its sense of passionate abandon. Passionateness and fragmentariness link her and the Sappho of my own poem. Feeling persists through the fragmentariness, in both poets, in the most extraordinary way.

(TML, 462).

This idea, of passion presented and persisting through fragments, resonates not just with Sappho and Dickinson but also with the character of Cyrano de Bergerac. While Dickinson’s unveiling of desire in fragmented language suggests that it is uncontainable, ‘Futile - the winds - / To a Heart in port -’,⁵²³ Cyrano offers his love in fragments due to his self-imposed concealment of it. Cyrano states that ‘Ah kin huv nae illusions’⁵²⁴ about how Roxane would receive his confession of love and so, for Cyrano, there can be no passionate abandon; his fervour for her, however, remains. Certain moments carefully reveal his love, in the letters Cyrano writes under Christian’s name and in the monologues directed to his companions. Ultimately, though, it is hindered by that which he perceives to overshadow his inner self: the physical imperfection of his large nose. Although Parisian society recognises his linguistic talent, Cyrano believes his talent to be eclipsed by his external appearance and subsequently wrestles with the duality of the internal and external self. Despite his poetry exuding self-confidence, Cyrano’s monopolising sense of unworthiness due to his outward appearance fundamentally suppresses his feelings.

In *The Midnight Letterbox*, McGonigal and Coyle suggest that Morgan’s poetry in the 1980s developed ‘a focus on the dramatic monologue and narrative forms’,

[T]rying on, as it were, various possible selves: the playwright Shakespeare, the monster Grendel, the storyteller Jack London, the acrobat Cinquevalli -

⁵²³ Emily Dickinson, ‘Wild Nights - Wild Nights!’, *Wild Nights: Selected Poems*, ed. Miriam Chalk (Maidstone: Crescent Moon Publishing, 2012), 21.

⁵²⁴ Morgan, *Cyrano de Bergerac* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1992), 33.

each of these in his own way an outsider. This was something Morgan recognised in himself.

(*TML*, 325).

Morgan's *Cyrano* is arguably an extension of this. Cyrano is, as John Corbett determines, 'the Gascon outsider [who] falls in love with Roxanne, the Parisian representative of the centre', his story incorporating the themes of 'self-loathing, erasure and exploitation' despite his performance of bravado.⁵²⁵ Regarding Morgan's earlier monologic characters, the mercurial Cinquevalli resonates particularly with Cyrano, the German entertainer and Gascon poet seemingly interchangeable in a passage from 'Cinquevalli' (1980): 'half reluctant, half truculent, / half handsome, half absurd' (*CP*, 432, ll. 28-9). Just as the play balances comedy with pathos, so, too, is there a balance of Cyrano's inner and external self, his daring and his vulnerability, two traits both present in Cinquevalli.

Cyrano's vulnerability is most evident when considering his linguistic movement, the character 'donning and discarding different styles of language'.⁵²⁶ Cyrano introduces himself through colloquial Glaswegian, calling 'Oot!' to Montfleury who is performing on stage. He warns the untalented actor that, should he continue with his performance, 'Ah'll skelp yer lugs if ye do, ya fat jujube!' (*Cyrano*, 16). Cyrano's opening remark immediately projects the bold nature of his external self. His spirited use of language conveys an energetic confidence that compels people to follow his lead, with Montfleury booed off stage within minutes of Cyrano's appearance. Foreign phrases interject his urban Scots, threatening Montfleury with either 'a lug-cut or a hara-kiri!' (*Cyrano*, 16) and calling to 'Aw the *morituri*, hod up yer hons!' (*Cyrano*, 18), demonstrating his linguistic ability as he outsmarts his rival on stage. Cyrano reverts to Standard English in mockery of Montfleury and the Lady Intellectuals who question his contempt for Baro's tired verse, before establishing his own verbal prowess in a monologue about his nose: '*Dramatic*: "Bleeds a haill Rid Sea, the bugger!" / *Lyrical*: "It's a conch fur Captain Hornblower!" / *Naive*: "Is yer monument open fae nine tae four?"' (*Cyrano*,

⁵²⁵ John Corbett, 'Speaking the World: Drama in Scots Translation' in *Voices in Translation: Bridging Cultural Divides*, ed. Gunilla M. Andermann (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2007), 32-45, 42.

⁵²⁶ Bill Findlay, 'Linguistic motivation, dramatic language and Glasgow-inflected Scots in Edwin Morgan's version of *Cyrano de Bergerac*', *International Journal of Scottish Theatre and Screen*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2011), <https://ijosts.ubiquitypress.com/articles/abstract/110/> [accessed 17.05.2018], 1-45, 35.

25). His language in these opening scenes highlights Cyrano as a man of aplomb, his poetic energy accentuating the confidence of his projected external self.

In comparison to the assertive colloquial Glaswegian employed by Cyrano at the height of his verve, his language used to express Roxane's qualities evokes his tenderness of feeling, suggesting his internal self to be separate from his external performance. In private conversation with Le Bret/Carbon, Cyrano describes Roxane for the first time:

A femme fatale withoot
Trying it, a beauty selfless tae the root,
A trap that's set by nature, a musk-rose -
Love lies in ambush as the petals close -
Tae see her smile it's guid tae walk a mile,
She creates grace in stillness, wi nae guile,
Makes a simple gesture gie us the divine.

(*Cyrano*, 33).

Wistful lyricism of formal love poetry replaces his formerly brazen language, elevating Roxane by depicting her as nature's beauty. Love personified as lying in ambush highlights his own vulnerability and yet his readiness to walk just 'tae see her smile' suggests that he wilfully consents to love's control over him. The idealised description of Roxane as 'beauty', 'grace', and 'divine' contrasts with how Cyrano perceives himself to be an unworthy recipient of her love: 'Think of hoo this neb, / Which walks a quarter of an oor aheid, / Renders ony hope a love stane-deid, / Even fae an ill-faur'd wumman' (*Cyrano*, 32). Cyrano frequently makes his nose the subject of comedy, emphasising his statement that 'this thing / Ah cairry is a thing Ah'm proud tae sing' (*Cyrano*, 23). His dismissal of others' disparagement regarding his looks, however, is arguably a surface pretense. His ostensible eagerness to challenge and deflect any mockery directed at his appearance does not wholly mask the deep-seated insecurity that ultimately becomes his major impediment: 'Who'd no prefer / Tae walk wi his ain love, spring or fall / Unner the muin? Ah dream a that scenario, / Forget Ah'm no cut oot fur a Lothario / Then see ma shedda-profile oan the wall!' (*Cyrano*, 33).

Throughout the play, Cyrano struggles to express his feelings truthfully to Roxane. In her first appearance on stage, Roxane meets Cyrano alone at her request. Cyrano believes that her

eagerness to see him reflects her reciprocation of his suppressed feelings of love. Nostalgia lingers in his recollection of their childhood years, ‘Ye were still Madeleine, in shoart skirts then...’ (*Cyrano*, 50), and yet after Roxane explains her desire for Christian, Cyrano’s dejection is manifested in his language. Despite Roxane’s overt affection for Cyrano, he is unable to respond in like to her effusive speech, his language reduced to monosyllables, repetition and ellipsis:

ROXANE: Oh, ah jist knew ye’d be his true defender!

Ma feelins fur ye huv been ay sae tender!

CYRANO: Aye, aye...

ROXANE: Ye’ll be his freen?

CYRANO: Ah kin weer it.

ROXANE: Nae duels then fur him, ever?

CYRANO: Ah sweer it.

ROXANE: OH ye’re great - Ah’m proud of ye - Ah must go -

But ye niver tellt me aboot that terrific show

Last night - it’s so incredible! - Ah must fly...

Get him tae write tae me.

Oh, Ah love ye!

CYRANO: Aye, aye.

(*Cyrano*, 53-4).

Compared to the poetic energy of Cyrano’s entrance, this scene demonstrates the detrimental effect his sense of unworthiness has on his linguistic skill. For Cyrano, who has deemed himself undeserving of Roxane due to society’s standards of beauty, he can only reveal his feelings through the mask of the conventionally attractive Christian. Even in the moments before his death, Cyrano masquerades his love for Roxane as a recital of Christian’s final letter to her. The two men are ultimately inversions of each other. The unsightly Cyrano with his remarkable rhetorical prowess suggests to the attractive and yet ineloquent Christian that together they can create a chimera lover, merging their best qualities to create the ultimate object of desire for Roxane: ‘Ah’ll be your hauf, you ma hauf, and the shades / Will gaird me as Ah gaird you, new and fresh. / Ah’ll be your flashin wit, you’ll flash ma flesh’ (*Cyrano*, 72). Cyrano’s self-imposed suppression of love means that only fragments of him are allowed to emerge in Roxane’s presence, dependent on the ‘gaird’ and ‘shades’ of Christian’s physical self. In front of Roxane, Cyrano suppresses the poetic revelation of his internal emotions, which in turn only surface when his external self is submerged in shadow: ‘ye mind the night

wae Christian at / Yer balcony? [...] Ah wis cooried in the shedda below' (*Cyrano*, 160). Here Cyrano references the scene in which his true feelings are spoken most fully, masquerading as Christian from underneath the protective guard of the balcony. Reduced once more to shadow, he remarks that 'Ah find it therapeutic / Jist tae... enjoy the moment... incredibly, / Talkin quietly, invisibly' (*Cyrano*, 90). Frequent reference is made to the fragmented self in this scene, describing himself through the mask of Christian's physical self as 'hauf glimpsed, hauf thote [...] Ah'm but a shedda, you are aw brightness', recognising that only under this illusion can he be 'speakin tae ye straight, as niver before' (*Cyrano*, 90).

Cyrano's continual reference to himself as the 'shedda' or 'hauf' of Christian highlights David Kinloch's argument that in the 'echo' of Morgan's translation a deeper intimacy exists between the two than in the original text.⁵²⁷ Instead of offering to 'complete' Christian, the verb 'compléter' deployed in Rostand's text suggesting Cyrano as merely supplementing a fragment missing from Christian's ideal self, Morgan's language portrays them as two parts of one whole, cultivating each other. The physicality of their joining is urged by Cyrano who bids Christian to 'flash ma flesh' (*Cyrano*, 72), both figures protecting and guarding one another. Kinloch argues that in Cyrano's anguish to embody the 'hauf' of Christian that he lacks, there are 'uncanny parallels with classic interpretations of the origins and nature of homosexuality':

In such theories the desire for the other's body is grounded in a desire to be it because the other offers an image of beauty that the desiring man experiences in himself, perhaps quite erroneously, as a lack. [...] What Cyrano sees when he looks at Christian is not, ultimately, a handsome young man, but the mirror image of his own inner beauty.⁵²⁸

He suggests that, although Cyrano's desire is not homosexual, its 'co-ordinates echo a pattern familiar in the history of gay love. Cyrano's love, after all, cannot speak its name except in disguise, except through the shapely contours of another man'.⁵²⁹ Disguised as Christian,

⁵²⁷ David Kinloch, 'Edwin Morgan's *Cyrano de Bergerac*', *Frae Ither Tongues: Essays on Modern Translations into Scots*, ed. Bill Findlay (Clevedon; Buffalo; Toronto; Sydney: Multilingual Matters, 2004), 123-44, 141.

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

Cyrano admits that ‘It’s new... totally... tae be sincere/ Ma hert ay nippit... tae be laughed at... the fear...’ (*Cyrano*, 91). His tone is one of gentle wonderment in being able to articulate his sincere feelings for the first time. This draws attention not just to the suppression of his desire but also to the disparity of his public and private self, with Cyrano often employing ‘colloquial bluster’ to be perceived as something of a ‘Glasgow hardman’.⁵³⁰ Kinloch suggests that Cyrano’s tentative sincerity ‘is a reaction familiar to those who have been forced to suppress strong and unusual passion’, with Morgan catching its poignancy ‘by giving the inarticulate slightly more room to breathe and more space to signify than Rostand does’.⁵³¹

Unlike Rostand’s text, in which Kinloch suggests the titular character appears to be searching for the perfect expression of feeling, Morgan’s translation is ‘- more movingly - less assured, the momentary stutter of a big bear of a Glaswegian gobsmacked by a sudden vision of the pitiful, wonderful irony of his situation’.⁵³² Only through the involuntary turn to an intermediary, substituting his imperfect ‘hauf’ with the ideal one of Christian’s, can Cyrano express himself fully. There can be no great reveal of his inner self, which perhaps propels him to express his love with such direct urgency. His poetic flourish is reduced to words of plainspoken feeling, with Cyrano realising that this may be the only time he can elucidate his emotions in unguarded speech: ‘Ah love ye, Ah’m chokin, Ah know / Ah’m crazy, Ah love ye, Ah’m at the end a ma tether, ma hert’s a bell, yer name’s there in aw weather’ (*Cyrano*, 92). His statement that, ‘If Ah could gie ma happiness fur yours, / Even if nuthin a this came tae yer ears, / Ah’d be content tae hear, jist noo and then, Faur aff, your laughter, and ma loass your gain’ (*Cyrano*, 92), is poignant. Cyrano believes that this is all that he can expect from his relationship with Roxane, reducing himself to ‘hauf’ to help fulfil what he perceives to be her true desire: a handsome yet eloquent man. As Bill Findlay suggests, ‘in baring his soul to her, he has also bared his language and is exposed at his most vulnerable’.⁵³³

The play’s greatest moments of pathos are in the final two acts. Christian is self-sacrificing; having learnt that Roxane loves the ‘soul alane’ he urges Cyrano to confess his love while

⁵³⁰ Findlay, ‘Edwin Morgan’s version of *Cyrano de Bergerac*’, 35.

⁵³¹ Kinloch, ‘Edwin Morgan’s *Cyrano de Bergerac*’, 142.

⁵³² Ibid.

⁵³³ Findlay, ‘Edwin Morgan’s version of *Cyrano de Bergerac*’, 36.

professing himself ‘tired a ma doppelganger, ay pre-empting!’ (*Cyrano*, 137). Cyrano’s initial hesitation, a by-product of his own sense of unworthiness, effectively secures his future. Remaining in a state of delay, the sudden news of Christian’s death reaches Cyrano and the surrounding characters, leaving Cyrano unable to reveal the truth to Roxane. By losing the physical ‘hauf’ that reflects his inner self, Cyrano loses his ability to express, even from the ‘sheddas’, his unspoken desire. This is, Kinloch writes, ‘the real tragedy of Christian’s death, and it is why Cyrano must be silent in the space between Acts 4 and 5, which represents a period of fifteen years’.⁵³⁴

From the siege of Arras, the play is transported to the Convent Park of the Ladies of the Cross where Roxane secludes herself in the years following Christian’s death. In the opening of Act 5 Scene 4, in which Cyrano makes his final entrance, Roxane’s original line, ‘Elle qu’Avril offusque, Se laisse décider par l’automne, moins brusque’, transforms into ‘April’s the cruellest month’ (*Cyrano*, 151). Morgan’s translation pertinently alludes to the opening line from T. S. Eliot’s ‘The Wasteland’, the tone of Eliot’s poem harsh but vital in its ‘reminder of loss, a living thing that recalls death and melancholy’.⁵³⁵ Spring’s beauty establishes in Roxane the extent of her loss following the death of Christian. For Cyrano, still constrained by suppressed emotion, Roxane herself embodies both beauty and loss: the loss of his expression verbalised in Christian’s bodily contours, and the loss of what may have been if he had spoken truthfully, without hesitation. Cyrano, having been mortally wounded before his arrival, still shrouds himself in distorted truth when Roxane realises that he is in pain. He claims that ‘an auld wound / Fae Arras... plays me up... noo and then’ (*Cyrano*, 155), covertly referring to the moment in which his potential life with Roxane ended before it could begin. Reading the final letter Cyrano wrote for Roxane under the guise of Christian, Cyrano employs the mask of his ‘hauf’ for the last time to express in sincerity his love for Roxane: ‘Ma hert hiz niver left ye fur a minute; / As fur that ither warld, Ah’ll love ye in it / As deeply as Ah loved ye here, as true ...’ (*Cyrano*, 157). Roxane finally realises the veiling of Cyrano’s true self, but despite the desperate insistence of her reciprocated love, Cyrano’s sense of unworthiness structures his reaction:

⁵³⁴ Kinloch, ‘Edwin Morgan’s *Cyrano de Bergerac*’, 131.

⁵³⁵ Mariwan Nasradeen Hasan Barzinji, *The Image of Modern Man in T. S. Eliot’s Poetry* (Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse, 2012), 69.

ROXANE

Ah love ye! Live fur me!

CYRANO

Naw! In the fairy-tale,
When the Prince hears 'Ah love ye', then his hail
Ugly shame melts in the ray a that sun,
But ye kin see Ah'm no the lucky one!

(*Cyrano*, 160).

Cyrano's steadfast belief in his 'ugly shame' incites his tragedy, his inability to conform to conventional standards of beauty propelling his self-hatred and maintaining him in his role as outsider. In the monologue that precedes his death, Cyrano faces 'ma auld enemies' (*Cyrano*, 163). Despite his exclamation that 'Ah'll fight! Ah'll fight! Ah'll fight!' the 'shaddas' of 'Lies and Compromise! [...] Bigotry and Cowardice! [...] And Stupidity!' (*Cyrano*, 163), a sense of tragedy lingers in the understanding that Cyrano was unable to escape his shame, the root cause of his 'shaddas', while alive.

3.5.2. *Phaedra*: Guilt and Desire

In *Love and a Life*, published three years after the first performance of Morgan's *Phaedra*, he references the play's titular character in 'Desire'. The poem states that desire 'is a power, it is a mystery, it is a fate, / but above all it is a power. / The jaws of Venus will not let go their prey' (*LL*, 24, ll. 1-3). The presentation of Venus, the personification of desire, as an all-powerful predator to which one is bound by 'fate' acts as the antithesis of love, described in the sequence's subsequent poem as 'the food of music, art, poetry. It / fills us and fuels us and fires us to create' ('Love', *LL*, 25, ll. 3-4). Love is depicted as a form of energy, inciting and sustaining those who experience it, while desire is characteristically a destructive force, capturing its 'victim' who 'smiles / to see the spreading flower / Of blood, as it springs from those scary / threshings of life' (*LL*, 24, ll. 5-8). The paradoxical nature of the smiling victim suggests that desire renders a person powerless but is still irresistible, as emphasised by *Phaedra* in Morgan's translation. She claims it is 'Divine mairciless Venus' who 'Breks yir faimly', but then subsequently laments her desire for having never been fulfilled: 'An whit a baur, / Ah never squished the fruit ma shame declarit. / Thae miseries maun hunt me tae the daith' (*Phaedra*, 59).

As Simon Critchley observes, Phaedra herself is a paradox: ‘she detests her desire, yet she cannot give way on it; she fears the burning conscience of the Sun, yet she constantly calls to him’.⁵³⁶ Phaedra’s contrasting states of mind suggest inconsistency in that which she truly wants, with Gabriela Basterra asking ‘Does she want to enjoy physical satisfaction, or to preserve her own burning conscience, her consciousness of guilt, thus accomplishing her self-division?’⁵³⁷ Phaedra’s divided self plays into the well-established idea of duality being ‘characteristic of Scottish identity, often associated with feelings of anxiety [and] Calvinist guilt’.⁵³⁸ Morgan believes this to be a ‘very Scottish’ element of the original French text, suggesting it is ‘something about the underlying feelings and ideas on what one should and shouldn’t do’.⁵³⁹ The conflict of guilt and desire in Racine’s *Phèdre* embodies the religious strictures by which he was raised, having been brought up by nuns in the abbey of Port Royal, ‘the centre of Jansenism’.⁵⁴⁰ Followers of Jansenism endorsed the teachings of Cornelius Jansen, ‘a seventeenth-century Dutch theologian whose writings [...] were influenced largely by those of the fourth-century saint, Augustine’.⁵⁴¹ This Catholic sect prioritised ‘predestination, personal holiness, and man’s essentially corrupt nature’,⁵⁴² its tenets aligning with Calvinism, the theological system embraced by Scotland during the sixteenth-century Reformation. In ‘Translating *Phèdre*’, Kenny Ireland suggests that Morgan’s *Phaedra* demonstrates ‘connections at the level of the language’ between Jansenism and Scottish Presbyterianism.⁵⁴³ Although Jansenism and Calvinism depart from one another in the subject of salvation,⁵⁴⁴ a moral fear encompasses the two forms of religion. This, alongside their

⁵³⁶ Simon Critchley, ‘I Want to Die, I Hate My Life: Phaedra’s Malaise’ in *New Literary History*, vol. 35, no. 1 (Winter 2005), 17-40, 23.

⁵³⁷ Gabriela Basterra, *Seductions of Fate: Tragic Subjectivity, Ethics, Politics* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 43-4.

⁵³⁸ Fiona Stafford, ‘A Scottish Renaissance: Edwin Morgan, Douglas Dunn, Liz Lochhead, Robert Crawford, Don Paterson, Kathleen Jamie’, *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century English Poetry*, ed. Neil Corcoran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 230-244, 231.

⁵³⁹ Morgan et. al, ‘Translating *Phèdre*’, 202.

⁵⁴⁰ Daniel S. Burt, *The Literary 100 Revised Edition: A Ranking of the Most Influential Novelists, Playwrights, and Poets of All Time* (New York: Facts on File, 2009), 227.

⁵⁴¹ S. Karly Kehoe, *Creating a Scottish Church: Catholicism, gender and ethnicity in nineteenth-century Scotland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 26.

⁵⁴² Burt, 227.

⁵⁴³ Morgan et. al, ‘Translating *Phèdre*’, 202.

⁵⁴⁴ Unlike Calvinist theology, which dictates that the chosen elect are assured salvation, Jansenism teaches its followers that the salvation of the justified can still be lost.

shared belief in predestination and the corruption of humankind, creates a correspondence between the two belief systems.

Much has been made of the legacy that Calvinism and its 'psychological tensions'⁵⁴⁵ has left on the Scottish psyche since its Reformation beginnings. Carol Craig suggests in *The Scots' Crisis of Confidence* that valuable traits such as 'the importance of principles, a highly developed work ethic and a sense of duty and social responsibility' can all be attributed to the Calvinist legacy. She proposes that these can duly lead to unfavourable characteristics, such as 'a diminished interest in pleasure and a heightened sense of guilt'.⁵⁴⁶ Cairns Craig argues that 'there is no more powerful term of approbation in the language of Scottish Presbyterianism' than 'God-fearing', suggesting that 'the potency of fear remains central to Scottish culture' despite Calvinism's grip having been tempered since the Reformation.⁵⁴⁷

Phaedra's character is God-fearing, which subsequently structures her accompanying guilt, and Morgan states that he had Calvinism 'in my mind' when translating Racine's text.⁵⁴⁸ The pervasive watch of the gods as Phaedra plays out her unspeakable desire perhaps reminded Morgan of his own Protestant upbringing, his mother telling him from a young age that 'you may do something that we don't know about but there's an eye up there'.⁵⁴⁹ The somewhat interchangeable teachings of Calvinism and Jansenism means that *Phaedra* incorporates a particularly Scottish tradition. The original play's Racinian theology remains, but the shared doctrines of the two religions invite *Phaedra* to follow a long tradition of Scottish literature informed by Calvinist principles, specifically regarding sexuality. John Calvin described sexuality as a 'depravity' in humankind that 'never ceases' and encouraged the social control of it.⁵⁵⁰ Phaedra embodies the positive correlation made between religiosity and guilt related to

⁵⁴⁵ Gerard Carruthers, "'Creation festers in me": Calvinism and Cosmopolitanism in Jenkins, Spark and Gray', *Beyond Scotland: New Contexts for Twentieth-Century Scottish Literature*, eds. Gerard Carruthers, David Goldie, Alastair Renfrew (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2004), 167-84, 177.

⁵⁴⁶ Carol Craig, *The Scots' Crisis of Confidence* (Argyll Publishing: Glendaruel, 2011), 44.

⁵⁴⁷ Cairns Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 37.

⁵⁴⁸ Morgan et. al, 'Translating *Phèdre*', 202.

⁵⁴⁹ Morgan, *Footsteps and Witnesses*, 23.

⁵⁵⁰ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 1 (Urbana, Illinois: Project Gutenberg), <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/45001/45001-pdf.pdf> [accessed 20.09.2018].

sexual impulse. In her story of frustrated love, restricted by social convention and her connection to the gods, Phaedra incorporates the lingering guilt and shame linked to desire that has resonated throughout Scottish culture as a result, in part, of the Calvinist inheritance. Alain Viala suggests that, for Phaedra, ‘desire is like madness’,⁵⁵¹ encapsulated in the text by her description of being ‘radge, radge in love’ (*Phaedra*, 20). The Scots word denotes a certain uncontrollability or violence, the madness of feeling identified later by Aricia who describes love as ‘thon radge deleerit thing’ (*Phaedra*, 27), the word ‘deleerit’ suggesting a disturbed state of mind. As Peter France explains, the meaning of the colloquial term ‘radge’ further extends to ‘silly’, ‘weak-minded’ and ‘sexually excited’.⁵⁵² Embodying not just Phaedra’s hysteria, the word captures her desire and her inability to suppress it. For Phaedra, whose desire for Hippolytus is caused by the gods, her madness or uncontrollable strength of feelings is inseparable from her religion. A key component of Phaedra’s frustration is the God-given nature of her desire, and her direct connection to the gods only serves to intensify the guilt despite her desire being caused by them. She believes that Venus ‘wahnts the cursit line / Tae end in me, maist wretchedest of aw’ (*Phaedra*, 20), referencing the Greek myth in which Phaedra’s affliction of an incestuous passion for Hippolytus is due to her heredity. She is the daughter of Pasiphaë who, having been cursed by Poseidon, falls in love and copulates with a bull. Phaedra carries Pasiphaë’s curse with her, with predestination coming in the form of ‘guilty infatuation [...] divinely thrust upon her’.⁵⁵³ Furthermore, Phaedra is the granddaughter of the Sun, ‘ma mither’s faither!’ (*Phaedra*, 16). She is ‘acutely conscious of being watched by this silent, distant, but omnipresent Jansenist God [...] who, for the tragic hero, is more present than anything else’,⁵⁵⁴ an embodiment of absolute moral judgement. Guilt plagues Phaedra for experiencing a forbidden desire, forced on her by gods who subsequently condemn it; she is trapped in an unforgiving fate through no fault of her own.

Phaedra wrestles internally with her forbidden love throughout the text, and Christopher

⁵⁵¹ Morgan et. al, ‘Translating *Phèdre*’, 203.

⁵⁵² Peter France, ‘The Poet’s *Phèdre*’, 204.

⁵⁵³ Richard Wilbur, ‘Introduction’, *Phaedra*, transl. Richard Wilbur (Harcourt: Orlando, 1984), ix-xvii, xi.

⁵⁵⁴ Bernadette Höffer, *Psychosomatic Disorders in Seventeenth-Century French Literature* (London; New York, Routledge, 2016), 194.

Whyte argues that ‘were one to switch the gender of the main character, the play would offer a concise expression of one particular brand of homosexual self-hatred’.⁵⁵⁵ Throughout Morgan’s translation, the descriptions of Phaedra’s desire for Hippolytus align with society’s perception of it, such as ‘daurk’, ‘durty’ and ‘ootlawed’ (*Phaedra*, 22; 50). At times, Morgan’s translation appears to specifically respond to Whyte’s assessment of Phaedra. The description of Phaedra’s feelings as having ‘skailed the closet’ (*Phaedra*, 39), the closet defined here as a place of concealment, makes a common association with the disclosure of sexual orientation or gender identity. The Scots term ‘skailed’ is particularly pertinent in this context. To ‘skail’ is to ‘spill out or over, overflow’, but it also means to ‘raise (a siege)’.⁵⁵⁶ Phaedra possesses an urgency to express her feelings truthfully, battling against the blockade of religious and social structures. She acknowledges her all-consuming shame to Oenone (*Phaedra*, 17), but still, crucially, insists on ‘coming out’. This suggests that the clandestine nature of her desire has become unbearable, that she is willing to risk the truth despite the consequences. Unlike Cyrano, Phaedra does not wait until she is dying to confess her feelings for Hippolytus; her love, or desire, dares to speak its name.

Phaedra’s response that follows Hippolytus’ horrified reaction to her confession, that he had simply been ‘struck dumb’ because ‘it wiz the furst he’s ever heard o love’ (*Phaedra*, 40), implies her hope that he will, eventually, respond positively. Phaedra, then, does not inherently hate the desire forced upon her, otherwise Hippolytus’ potential reciprocation would horrify her. Her anguished statement, that ‘Ah hate tae love this love / Ah hate tae feed the pyson, the fell dreep / That seeps intae a mind gane gyte wi love’ (*Phaedra*, 35-6), suggests that it is her inability to escape desire and her extended feelings of guilt and shame that she hates, rather than the desire itself. Phaedra commits only the sin of intention but still agonises over it, highlighting the extent to which she is bound by religious and social strictures, her turmoil over her conscience propelled by these external factors. Phaedra is, Charles Mauron writes, ‘simultaneously the guilty impulse, the self which confesses and gives in to that impulse, and the consciousness which condemns and punishes it’.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁵ Whyte, ‘Queer Readings, Gay Texts’, 150.

⁵⁵⁶ *The Concise Scots Dictionary: a new comprehensive one-volume dictionary of the Scots language*, ed. Mairi Robinson (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1985), 619.

⁵⁵⁷ Charles Mauron, qtd. by Brian Nelson, *The Cambridge Introduction to French Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 37.

In the ensuing act, a scene of exclamative despair following Hippolytus' appalled reaction, Phaedra determines that 'Ah've sayed things naebdy hiz the richt tae say. / Gode!' (*Phaedra*, 39). The scenes highlight the inescapable God-given nature of Phaedra's desire, forced upon her by divine means as demonstrated by her exclamation 'Gode!'. Phaedra's sentiment, that she does not have 'the richt tae say' how she feels, highlights her perception of herself as immoral. However, despite feeling constrained by a desire that is both outwith her control and forcibly repressed, Phaedra's decisive expression of her feelings demonstrates a certain empowerment. She is determined to overcome that which controls her and is therefore arguably less constrained than Cyrano despite the strict bindings of her society.

Phaedra's love and desire is inherent and yet rejected by society. There are evident parallels to be made with the text and a modern-day homosexual narrative, Phaedra's repressed and forbidden love correlating with the concealment of sexuality. Phaedra's frustration, caused by the God-given nature of her desire, further aligns with participants of Meek's study on non-heterosexual men growing up within religious frameworks in twentieth-century Scotland. Some interviewees indicate that the 'God-given' nature of their sexuality allowed them to compartmentalise faith and sexuality, thus alleviating feelings of guilt. For some, the disconnect between religion and sexuality resulted in intense internal turmoil,⁵⁵⁸ corresponding with Phaedra's own strife. Phaedra's earlier exclamation in the text, that there is 'nae cure for the incurable, nae cure for love!' (*Phaedra*, 22), responds to a particular homosexual context, the original text aligned with the mid-twentieth-century debate about homosexuality as a pathology, the 'disorder' not dropped from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* until 1987.

Phaedra's 'incurable' love ultimately excludes her from the society she inhabits. Hippolytus states early in the text of how 'we're aw Jock Thompson's bairns' (*Phaedra*, 30), a Lowlands Scots phrase that determines humankind to be all the same and deserving equal treatment. He also evidently understands love's perpetual force, having experienced it with Aricia: 'Love is a lowe that burns baith wance an ayweys' (*Phaedra*, 34). Despite this, society's perception of

⁵⁵⁸ Meek, *Queer Voices*, 140-2.

Phaedra's depraved desire prevents him from extending these beliefs to include her: 'Blot it oot, / Steek it, loack it, the secret thing, fur ay!' (*Phaedra*, 37). The roles by which Phaedra has been identified for many years - wife, queen, and mother - are superseded by her unwanted desire. She is forced into a new identity as the Other, isolated from her known world because of her uncontrollable feelings, her situation finding parallels with a homosexual narrative.

Morgan states that 'someone who is living in an unsatisfactory unfinished environment will feel pressure within himself to keep writing about it in some kind of way' (*NNGM*, 81). His reasoning is developed in an earlier essay, 'The Beatnik in the Kailyard' (1962), which suggests that Scotland remained 'emotionally [...] unfinished' having once been independent before being 'overshadowed in union' (*E*, 166). *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Phaedra* were published and performed in a critical period of Scotland's political history, the Scottish parliament established the year before *Phaedra* took to the stage. The movement of *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Phaedra* into 'the Scots language of the "margins" rather than the Standard English of the "centre"' (*BTLD*, 361) parallels the era's political shift, the language employed echoing Scotland's transition away from England's eclipse. Corbett suggests that *Cyrano*'s status as a Gascon outsider fits into a 'postcolonial paradigm'⁵⁵⁹ relevant to the political context in which Morgan's version was produced. The English-speaking Count de Guiche's diatribe against the Gascon cadets highlights this, describing them as 'malcontents [...] / mountain tribes, / Grampian lairds and Morvern caterans [...] / The anti-shabbies of the Gascon nation' (*Cyrano*, 115). Although not so politically charged, *Phaedra* redefines the capabilities of the Scots language, rejecting the limiting ideology of Scots, 'by virtue of the homespun vernacular tradition, as [being] more suitable for comic or low-life theatre than for high formal tragedy'.⁵⁶⁰ A somewhat crude parallel can be made here with the era's political context, the devolution of Scotland enabling the country to reject its imposed limitations and demonstrate its own capacity and potential.

While Phaedra's revulsion of herself and her feelings for her husband's son stems almost solely from its taboo nature in society, *Cyrano*'s self-loathing appears more deep-rooted. He

⁵⁵⁹ Corbett, 42.

⁵⁶⁰ France, 'The Poet's *Phédre*', 202.

considers it ‘absurd’ (*Cyrano*, 137) that he could ever inspire the love of Roxane, believing overwhelmingly that his appearance prevents it. While Phaedra entertains the thought that Hippolytus might love her back, despite her desire being both adulterous and incestuous, Cyrano regards it an impossibility that Roxane could ever reciprocate his feelings. His insecurity fuels his own suppression, even when he is told that it is his ‘soul alone’ (*Cyrano*, 134) that Roxane loves. In the duality of Cyrano de Bergerac’s character, being both ‘self-confident and yet self-effacing’,⁵⁶¹ a particularly Scottish quality resonates. So, too, is there ‘something very Scottish’ about *Phaedra* and the underlying struggle between desire and taboo, Phaedra’s Jansenist guilt compared to the ‘severe fundamentalism’ of Scottish Presbyterianism.⁵⁶²

The political implications of the plays’ Scots translation should be acknowledged, but Morgan’s ultimate aim is to discover ‘what survives and transcends a jolt into an alien register’ (*Phaedra*, 8), while simultaneously fulfilling what Kinloch describes Morgan’s role to be: ‘the poet, the writer, the translator of hidden and secret messages’.⁵⁶³ *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Phaedra* are key examples of Morgan’s statement that ‘so much of my work has been about something that is in the process of change’ (*NNGM*, 131). Morgan is faithful in translating, rather than adapting, the original texts, and yet his process is the ultimate definition of change. He removes the characters and their language from the high classical French structures of their original productions and places them into a framework responding to a modern Scottish context through the language of demotic Scots.

The period and society in which the translations were performed was duly a place of change, not only politically but also regarding the social push for LGBT rights. It is important not to overstate the gay subtexts that emerge in the translations; Morgan ultimately did not alter the essential facts of the characters or the action. However, his translations highlight facets relevant to the LGBT community - isolation, suppression, shame - who were, at that time, striving for the same rights as heterosexuals. By localising the plays through the Scots

⁵⁶¹ Eric Merrill Budd, ‘Translator’s Introduction’ in Edmond Rostand, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, transl. Eric Merrill Budd (Morrisville: Lulu, 2005), 5-10, 6.

⁵⁶² Morgan et al., ‘Translating *Phèdre*’, 202.

⁵⁶³ Kinloch, ‘Edwin Morgan’s *Cyrano de Bergerac*’, 143.

language, these thematic strands form a response to Scotland's socio-historical context of the period in which they were performed. Concealment connects the titular characters of the two plays, with Cyrano and Phaedra both poised on the verge of 'coming out' and publicly unveiling their forcibly suppressed love. Their fundamental difference is highlighted by their subsequent decisions. In taking the fatal step and revealing her love to Hippolytus, Phaedra asserts her agency despite inherently understanding the danger of her decision. Cyrano, immobilised by the fear of what may come, postpones his confession until it is too late. Both plays are tragic, but from this perspective *Cyrano de Bergerac* is arguably more so in its portrayal of loss and inconsequence. Through these characters, the essential importance of speaking out is emphasised. Morgan's own triumphant coming out was arguably measured by what had been overcome, in society and in his own life, but by publicly declaring his sexuality he became part of a fundamental narrative, in which moral, political, and social change is propelled by the power of truth. Although the plays demonstrate the danger of speaking out, they also highlight its necessity.

Morgan speaks of liking 'to give a voice to others, especially things neglected or despised [...] You have to keep the sympathy going'.⁵⁶⁴ The neglected Cyrano and despised Phaedra embody this practice completely, with Morgan's translations revitalising the original texts and extending empathy to the titular characters, their flaws and weaknesses recognisably human. Together, they are representative of Morgan's lived experience. Cyrano engages with the difficulty of publicly declaring one's private self, while Phaedra demonstrates the empowerment that comes from action. 'Revelation takes its time' (*Phaedra*, 71), as she acknowledges in her final speech, but the truth ultimately releases her from the structures that bind her. Tragic though Phaedra's ending is, by risking her life for the sake of love she demonstrates an essential courage, one which Morgan took with him into the millennium. As Morgan moved into the twenty-first century, the honesty and transparency of feeling found in *Phaedra* became essential to his own civic courage and demonstrations of love.

⁵⁶⁴ Edwin Morgan, 'Interview: The many realities of Edwin Morgan', interviewed by Judith Palmer for *The Independent* (25 November 1997).

3.6. Morgan in the New Millennium

The repaired Hubble is poised to do great things. Oh I can't wait. More images please. More million-miles towers of gas and dust and budding stars. And speaking of smaller-scale buds, my orchid in its pot which I thought wouldn't bloom again has joyfully exuded five buds of which the fattest has just today (Valentine+1) split open to wink at me with its beautiful spotted dye. Love is everywhere.⁵⁶⁵

Taken from a letter to Mark S., a man whom Morgan met in 1998 and for whom he felt the hit of 'that old bolt, that *coup de foudre*' that 'I never thought [...] would happen again at that age' (TML, 476), the extract above encapsulates Morgan's continuing curiosity about life, and energy for love, as the world entered into a new millennium. Mark in particular, the last great love of Morgan's life, encouraged that which is overtly present in much of the poet's later writing: the rejection of serenity and an inherent urging to 'push the boat out, whatever the sea' (C, 69, l. 2). Despite an age gap of more than fifty years, the energy and intellectual curiosity of Mark invigorated Morgan in his later years, who 'swore I would cope / With whatever late late lifeline this man, whom / I knew I loved, picked up and threw me' (LL, 26, ll. 13-5). The frank nature with which Morgan refers, in both letters and poetry, to his romantic attachment to Mark demonstrates the openness, steadily developed after the public declaration of his sexuality, with which he responded to personal feeling. Writing to Mark about *Love and a Life* in 2002, a sequence in which Mark is a prominent figure, Morgan notes that he could have disguised the real names employed in the sequence 'but honesty was important'.⁵⁶⁶ Although Morgan's feelings for Mark were romantically rooted, what prospered between the two men was ultimately platonic, although marked by a particular intimacy and intensity, unusual in its occurrence, for Morgan, so late in life.

With Mark having developed in his twenties a love of and curiosity for literature, the letters between the two are at times reminiscent of a teacher and his dedicated student. Morgan patiently responds to Mark's enthusiastic discovery and probing of writers and texts new to him, and occasionally assumes the role of mentor for Mark's creative writing. Although literary discussions are a significant factor of the letters, it would be reductive to define their relationship only by their shared intellectual curiosity. Morgan writes in 'Plans' of celebrating

⁵⁶⁵ ASC MS Morgan, DS/6/3: Letter from Morgan (15 February 2000).

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., DS/6/1: Letter from Morgan (1 December 2002).

with Mark ‘four years of letters and talk’ (*LL*, 27, l. 2), their friendship marked by the consistency of their communication, unaffected by physical distance. The poems about Mark in *Love and a Life* often picture him in Italy, where he spent time working in Rieti. Despite this, Morgan, ‘peering through a crack / In the dusty polythene at distant Italy, and you’ (*LL*, 29, ll. 13-5), remained a vital presence within Mark’s life, the pair exchanging frequent letters of lives marked by their difference and yet intrinsically connected still. What their letters evidence is the sincerity of feeling held by the two men for each other, often remarked simply upon by Morgan: ‘You are a part of my life that keeps going’, ‘I think of you often, often’.⁵⁶⁷ What furthers their affection still is a shared desire for each other to exhaust life fully, to ‘keep writing, dreaming, chair-swinging’.⁵⁶⁸ Their friendship ultimately encouraged Morgan’s resistance to the limitations placed on him by dwindling health, while simultaneously inspiring new and candid writing.

Although Morgan’s letters are spirited in nature to Mark, his tone often mirroring the youthful exuberance of his ‘compañero’,⁵⁶⁹ the topic of mortality is an underlying presence. In October 1998, Morgan writes to Mark of needing ‘a little space till I get myself back on track’, having learned of Iain Crichton Smith’s death that ‘came very suddenly’ after an initial cancer diagnosis.⁵⁷⁰ With the exception of Morgan himself, Crichton Smith had been the last remaining figure of the Scottish literary circle depicted by Alexander Moffat in the painting *Poets’ Pub* (1980), a group which further included Hugh MacDiarmid, Robert Garioch, Sydney Goodsir Smith, Norman MacCaig, Sorley MacLean, and George MacKay Brown. The latter three passed away in 1996, but Morgan admits in his letter of feeling ‘much closer’ to Crichton Smith, having known him for over forty years: ‘I must say it has hit me’.⁵⁷¹ In December of the same year, Morgan sent Mark newspaper cuttings documenting the death of academic Bill Aitken, ‘another one - I knew him well - what a year it’s been!’, and museum curator Robert Blair Wilkie, ‘In case you thought the last one was the last one - still they come. Flitting shaddas everywhere’.⁵⁷² Mark’s responses in these moments are respectful

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid., DS/6/3: Letters from Morgan (9 November 2000; 26 October 1999).

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid., DS/6/4: Letter from Morgan (16 March 1999).

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid., DS/6/2: Letter from Morgan (20 January 2001).

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., DS/6/4: Letter from Morgan (17 October 1998).

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

⁵⁷² Ibid., DS/6/4: Letters from Morgan (undated).

about 'that fearful subject of dying',⁵⁷³ and yet he rarely sentimentalises Morgan's own mortality; instead, there is conviction in his belief of Morgan's endurance. This resonates with Morgan, a defiant optimist, who refers in one letter to Vincent van Gogh's *Wheatfield with Crows* (1890) and their symbolic rendering of death: 'I shall have to shoot the clatter of those wings'.⁵⁷⁴

A few months after the death of Crichton Smith, Morgan was diagnosed with prostate cancer. He writes to Mark in July 1999 of how he is 'still coming to terms with a new situation' and yet, characteristically, he remarks that 'the only real reaction is to be positive, and I don't intend to move or go out of circulation'.⁵⁷⁵ In his letters over the following years, Morgan's confrontation of his mortality is never self-pitying. Instead, he writes candidly about his hospital experiences - 'Clothes off, gown on [...] inching into the white whalebone-like arch of the machine'⁵⁷⁶ - all the while refusing the limitations of his diagnosis: 'Skull, ribs, hips emerge / from the dark like a caravan / [...] Still of a piece and still en route, beating out the music of tongs and bones while it can' ('Skeleton Day', *LL*, 35, ll. 9-15). When writing to Mark in 2002 about the death of Morven Cameron, a teacher who became 'a sort of surrogate family' (*BTL*, 264) to Morgan in the 1980s, the poet's grief is evident and yet the necessity of endurance is present: 'so many things fall away and somehow leave you more naked and vulnerable, but you just have to get on with it'.⁵⁷⁷

The unguarded vulnerability that resonates throughout Morgan's writing in his final decade demonstrates an openness that developed as society itself became more tolerant, albeit not wholly. To speak forthrightly about his feelings depended, as Morgan states, 'on changes in society, changes in the law, changes in the people I knew', although his confidence that 'I would be able to be open eventually'⁵⁷⁸ indicates his own inherent optimism. His position as one of Scotland's leading twentieth-century poets is arguably a factor that contributed to the wide acceptance of Morgan's sexuality. McGonigal suggests that 'Morgan was already so

⁵⁷³ Ibid., DS/6/4: Letter from Mark (early 1999, undated).

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., DS/6/3: Letter from Morgan (26 October 1999).

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., DS/6/4: Letter from Morgan (5 July 1999).

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., DS/6/1: Letter from Morgan (2002, undated).

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., DS/6/1: Letter from Morgan (1 December 2002).

⁵⁷⁸ Morgan, 'Zest and Grit'.

much a part of people's hearts that, by the time they discovered he was gay, they'd accepted him'.⁵⁷⁹ This response is indicative of how Morgan was, and is, loved, an important factor to consider alongside his own demonstrations of feeling. Personal responses to Morgan are abundant, epitomised in the literature of his contemporaries⁵⁸⁰ and in collections such as *Unknown is Best: Edwin Morgan at Eighty* (2000) and *Eddie@90* (2010), but the collective societal response is also recognisably positive, highlighted by his appointment as Scotland's Makar.

Although Morgan is a global citizen in many respects, demonstrated by his international outlook, a love of nation still underpins his work, with Morgan admitting that he does not feel 'anything but Scottish' (*NNGM*, 142). His love for Scotland is not unquestioning, as demonstrated in the uncompromising critique of Scotland's social structures in poems such as 'The Flowers from Scotland' (1969) or 'Glasgow Sonnets' (1973). However, as Robert Crawford writes, 'what Edwin Morgan's poetry did for Scottish life was to provide a vibrant articulation of chance',⁵⁸¹ opening lines of connection that demonstrate his own hopeful vision of Scotland's future. As such, the 'serene humanist optimism'⁵⁸² of Morgan is never more present than when in relation to Scotland, epitomised in his poem 'New Times' (2004) that calls for Scotland's separation from the United Kingdom: 'we're raw, we're green / But what's to come, not what has been, // Drives us charged and tingling-new, / To score our story on the blue, / Or if it's dark – still speak true'.⁵⁸³

By appointing Morgan as the nation's first Makar in 2004, Scotland offered the same reverence to Morgan that he extends to the country, with First Minister Jack McConnell stating of the appointment that Morgan 'is not just a poet for Scotland - he is a poet for our times'.⁵⁸⁴ Despite an aversion to the title itself, which he determined to be 'a word from a long time ago' that

⁵⁷⁹ McGonigal qtd. by Sarah Crown, 'Zest and Grit'.

⁵⁸⁰ For example: Ron Butlin, 'Absinthe with Eddie' (2005); Gerry Cambridge, 'Thirteen Ways of Looking at Edwin Morgan' (2002); Roddy Lumsden, 'Kissing Edwin Morgan' (2017).

⁵⁸¹ Robert Crawford, *Bannockburns: Scottish Independence and the Literary Imagination, 1314-2014* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 188.

⁵⁸² Ali Smith, 'Gold from the Old: Review: *The Play of Gilgamesh*', *The Guardian* (14 January 2006).

⁵⁸³ Edwin Morgan, 'New Times', *A Book of Lives* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2007), 55, ll. 14-20.

⁵⁸⁴ Phil Miller, 'Scots Makar? No I'm a Modern Man', *The Herald*, (17 February 2004).

‘look[s] back, whereas I like to look forward’,⁵⁸⁵ Morgan’s appointment symbolised ‘the success of Scottish poets in the past and the potential of Scottish poetry in the future’.⁵⁸⁶ As a cross-party agreement, the Makar role does not enforce a commitment to particular party politics. Instead, it enabled Morgan to demonstrate his love, curiosity, and optimism for Scotland that is first realised in *Sonnets from Scotland*. The 1984 sequence reflects on Scotland through the lens of world history, geology and the cosmic universe, with Morgan rejecting the parochialism that is sometimes linked to a love of nation. Morgan connects the country instead to the wider contexts of ‘European learning and world culture’ (*BTLD*, 280), highlighting Scotland’s place within an international context. So, too, does Morgan depict Scotland as outward-looking in his role as Makar.

Morgan dismissed the potential poetic limitations of the appointment, remarking that ‘I don’t think I will suddenly have to write many poems about the first minister’.⁵⁸⁷ He continued:

People in Scotland, like people elsewhere, are quite entitled to have views about space exploration or pre-emptive strikes, or anything of that kind. And anyone who is given a place of being a spokesman must if possible reflect those views - if he or she feels that himself or herself.⁵⁸⁸

The diplomacy of Morgan’s statement evidences his dedication to Scotland’s people and their voice, rather than to specific political ideologies or parties. In his poem ‘For the Opening of the Scottish Parliament’ (2004), its collective voice, which both challenges and encourages the new governing body, articulates the importance of connection, openness, and regeneration for Scotland and its citizens. ‘[I]mperial marble it is / not!’ (*ABL*, 9, ll. 15-6), Morgan writes of the new parliament building, referring to the cultural hegemony often associated with the British Empire. Instead, landscapes and humankind are unified as the people’s representatives speak in the ‘curves and caverns’ of the parliament’s modern architecture, built from Scotland’s geology: ‘slate and stainless steel, black granite and grey granite, seasoned oak and sycamore’ (*ABL*, 9, ll. 10-4). Citizens, too, are unified with their government, the parliament’s location ‘down there, in the midst of things, not set upon a hill’ (*ABL*, 9, ll. 24-5) symbolising

⁵⁸⁵ Edwin Morgan, ‘New Times’, *A Book of Lives* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2007), 55, ll. 14-20.

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁷ Phil Miller (17 February 2004).

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

the people joined together with their representatives. The refrain of Morgan's final lines, 'We give you', followed by 'our consent', 'our deepest dearest wish to govern well [...] this great building' (*ABL*, 10, ll. 45-8), emphasises the faith being placed in the government, the notes of warning throughout the poem suggesting that future failings will not be ignored. As Morgan states, the poem urges parliamentary engagement with Scotland's 'ideas and ideals', which were 'never quite lost, though stretched and damaged', to create 'a thoroughly modern and developing state'.⁵⁸⁹ By highlighting the necessity of the populace's voice within the nation's regeneration, Morgan aligns his vision of modern Scotland with its people. Through this, he extends and returns the love offered to him by his nation, believing his fellow citizens to be the driving force behind Scotland's revival.

3.7. *A.D. and Gilgamesh*

In the final decade of his life, Morgan's work moved more urgently to address directly the universal themes of time, religion, and love. In his exploration of them, he moved back through history to Jesus Christ and Gilgamesh, reimagining their stories as dramas for a millennial audience: *A.D.: A Trilogy of Plays on the Life of Jesus Christ* (2000) and *The Play of Gilgamesh* (2005). The timing of these publications is significant; Morgan's life in this period, in which he is conscious of his own mortality and yet revitalised through an unpredicted love, resonates throughout the texts, in Jesus Christ and his message of love as 'the very presence of life'⁵⁹⁰ and Gilgamesh's 'human longing for life eternal'.⁵⁹¹ Although conscious of his own mortality about which he speaks to Mark unreservedly, he admits that 'I don't feel that particular desire for [...] personal immortality',⁵⁹² aligning himself covertly with the Christian saviour and Mesopotamian king of his dramas. Although Jesus recognises that the 'squirms and twists' of a caught fish is an echo of its 'desire not to be nothing' (*A.D.*, 149), he does not focus on life's singularity but on the 'words' that 'will not pass away' (*A.D.*, 188). Similarly, Gilgamesh discovers immortality is secured through the lasting endurance of one's achievements. Christ and Gilgamesh hold a global significance, but here their personal

⁵⁸⁹ Edwin Morgan, 'For the Opening of the Scottish Parliament: About this poem', *Scottish Poetry Library*, <https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poem/opening-scottish-parliament-9-october-2004/> [accessed 01.02.19].

⁵⁹⁰ Edwin Morgan, *A.D.: A Trilogy of Plays on the Life of Jesus Christ* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2000), 149.

⁵⁹¹ Andrew George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Babylonian Epic Poem and Other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian*, (London: Penguin, 1999), xiii.

⁵⁹² ASC MS Morgan, DS/6/1: Letter from Morgan (8 January 2003).

significance is made evident; Morgan's reimagining of them is, in part, representative of himself. Faced in this period with life's temporality, Morgan demonstrates his belief in survival being achieved through legacy, stating to Mark that 'if a few poems survived it would be enough - I'd be in the poems - anything else would be a defying of the law of death'.⁵⁹³ Morgan's faith lies not in religion, as demonstrated by his humanist reimagining of Jesus Christ, but in the 'very ancient art' of poetry, 'which has gone through many metamorphoses but survives because of its power to move people's emotions in unexpected ways' (*TML*, 504).

Throughout his writing Morgan is most assuredly present, with Alan Riach suggesting that 'we can infer the poet, not as romantic ego, active intervention, moral judge, but rather as citizen, someone in the play who is also watching the play'.⁵⁹⁴ Certainly in the final decade of his work, Morgan's poems are delivered through the personae of ancient figures, lending themselves to a more personalised, overarching, and often politicised, narrative. His writing encourages love and humanity to be active forces, triumphing in uncertain times: 'Morgan, I said to myself, take note, / Take heart. In a time of confusion / You must make a stand' (C, 9, ll. 9-10). This address to his own named self in 'Pelagius' foregrounds his personal investment in the poems in a different way from his earlier use of personae. The deliberate openness in the autobiographical premise of these poems had not been visible before. In 'Love and the Worlds', Morgan as himself highlights the necessity of love to be an act of cultivation:

Scary is this tremulous earth, flaring, shouting,
 killing and being killed.
 Is the universe rippling with life? What sign is
 there that space is filled
 With anything but gas and dust and fire and rock?
 Are we the tillers to have it tilled?
 I think so! And with these red hands, an act of love?
 Why not? We cry but we create, we kill but we build.

(*LL*, 54, ll. 1-8).

⁵⁹³ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁴ Alan Riach, 'Introduction: Presence, Process, Prize' in *The International Companion to Edwin Morgan*, ed. Alan Riach (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2015), 1-15, 7.

Against the ‘killing and being killed’, love is, as Morgan states in the same collection, ‘the wolf that guards the gate’ (*LL*, 25, l. 2), the countermeasure to acts of violence that defined the millennium’s troubling start, to which Morgan responded poetically.

In terms of international politics, the attacks orchestrated by Al-Qaeda on the city of New York on 11th September 2001 was a defining event of the early twenty-first century, prompting an intercontinental War on Terror. Commenting on how, by this time, he had ‘been right through life like an arrow’ (*ABL*, 104, l. 13) and witnessed humankind’s recurring wars, Morgan responded to the attack with characteristic humanity. He addresses ‘The Twin Towers’ to a collective group, ‘my friends’ and ‘my dears’ (*ABL*, 42, l. 6; l. 8), highlighting the necessity of unification and community amid conflict. His depiction of the ‘twisted metal, scalding jet fuel, / smoke, fire, fear, baffled frenzy’ (*ABL*, 42, ll. 9-10) recognises the terror faced by victims of the attack, with Morgan encouraging the remembrance of individuals: ‘Think of those who escaped stumbling down the stairwells [...] / Can you think of the pilots too’ (*ABL*, 42, l. 12; l. 16). Despite the poem’s sombre tone, Morgan’s essential optimism filters through. He proclaims to those who propagate terror that ‘there is a soaring thing / you will never stunt or stamp into the earth’ (*ABL*, 42, ll. 26-8). The statement highlights the love and humanity Morgan urges people to cultivate, the force of which outweighs the destruction caused by a minority. In the face of the ‘advocates of lowliness’ (*ABL*, l. 26), Morgan holds in disdain the passivity of those who do not grasp life and, by extension, love. In ‘The War on the War on Terror’, he is reproachful of a woman who ‘say[s] she could not bear / To bring a child into a world so dreadful’ (*ABL*, 104, ll. 1-2). Critical of her ‘sensibilities’, he urges her to ‘Stay in bed then; count the hours and wars’ (*ABL*, 104, ll. 11-5). His exasperated tone highlights his disparagement of those who fail to recognise ‘that the greatest gift it is possible to make / Is life itself’ (*ABL*, 104, ll. 32-3).

The arbitrary devastation of life as depicted in ‘The Twin Towers’ resonates in ‘The Trondheim Requiem’ (2002). Commissioned for performance in 2001 at the Trondheim Cathedral in remembrance of groups persecuted by the Nazis during the Second World War, the three-poem sequence focuses on Jews, gypsies, and homosexuals. The poems’ portrayal of the groups’ extreme physical and mental suffering is not moderated. Instead, Morgan envisions the persecuted in concentration camps, ‘Scrubbed with pumice until we bled’ (*C*, 64,

14) and ‘Choking at last on the last pocket of air’ (*C*, 63, l. 19). Nameless voices epitomise the shattering collective experience of those incarcerated and massacred by the Third Reich in the camps of ‘Babi Yar, of Buchenwald and Belsen’ (*C*, 63, l. 3). Amongst the brutal imagery, the victims echo a plea for tolerance and acceptance of their place within humanity. The represented voice of the Jews urges perpetrators and witnesses to ‘give us our human place, / Allow our human race’ (*C*, 63, l. 27-8), alongside poignant imagery of the gypsies’ lost freedom: ‘Sometimes we dreamed of those far evenings / When smoke rose from the caravan / And we played our ancient music / And dancers danced and children ran’ (*C*, 63, ll. 21-4).

The final poem of the sequence, ‘The Pink Triangle: Homosexuals’ is, again, unrelenting in its depiction of the suffering experienced by those captured by the Nazis: ‘Cattle trucks, the fatal station, / Branded clothes, electric fence, / Castration under the immense / Heaven of ignorant Europe’ (*C*, 65, ll. 7-15). The litany of atrocities suffered is furthered, with homosexuals having to suppress the elation of eventual liberation: ‘Gay men returning had to shun / Stories of those terrible years. / Secrets and shames like unshed tears / Filled our hearts; we could not speak’ (*C*, 65, ll. 26-9). The poem highlights the suffering of homosexuals not just under the Nazi regime but throughout the twentieth century. Compassion is urged by the simple statement that ‘We are no different from you’ (*C*, 65, l. 32) and, as in ‘The Twin Towers’, the poem appeals for remembrance, to ‘make known / Dark times, inscribe them on a stone’ (*C*, 65, l. 33-4). Love, Morgan writes, ‘fuels us and fires us to create’ (*LL*, 25, l. 4), and the devastation caused by the events depicted in ‘The Trondheim Requiem’ and ‘The Twin Towers’ surfaces as the opposition of love: the aimless destruction of life, the afflicted reduced to numbers of the nameless dead.

In terms of politics closer to home, Morgan furthered his response to the Catholic Church’s denigration of homosexuality. Writing in May 2000 to the founder of Nil by Mouth, a charity that promotes the elimination of Sectarian attitudes and behaviours in Scotland, Morgan responded to their request that he become a patron of the charity. He highlights the ‘Catholic bigotry’ that he believed leading members of the Church were promoting:

You are concerned about Protestant bigotry against Catholics, and that is fine as far as it goes, but it is one-sided and there seems to be no acknowledgement of the existence of Catholic bigotry. You say that language is important. How then

do you regard the language of Cardinal Winning and his friends in the hierarchy, when they are discussing Section 28? Here are some favourite words: ‘perverted, perversion, inherently disordered, unnatural’. How do you think I, as a gay man trying to lead a decent life, feel when I read or hear such language and realize that it is directed at me and many of my friends?⁵⁹⁵

For Morgan, the reaction against the repeal of Section 28 demonstrated ‘a dark undercurrent in Scotland [...] an ancient feeling of prejudice’.⁵⁹⁶ His response to his perception of a ‘new militant Catholicism abroad in Scotland’ (*TML*, 466) was encapsulated in the polemic ‘Section 28’, a poem from the ‘Changing Glasgow’ sequence (2002). Morgan speaks through the voice of God, opening with Cardinal Winning’s denouncement: ‘God said to Winning: “You are not. / Winning, I mean. You and your lot / Are rowing backward this time around”’ (*C*, 35, ll. 1-3). Just like the Jesus of the *A.D.* plays, Morgan’s God is progressive and part of a ‘Changing Glasgow’, critical of Winning and like-minded Catholic Church members. God considers their intolerance of homosexuality to be archaic and obsolete in the modern world, suggesting that their beliefs do not align with Christian compassion: ‘your favourite sound-bite, gay perversion, / Is not in my New Authorized Version’ (*C*, 35, ll. 5-6). The prejudice of the Cardinal leads to his own exclusion, rather than that of the homosexual community, with God’s final retort being that ‘the last seat [in Heaven] went to Alan Turing’ (*C*, 35, l. 12). Morgan’s reference to Turing, the father of theoretical computer science who was prosecuted in 1952 and chemically castrated due to his homosexuality, forges a link between the twentieth-century treatment of homosexuals and the regressive attitudes that remain in the twenty-first century. By including ‘Section 28’ and ‘The Pink Triangle: Homosexuals’ in the same collection, Morgan suggests that modern-day intolerance regarding homosexuality follows a troubling historical path.

Morgan’s aversion to organised religion, of which he was, as R. S. Edgecombe suggests, ‘later in his career [...] highly critical’,⁵⁹⁷ meant that he had a distinctive, personal take on religious themes. At the turn of the century, Morgan re-envisioned Christian theology in *A.D.: A Trilogy of Plays on the Life of Jesus* (2000). Employing a narrative adapted from the western world’s

⁵⁹⁵ ASC MS Morgan, L/6: Letter from Morgan (1 May 2000).

⁵⁹⁶ Edwin Morgan, ‘The Domini Effect’, interviewed by Peter Ross for *The Sunday Herald* (3 September 2000).

⁵⁹⁷ Edgecombe, *Aspects of Form and Genre*, 6.

foundational religious text to convey his message of love and compassion, Morgan presents a story defined by one reviewer as ‘deeply moral - though in a humanist rather than doctrinal fashion’.⁵⁹⁸ Located within the political and social ethos of the twenty-first century, the freshly humanised relevance of Jesus and his urgent message that love ‘cannot be satisfied with darkness and silence’ (*A.D.*, 149) is portrayed. David Jasper suggests that, instead of being ‘Christian drama’, the plays ‘exercise a creative dialogue with the Christian tradition and its assumptions’, with Morgan interweaving ‘political, literary, and theological themes across cultures and historical eras in interaction with the familiar narratives of the Gospels themselves’.⁵⁹⁹ The plays follow New Testament narrative while simultaneously filling in gaps from Christ’s life story. Morgan seeks to ‘make it clear that [Jesus] was fully a man’,⁶⁰⁰ drawing out the figure’s ultimate humanity. Jesus’s fundamental tenet is expressed through the words of his beloved disciple, John: ‘There is in love / A great strength; by it, indeed, we live’ (*A.D.*, 148).

The plays sparked heated debate between Church members and defenders of the play. Media coverage incited initial rebuke by mistakenly reporting the Jesus of Morgan’s plays to be gay, confusing the trilogy with Terence McNally’s *Corpus Christi* (1998). Although Morgan did not face backlash to the extent that McNally did, the UK Sharia Court passing a fatwa on the American playwright, he encountered adverse reaction. Patrick Reilly, a devout Catholic and Professor of Literature at Glasgow University, objected to Morgan’s statement that ‘I’m writing a play not standing in a pulpit’,⁶⁰¹ claiming that Morgan’s adapted Jesus ‘reaps all the advantages of writing about a historical figure without any of the responsibilities’.⁶⁰² A Religious Education teacher from Hamilton, who followed the media coverage, similarly opposed the ‘rotten theology’⁶⁰³ of Morgan’s adaptation. Other schools cancelled theatre trips and *A.D.* workshops, likely aligning with the Hamilton teacher’s belief that Morgan had ‘lost

⁵⁹⁸ ‘Theatre: A.D. Review’, *The Herald* (25 September 2000).

⁵⁹⁹ David Jasper, ‘Jesus the Actor: Edwin Morgan’s *A.D.: A Trilogy of Plays on the Life of Jesus Christ*’ in *Sanctified Aggressions: Legacies of Biblical and Post-Biblical Vocabularies of Violence*, eds. Jonneke Bekkenkamp, Yvonne Sherwood (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2003), 132-7, 134-5.

⁶⁰⁰ Morgan, ‘The Domini Effect’.

⁶⁰¹ Morgan qtd. in ‘Holy outcry over Jesus play - Work branded offensive’, *The Herald* (10 January 2000).

⁶⁰² Patrick Reilly, ‘You can’t play fast and loose with the facts of this life’, *The Herald* (24 January 2000).

⁶⁰³ ‘Why school theatre trip was cancelled’, *The Herald* (21 September 2000).

the sense of the sacred'.⁶⁰⁴ In addition to the 'placards and chanting of fundamentalist protestant objectors' (*BTL*, 382), on the opening night Pastor Jack Glass threw thirty pieces of silver into the theatre lobby, responding to what he perceived to be the blasphemous nature of the trilogy.⁶⁰⁵

A number of letters received from both religious and non-religious theatregoers did, however, support Morgan, with one reverend celebrating the play and 'the beauty of its language [...], the emphasis on the primacy of love, and the sheer integrity that shone through the whole action'.⁶⁰⁶ Although the plays suffered from what Raindog, *A.D.*'s production company, determined to be 'the Catholic Church's opposition',⁶⁰⁷ Morgan accepted the backlash to some degree. He writes that 'anyone writing about Jesus starts from a tiny nugget of fact and an enormous mass of assertion and conjecture', suggesting that Jesus 'cannot be written about [...] without causing his offence'.⁶⁰⁸ The division caused by the plays is given meaning in their opening scene, the prophetic astronomer Gaspar asserting that 'there must be dialectic. / If there was one law, that would be the end, / One revelation, we could shut up shop. The world breathes in and out. *Odi et amo*' (*A.D.*, 8). There is, Morgan dictates through the words of Gaspar, value to be taken from accepting and exploring conflicting ideas and ideologies, a pertinent message from a trilogy that determines the necessity of community and acceptance.

Morgan creates a considerably humanist retelling of Jesus's life through adaptation of Gospel narrative and the substitution of 'gaps' from the New Testament. So, too, does he use the fragmentary state of another foundational text, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, as a tool to explore the story's understanding of 'the human condition' and 'the truths that touch us all',⁶⁰⁹ with love playing a central role. Morgan questions in his introduction to *The Play of Gilgamesh* (2005) whether the original text is 'not only the oldest poem in the world but the oldest gay poem in the world' (*TPoG*, vii). The nature of adaptation allows Morgan to redefine Gilgamesh and

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁵ 'Standing up for Jesus', *The Herald* (22 September 2000).

⁶⁰⁶ 'Excellent and memorable Jesus trilogy', *The Herald* (3 October 2000).

⁶⁰⁷ Phil Miller, 'Lack of converts means Jesus play finishes as a flop', *Sunday Times* (8 October 2000).

⁶⁰⁸ ASC MS Morgan, K 8/7/1: *A.D. by Edwin Morgan: A Resource Pack for Workshop Participants*.

⁶⁰⁹ George, xiii.

Enkidu's relationship as homosexual rather than homosocial. In the play, Gilgamesh transforms from totalitarian dictator to a human figure desperately searching for the secret to immortality following the death of his beloved Enkidu: 'He is clay, the friend I love. What skill / what search, what secret can save me from the clay?' (*TPoG*, 82).

Recognised as the oldest poem known to humankind, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* was preserved on cuneiform tablets for over four thousand years, resurfacing in the nineteenth century where the region of Mesopotamia once stood. Although Andrew George argues that the eventual and complete recovery of the epic 'is assured by the durability of the writing medium',⁶¹⁰ *The Epic of Gilgamesh* remains in a state of constant evolution, its opening only discovered in 1998. With the full Standard Version still to be recovered, Assyriologists are 'forced to work with fragments, piecing them together before deciphering the text',⁶¹¹ the text's history of scholarly assembling filled with examples of other Sumerian texts being misidentified as parts of the *Gilgamesh* epic.

Despite the difficulties that arise by nature of the text's fragmentary existence, it is favourable for a work of adaptation. By existing only partially, the text in its incompleteness leaves the story and themes open for elaboration. Although George argues that a modern editor who joins up the epic's disconnected fragments performs a disservice to the original text,⁶¹² for the task of adaptation the gaps are valuable spaces for further exploration of the story's dramatic potential. Unlike translation, which Morgan considers a 'conscious and deliberate art' for which 'many initial or early decisions may have to be made on purely technical matters',⁶¹³ adaptation is more fluid in nature. The writer can direct the narratives of the source texts to respond to a certain environment or to emphasise a set of values in a manner more overt than that of a translator. In discussion of the theory of translation as rewriting, André Lefevere suggests that:

[A]ll rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a

⁶¹⁰ Ibid., xxx.

⁶¹¹ Eric Quinn, *Gilgamesh: The Ancient Epic, Tablets 1-4* (Port Townsend: Washington, 2013), ii.

⁶¹² George, xxviii.

⁶¹³ Morgan, 'The Poet's Voice and Craft', *The Poet's Voice and Craft*, ed. C. B. McCully (Manchester: Carcanet, 1994), 54-67, 63.

given way [...] Rewriting can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another.⁶¹⁴

Morgan's translations often rely more heavily on a faithfulness to the original text than that which Lefevere is suggesting. His early Anglo-Saxon translations, for example, invite a didactic purpose to Morgan's approach, meaning a faithfulness to form, diction, and metre is necessary. Morgan's adaptations, however, respond to Lefevere's notion of 'rewriting', with the exploration of contemporary contexts in *A.D.* and *The Play of Gilgamesh* rooted in the original narratives' frameworks. Given the continued debate regarding homosexual rights at the time of the texts' publications, it is unsurprising that the 'gaps' in the source texts form a space in which Morgan encourages acceptance through the foregrounding of homosexual relationships, the texts in turn demonstrating love's universality. In *A.D.*, Jesus's 'beloved disciple' John is homosexual, while Gilgamesh's love for Enkidu propels his ultimate renewal. In both texts, a tolerance for love in whatever form it takes is implicitly imposed, with Morgan making a political point in the presence of a gay morality.

The Play of Gilgamesh, Anne Varty suggests, is 'a remarkable companion piece for *A.D.* It is a pagan old testament to match the new testament of the Trilogy'.⁶¹⁵ Morgan places a key figure as the mobiliser of change at the heart of each drama, both echoing each other's shared concerns. In *A.D.*, Jesus calls to his disciples on the eve of his crucifixion that 'I want a new order of things' (*A.D.*, 188); Enkidu, affronted with Gilgamesh's dictatorial reign for the first time, states 'how soon I mean to change the order of things' (*TPoG*, 17). For both figures, love is the propelling force for renewal and regeneration within communities fractured by overbearing reigns of repressive regimes.

A.D. presents a society inhabited by religious zealots, for whom 'well-dispersed activist cells and diligent weapon-training are the key' (*A.D.*, 19). Authoritarian Roman Centurions alert their citizens to the state's Orwellian eye 'that never sleeps' (*A.D.*, 18), warning non-conformists that 'Rome deals roughly with the new' (*A.D.*, 57). Similarly, the city of Uruk in

⁶¹⁴ André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2004), vii.

⁶¹⁵ Varty, 155.

The Play of Gilgamesh is initially depicted as totalitarian. In the first act, the city's guards crack whips at prisoners who question the regime, impressing upon them the unforgiving, dictatorial nature of the king: 'Of course the people are his! He does what he likes / with the people. He watches and he strikes' (*TPoG*, 8-9). The opening act highlights the citizens' terror when faced with the king, the silence in which Gilgamesh examines them 'as if at a slave auction' making the scene 'all the more sinister because the king's purpose is never made clear' (*TPoG*, 10). Both texts resonate with aspects of contemporary world politics, *The Play of Gilgamesh* opening to a 'very modern-looking tyranny'⁶¹⁶ and *A.D.* responding covertly to current events with its 'contemporary allusions to power politics, guerilla warfare and modern weapons of mass destruction'.⁶¹⁷ Through this Morgan highlights the relevance of the message underpinning both texts, one of love's necessity in turbulent times. Ali Smith describes Morgan's adaptation of Gilgamesh as 'celebrating the poem's 4,000-year-old suggestion that love takes many forms and the moderation of authoritarian behaviour begins with social and emotional inclusion of outsiders',⁶¹⁸ a message also incorporated in *A.D.*

In the first play of the *A.D.* trilogy, historical and religious periods converge as the young Jesus enters a Greco-Roman world when visiting Agathon, a theatre director, and his sister, Helen, in Sepphoris. Agathon and Helen represent a pre-Christian world, evidenced by their worldview as well as by their names, which both allude to Greek literature.⁶¹⁹ In Agathon's theatre workshop, Jesus witnesses the siblings' liberal perspective regarding sex and sexuality. They evoke the attitudes of Ancient Greek society in which *eros*, 'like all powerful emotional forces, but more consistently than most, was personified and deified'.⁶²⁰ Lining the workshop's wall is 'a shelf filled with strap-on phalluses', one of which is strapped on to a youth in costume who 'grunts through [his] mask, and thrusts' (*A.D.*, 41). Jesus demonstrates evident inhibition when presented with phallic props overtly celebrating sexuality, later stating

⁶¹⁶ Smith, 'Gold from the Old'.

⁶¹⁷ Jasper, 134.

⁶¹⁸ Smith, 'Gold from the Old'.

⁶¹⁹ Agathon (c. 448 - c. 400 BC) was a Greek tragic poet who appears in Plato's *Symposium*; Helen is a reference to Helen of Troy, a figure from Greek mythology whose abduction brought about the Trojan War.

⁶²⁰ K. J. Dover, 'Classical Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behaviour' in *Sex and Difference in Ancient Greece and Rome*, eds. Mark Golden, Peter Toohey (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 114-30, 114.

that he is ‘glad to say’ he has never heard of Aristophanes (A.D., 41), the Greek playwright who applauded the nuances of sexuality.

Christianity was not the first society to provoke feelings of guilt and shame about sex, the Ancient Greeks having also imposed limits on sexual behaviour.⁶²¹ However, K. J. Dover suggests it is ‘undeniable’ that most pagan Greeks were less constrained than most Christians: ‘Not only had they a goddess specially concerned with sexual pleasure; their other deities were portrayed in legend as enjoying fornication, adultery and sodomy’.⁶²² This early Jesus, then, embodies a particularly Christian inhibition, enhanced by his distrust of masks and performance. Monika Kocot correlates Jesus’s statement, ‘truth has no need of megaphone or mask’, with his ‘diction and argumentation [...] from the Synoptic Gospels’,⁶²³ suggesting his response to Agathon and Helen’s presentation of art and imagination delivers authority but demonstrates his thinking as rigid. Helen warns of uncompromising attitudes, appealing to Jesus to ‘let the world in. / It is not going to destroy you’ before referencing the fabulist Aesop’s tale, ‘The Oak and the Reed’: ‘The reed bends, / The rod breaks’ (A.D., 41). It is a pivotal moment for Jesus, who accepts Helen’s proposition to ‘absorb / the dervish, dance with him, don’t fight him’ (A.D., 42). Here, Jesus demonstrates his acceptance of difference, the Hellenic individual teaching the central figure of Christianity the virtues of the dervish, a member of the Sufi religious order who expresses emotion and attains wisdom from God through the act of performance. In comparison to the earlier dialogue, in which Jesus verges towards intransigent thinking, the scene becomes a declaration of his open-minded tolerance by which his teachings are later defined: ‘I am learning. I am in your hands. Where next?’ (A.D., 42).

The value of tolerance exhibited in the first play manifests itself most fully in Jesus’s later exchange with his disciple John ‘the Beloved’ at the end of the second play. Following a conversation in which John warns prophetically of Jesus’s teachings being taken in a literal sense, anticipating ‘wars, massacres, in the name of Jesus’, Jesus requests him to ‘leave

⁶²¹ James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 15.

⁶²² Dover, 115.

⁶²³ Monika Kocot, *Playing Games of Sense in Edwin Morgan’s Writing* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2016), 166.

massacres / and talk about love' (*A.D.*, 147-8). Having surmised correctly that John 'love[s] - men, am I right?', Jesus impresses on his disciple the intolerance he faces from particular sects of society: 'To me, it is fine / But you must know there are some Pharisees / Who would vote to stone you tomorrow' (*A.D.*, 148). Underpinning both conversations is the practice of literalism regarding the interpretation of religious texts, a method most commonly employed by fundamentalists. Jesus, who is taught the importance of the bending reed over the breaking rod, encourages moderation and tolerance in comparison to the unyielding framework of fundamentalism. The message resonates in the twenty-first century, the naivety of Jesus who is unable to imagine 'massacres in my name' (*A.D.*, 147) drawing attention to contemporary wars that have been fought in the name of religion. The play's narrative of war exists in parallel with Jesus's teachings of love and compassion, and Morgan highlights the damage that war bears on the innocent individual. When Jesus's brother Jude is captured and executed by the Roman centurions, having declared to them the devotion of his 'band of brothers' to 'sweep you and your legions into the sea' (*A.D.*, 135), a mother's loss is impressed upon the audience. In *A.D.*'s shortest scene, Mary is delivered her son's mutilated body to which she responds in mournful exclamation: 'Jude! Oh Jude, Jude!' (*A.D.*, 137). Her emotive response portrays the reality of zealotry: the loss of human connection amid conflict.

John, acutely conscious of the ways in which certain religious sects will react to his sexuality, places emphasis on love as the primary force of survival: 'You know there is in love / A great strength; by it, indeed, we live. / And love is love, whatever flesh it inhabits' (*A.D.*, 148). The statement is meaningful in its simplicity, placing emphasis on love as an intangible force and strength rather than prioritising the bodies between which it connects and occurs. In response, Jesus defines love as the energising force that propelled the world into existence:

In the beginning
There was something; before that there was nothing.
That moment - a moment or an age, who knows -
Surely showed the power of love. Love
Is generous, overflows, wants to create,
Cannot be satisfied with darkness and silence.

(*A.D.*, 149).

Creation, Jesus determines, is an act of love, the primary force from which humankind and its surroundings came into being, the beginning and end of everything. The personification of love corresponds with its depiction in 'Love' as 'the food of music, art, poetry. It / fills us and fuels us and fires us to create' ('Love', *LL*, 25, ll. 3-4). In both excerpts, love is depicted as a motivating energy, one with no conditions regarding those who experience it. John, as a homosexual existing in a framework of early Christian thought, should by nature be an outsider and yet love, in its overflowing generosity, is extensive and therefore inclusive. Jesus presents life and love as an act of community, defining baptism as 'a good dignified communal occasion' (*A.D.*, 62) in which love through new life is a shared experience. He believes 'the very presence of life is love' and that 'if God so loved the universe, we too / Should love it, and our neighbour as ourself' (*A.D.*, 149). He highlights the value of interconnection, existing between people but also between man and nature. Following Jesus and John's dialogue in which the latter's sexuality is discussed and accepted, the second play closes with a hymn to love in the whole of creation: 'The sparrow in the summer dust is love. / The great leviathans embrace with love. / The cedars of Lebanon are broad with love [...]' (*A.D.*, 149).

The love proposed by Jesus throughout *A.D.*, one that is all-inclusive and far-reaching, is emphasised by the trilogy's oppositions to love. The arbitrary devastation of life found in 'The Twin Towers' resonates in the beliefs and actions of those holding power in the society into which Jesus is born. Jesus's brother, Jude, is held in Roman army headquarters before his death. For him, love of one's country gives purpose to zealotry, eventually leading to his capture, interrogation, and subsequent execution. Identifying himself as 'roots' in the 'Palestinian earth', Jude refuses to cooperate with the chief interrogator Junius, sacrificing himself for 'the waiting, patient (or not so patient) native shoots to push through again and flourish' (*A.D.*, 135). Junius, the face of a dictatorial society that values people only if they provide use to the state, orders Jude's execution. Afterwards, he quotes the Roman playwright Lucius Accrius: '*Oderint dum metuant*, as the proverb says. Let them hate me as much as they like, so long as they hold me in fear' (*A.D.*, 136). A sentiment endorsed by the bloodthirsty Roman emperor Caligula and later adopted by Niccolo Machiavelli, *oderint dum metuant* highlights the forces working in opposition to Jesus's call for love and interconnection. The desire to be feared derives from the desire for power, and to overpower, but there is also an

inherent rejection of vulnerability, highlighted in the second play by Kohath, the temple spy, who is shown to 'love the stepping stones of power', believing himself to be 'invulnerable because I believe nothing' (*A.D.*, 104).

Through their attachment to the power of fear, characters such as Junius align themselves readily with Satan. The 'vulnerable' make such 'admirable prey' (*A.D.*, 68) for Satan, but his indifference to life is what separates him so greatly from Jesus. Just as Junius orders the execution of dissidents without a second thought, Satan defines the 'millions of sprats [that] go flitting through / God's hands and mine' as 'small beer, small change' (*A.D.*, 69), the lives of others perceived by both characters to be without value. Their flippant response to life opposes Jesus's belief that life and creation is the most powerful act of love and should, therefore, be held in the highest regard. Unlike Jesus, who reveres nature and humankind as demonstrations of love through creation, for Satan the 'stony terrifying landscape' of the Judean wilderness is 'one of my favourite desolations', remarking on it as being a 'tempting threshold to damnation' (*A.D.*, 68). In *A.D.*, life and love thrive on generosity and interconnection, while power and fear are propelled by isolation and desolation. For Jesus, a 'human living in an inhuman world', revolution is necessary, 'some rousing with a voice / of love and not of horror' (*A.D.*, 37).

Just as nature and humankind's interconnection enforces Jesus' hymn to love in *A.D.*, *The Play of Gilgamesh* demonstrates the value of this connection, the intertwining of man and the environment becoming a framework for love. Initially depicted as animalistic in his destruction of men, Gilgamesh as leader 'ramps and stamps like a bull, never sated' (*TPoG*, 4). An embodiment of the city, he dominates nature and creates his kingdom upon it by whichever means he chooses. In contrast, Enkidu is a 'wildman, green man, woodwose [...] fearsome creature but not ugly, an apparition / like something nature's, not a god's, decision / had made a man of' (*TPoG*, 3-4). Enkidu is an inherent part of the nature he inhabits, the description of him as 'woodwose' determining him to be a mythical figure who connects modern humans to their ancient ancestors by being 'not quite human and not quite beast, but

something in between'.⁶²⁴ The pagan sensibilities that structure Enkidu's life in the wilderness are threatened by his meeting with the sacred harlot Shamhat, after which 'forest power seems a hoax, a cheat' (*TPoG*, 13). By entering civilisation, however, a balance is established between nature and urbanity. Uruk faces revolution following Enkidu's arrival, the 'wildman' announcing to the city's courts that 'the green world and the red / meet in my veins [...] / I have come to change the order of things' (*TPoG*, 16). Enkidu's arrival offers Gilgamesh, the tyrannical king, the chance of renewal. His dreams symbolise the change that Enkidu represents, and Gilgamesh's goddess mother, Ninsun, urges the intertwining of 'his branches [...] with yours' (*TPoG*, 21). With advice that mirrors Helen's warning of the breaking rod compared to the bending reed, Ninsun urges Gilgamesh to 'Love it, it will bend you / out of the ramrod fevers that would break you' (*TPoG*, 22).

Morgan writes in his introduction that 'some part of the author's quest [...] was to bring the urban world and the natural world together' (*TPoG*, xiv). A connection exists here between the sensibilities of the epic's creator and that of Morgan. Although Jack Rillie suggests that Morgan 'tends rather to sympathise with Mayakovsky's move away from nature [...] towards the city',⁶²⁵ Morgan finds value in nature, or, indeed, nature in relation to man. In 'Merlin', one of Morgan's dramatic monologues from the sequence 'Nine in Glasgow' (2002), the eremitic 'green man, man of the woods' learns the value of companionship from 'the wolf, grey wolf, dear wolf', who ultimately enables his return to civilisation ('Merlin', C, 13). Morgan's essential optimism for humanity replaces Merlin's previous disillusionment with humankind and the horrors of war as he holds 'the burning eyes of the wolf / Till the very last moment' and realises that 'now I must make the most of men' ('Merlin', C, 13). Merlin's understanding of civilisation and humanity's potential comes directly from his interaction with nature, suggesting that the two realms are more valuable when in connection with one another, an idea apparent in *The Play of Gilgamesh*. Gilgamesh 'tames' Enkidu, just as the city tames nature, and yet only by becoming 'a crownless pilgrim and wanderer' entering the 'deserts and mountain winds' (*TPoG*, 77) can the king understand the essential truths he seeks. Without

⁶²⁴ William Indick, *Ancient Symbolism in Fantasy Literature: A Psychological Study* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2012), 110.

⁶²⁵ Jack Rillie, 'Morgan as Critic', *About Edwin Morgan*, eds. R. Crawford & H. Whyte (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), 105-17, 114.

Enkidu, and without nature, Gilgamesh would not be able to comprehend both ‘wilderness / and wall’ (*TPoG*, 96), his interaction with both enabling his own regeneration at the end of the play.

The interconnection of the natural and urban world is prominent in much of Morgan’s 1960s love poetry, in which strength of feeling is composed through the unification of city and nature. The settings of his poems often depict a harmony existing between the two, such as of a ‘Glasgow balcony who pours / such joy like mountain water’ (*CP*, 183, ll. 16-7), or the poet in the thralls of new love ‘writing as the aircraft roar / over building sites, in this warm west light / by the daffodil banks that were never so crowded and lavish’ (*CP*, 180, ll. 13-5). Love comes unexpectedly, with unexpected people, for Morgan throughout his life, and these chance flourishings mirror the nature occurring in his urban cityscapes. This interconnection of opposites similarly occurs in *The Play of Gilgamesh*, in which Enkidu’s alliance with Gilgamesh ‘represents a kind of fusion of nature and culture, uniting the mysterious potency of the wilderness with the hierarchical power of urban civilisation’.⁶²⁶ The wrestling match between the two men, one which echoes the homoeroticism of the ‘physique’ magazines featured in Morgan’s scrapbooks, symbolises their unification, with Gilgamesh afterwards offering his kingdom to Enkidu in a shift from first person singular to the first person collective: ‘My palace is yours. / We shall do something. These are our overtures’ (*TPoG*, 18). Again, in the fusion of city and nature, love, in all of its surprises, occurs. This interconnection provides a background for the covert presentation of homosexual love in Morgan’s 1960s love poetry, just as it does in *The Play of Gilgamesh*, with Morgan specifically defining the relationship between Gilgamesh and Enkidu to be homosexual.

Although Assyriologist Thorkild Jacobsen first suggested in 1930 that the epic presumes a sexual relationship between Gilgamesh and Enkidu,⁶²⁷ his later academic criticism reverts to an understanding of it as homosocial.⁶²⁸ This change in interpretation highlights the ambiguity surrounding the matter in scholarly research, the misunderstanding of cultural differences often cited alongside an uncertainty of meaning that arises from the fragmented nature of the

⁶²⁶ David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality: And Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York; London: Routledge, 1990), 80.

⁶²⁷ Thorkild Jacobsen, ‘How Did Gilgamesh Oppress Uruk?’, *Acta Or*, 8 (1930), 62-74.

⁶²⁸ Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976).

text. Susan Ackerman argues that our modern understanding of a voluntary homosexual relationship between two equals ‘is fundamentally alien to the Mesopotamian mind’.⁶²⁹ Martti Nissinen supports this, aligning Gilgamesh and Enkidu’s relationship with ancient oriental homosociability, suggesting that ‘the equal relationship between the men, with no clear social or sexual role division [...] is often strong in societies in which men’s and women’s worlds are segregated’.⁶³⁰ W. Lambert argues, in relation to homosexuality within the text, that ‘Babylonian texts do not avoid explicit language, so until further and less ambiguous evidence is forthcoming the present writer does not assent to the proposal’.⁶³¹ The fragmented nature of *Gilgamesh* allows for uncertainty regarding Gilgamesh and Enkidu’s relationship, but James Neill argues that scholarly criticism is affected by ‘the indoctrination into a strictly heterosexual understanding of sex that results from the exclusively heterosexual depiction of sex that permeates every aspect of Western life from moral teaching to popular culture’.⁶³² For Neill, Gilgamesh’s transformation occurs ‘because of the harmony and satisfaction that arises from the sexual fulfilment he found in companionship with a partner that suited him’, his eventual spiritual development triggered by ‘the devastating loss of that relationship’.⁶³³

Neill’s interpretation aligns most fully with Morgan’s adaptation. The text’s fragmentary state enables Morgan’s explicit clarification of Gilgamesh and Enkidu’s relationship, as does its form as a play. The stage directions elucidate their specifically homosexual relationship, as does the Jester who, along with the songs of the play, offers comment on the action. As in the Standard Version of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Enkidu and Gilgamesh often refer to each other in Morgan’s play as ‘brother’ and ‘friend’, suggesting the homosocial nature of their relationship. However, the Jester, in wry demotic Scots, clarifies the true nature of the pairing. He sardonically acknowledges the outward presentation of their relationship, ‘youse are sworn brithers, youse are twin harmonies, you set yir watches thegither an that’s Sumerian time’ (*TPoG*, 28), but he also shows an inherent understanding of the relationship’s homosexual

⁶²⁹ Susan Ackerman, *When Heroes Love: The Ambiguity of Eros in the Stories of Gilgamesh and David* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 80.

⁶³⁰ Martti Nissinen, *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World: A Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1998), 24.

⁶³¹ W. Lambert, ‘Prostitution’ in *Aussenseiter und Randgruppen*, ed. V. Haas (Konstanz, 1992), 156.

⁶³² James Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations in Human Societies* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2009), 79.

⁶³³ *Ibid.*

nature: ‘Aye aye, enjoy yir party, enjoy yir wee honeymoon [...] Ye think the big strang waws’ll keep the universe oot? No if ye’re slurpin an smoochin -’ (*TPoG*, 29). Despite his mocking, the Jester accepts their relationship while being perceptive of how it may be received by others, later describing Gilgamesh and Enkidu as ‘a daft perr, but Ah’m no gaun tae knock ye. Sundry else’ll dae that, nae doot’ (*TPoG*, 59). His off-hand comment precedes the gods’ decision to kill Enkidu, a reaction to not only his murder of Humbaba, the forest guardian, but also Gilgamesh’s rejection of Ishtar. The high priestess is scathing of Enkidu, her suggestion that ‘no less limp wrist ever saw the day’ (*TPoG*, 44) making a contemptuous and derogatory contemporary reference to his homosexuality and, as she sees it, subsequent lack of masculinity. While Ishtar is outspoken in her feminine sensuality and desire for Gilgamesh, Anu the sky-god reveals the reality of the situation: ‘why want a wife when you have gained a mate?’ (*TPoG*, 62).

The stage directions frequently highlight the physical side of Gilgamesh and Enkidu’s relationship, specifying ‘an unspoken erotic charge’ (*TPoG*, 32) between the two of them. Particular actions emphasise this, such as to ‘look intently at each other’ (*TPoG*, 42), or Gilgamesh, in a triumphant moment, holding up his sword while ‘his other arm embraces Enkidu’s shoulders’ (*TPoG*, 54). While these directions retain the original text’s ambiguity regarding whether anything explicitly occurs between the men, the candid stage direction signalling their physical unity dispels this:

GILGAMESH and ENKIDU, alone at last, sweating and glistening from the dancing and drinking, stand facing each other, silently but intently, for quite a few seconds. Then GILGAMESH takes ENKIDU by the hand (no doubt about it this time), and they walk slowly to the back of the stage (backs to audience), where a curtain is drawn to reveal a bedroom - with one bed. Gradual blackout as they move towards the bed.

(*TPoG*, 59)

The scene precedes Enkidu’s death, the lead up to which highlights the tenderness existing between them and complements the heightened physicality of their relationship as previously depicted. The stage directions picture Gilgamesh at Enkidu’s bedside in a scene of domestic care, ‘sometimes gazing at him anxiously [...] He occasionally wipes Enkidu’s face with a

cloth' (*TPoG*, 66). While the actions are delicate, the play's dialogue is charged with their pain, the exclamative force of Enkidu's plea for 'the bond of love to enfold me!' mirrored in Gilgamesh's heartfelt response, 'I have no other, never will have another!' (*TPoG*, 73).

While Morgan's adaptation includes songs to give the play 'a sort of Brechtian comment on the action' (*TPoG*, vi), 'The Lament of Gilgamesh over Enkidu' directly references Andrew George's translation of the epic's Standard Version, on which *The Play of Gilgamesh* is based. Ali Smith describes Morgan's play as 'a grief-struck piece of lifeforce',⁶³⁴ and this is most evident in Gilgamesh's lament, as it is in George's translation. Both versions employ extensively the repetition of certain phrases, a feature that John Brockington describes as 'a mark of the oral character of the epics'.⁶³⁵ The lament captures the lives who will mourn for Enkidu. Gilgamesh calls for his city of people to join with 'the ploughed fields', the 'cypress and pine' and 'the pure Euphrates' (*TPoG*, 74) in mourning for Enkidu, his grief unifying humanity and nature.

Morgan's adaptation appears more measured at first in comparison to George's translation, which is extensive in length and in its employment of exclamation marks, emphasising the strength of Gilgamesh's grief. However, George's translation moves from first-person to third-person by adopting the voice of a poet-narrator. This shift follows ancient oral tradition in which a singular omniscient narrative is often employed, but the nature of it inherently creates a separation between Gilgamesh and his grief. In comparison, only Gilgamesh speaks Morgan's adapted lament, which retains the imagery and incantatory character of the original, the personalising of grief heightening the emotive force of the play. For Gilgamesh, Enkidu's death is all-encompassing, accentuated by Gilgamesh's adoption of the roles he experiences in his grief: 'But I am all memory, I / shriek for you like a mother. / I veiled your face like a bride's, swooped over you like an eagle, prowled about like a lioness / whose cubs have been snatched from her' (*TPoG*, 74). In these predominantly feminised roles, Gilgamesh asserts the protective nature of his love, one that is both animalistic and tender. His inability to save

⁶³⁴ Smith, 'Gold from the old'.

⁶³⁵ John Brockington, 'The textualization of the Sanskrit Epics' in *Trends in Linguistics: Textualization of Oral Epics*, ed. Lauri Honko (New York: Moon de Gruyter, 2000), 193-216, 201.

Enkidu, despite the extent of his love, serves as a harsh reminder of life's fragility, and Gilgamesh reverts to the masculine territory of conquering and destroying that which threatens him. When disclosing his intent to find Ziusura, 'an immortal man / who survived the flood', modal auxiliary verbs enforce Gilgamesh's language, highlighting a desperation for eternal life masked by the dominating force of a king: 'he will disclose / his secret to me. I will track him down / from land to land. His secret did not drown / and I must have it. I cannot bear to die' (*TPoG*, 77).

Morgan's introduction to the play determines the questions underpinning Gilgamesh's quest for immortality: 'what lasts, what changes, what survives? Is anything immortal?' (*TPoG*, vi). They are reimagined through Ziusura who, in his wisdom, understands Gilgamesh's underlying purpose: 'why do men die? do all men die? shall I?' (*TPoG*, 89). Describing the Flood scene that immortalised him, the deluge myth being common to many cultures, Ziusura rejects Gilgamesh's belief that 'the gods were good to you', forcefully responding that 'it is not good / to kill a million in a petulant mood' (*TPoG*, 91). The immortal Ziusura is haunted by 'the faces of the drowned' that 'still accuse me', characterising his supposed blessing as 'some horrible kudos' from the gods (*TPoG*, 91). David Adams Leeming defines the flood myth as a reminder that 'life depends on death, that without death there can be no cycle, no birth'.⁶³⁶ In recognition of this, Ziusura urges Gilgamesh to cling to the physical 'beating in your breast!' (*TPoG*, 92) rather than chasing an elusive dream. Gilgamesh returns to Uruk changed, valuing the cultivation of community and life over immortality. Before his departure to locate Ziusura, Gilgamesh orders a statue of Enkidu, its materials representing his lost companion: 'lapis-lazuli, / for the chest where his rich heart used to be / a body of gold, untarnishably bright' (*TPoG*, 76). Gilgamesh's request, for a statue resistant to any defilement, is a physical rendering of that which he seeks before his journey: a body that cannot be diminished or destroyed. The play's final directions instruct light to fall 'on the statue of ENKIDU, its dead but living guardian' (*TPoG*, 97). Gilgamesh learns that life is continually susceptible to tarnish, and yet, despite its vulnerabilities, it will endure through the presence of love.

⁶³⁶ David Adams Leeming, *The World of Myth: An Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 43.

William L. Moran describes *The Epic of Gilgamesh* as ‘a document of ancient humanism’,⁶³⁷ and Andrew George supports this interpretation, explaining that ‘the story of Gilgamesh was more about what it is to be a man than what it is to serve the gods’.⁶³⁸ Although *A.D.* reimagines the New Testament, employing the foundational religious text of Western civilisation as its basis, it is written from ‘an avowedly humanist perspective’⁶³⁹ with love’s inclusive nature at its very heart. In both works, interconnection demonstrates love most fully. Both texts highlight the importance of outsider inclusion, demonstrating the value that comes from the interconnection of people despite their inherent differences. John’s homosexuality is only touched upon, but by making a central figure homosexual Morgan offers a new dimension to Jesus’s commandment ‘love thy neighbour as thyself’. John becomes, by nature of his sexuality, an outsider, but Jesus accepts him without question. This highlights Morgan’s own intention that the ‘controversial aspects of the trilogy’ are ‘meant to be seen against a broader background of compassionate human experience. The theme of love is crucial, the new commandment to love one another, something that was neither Hebrew, nor Greek, nor Roman’.⁶⁴⁰ In *The Play of Gilgamesh*, Enkidu is not rejected as an outsider when he crosses the boundaries of the wilderness into civilisation. His outsider status comes, instead, from his acknowledged and emphasised homosexual relationship with Gilgamesh, going against much of the epic’s scholarly interpretation that excludes a homosexual reading. By choosing to convey a homosexual relationship in an adaptation of the oldest known poem in the world, Morgan suggests the necessity of accepting love in all forms, the universal nature of it transcending time and history.

Both texts employ the snake and the seed as symbols for regeneration and the start of a second life. These two symbols appear much earlier in Morgan’s *oeuvre*, employed in Morgan’s 1968 poem ‘The Second Life’, the title of which appears in both *A.D.* and *The Play of the Gilgamesh*. Morgan asks in the poem, ‘is it true that we come alive / not once, but many times?’ (*CP*, 180, ll. 35-6). The question is essential to his body of work, with Morgan

⁶³⁷ William L. Moran, ‘The Epic of Gilgamesh: A Document of Ancient Humanism’, *Bulletin, Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies*, 15-22, 22.

⁶³⁸ George, xxxiii.

⁶³⁹ Sue Wilson, ‘Review: *A.D.*’, *The Independent*, (28 September 2000).

⁶⁴⁰ ASC MS Morgan, K 8/7/3: ‘Pink Divinity’ Seminar (11 February 2000).

reimagining and revitalising the lives of historical and mythological figures, animals and inanimate objects, and imagined figures existing in the peripheries of space and time. Life is shown to be not singular or linear, but instead a collection of moments and selves, both real and imaginary, that interconnect through fragments like the construction of Morgan's 'New Divan'. He writes in 'The Second Life' of how,

we are drawn back to the image
of the seed in darkness, or the greying skin
of the snake that hides a shining one---
it will push that used-up matter off
and even the film of the eye is sloughed---
That the world may be the same, and we are not
and so the world is not the same,
the second eye is making again
this place, these waters and these towers [...]

(CP, 180-1, ll. 37-45).

The snake sloughing its skin represents the numerous lives humankind both experiences and interacts with, life and the world made different with each valuable encounter. Jesus's metaphor of the snake aligns with Morgan's message from the poem, the Christian figure hoping that 'I still have time to shine anew / As snakes do, glistening on their pathless way' (A.D., 37). Gilgamesh, in comparison, faces a physical snake in a forest glade, who snatches from him the plant 'that can lift cowering old age to youth again' and 'make them bold, / active, a second life, a second chance' (TPoG, 94). Concerned with mortality and the end of his singular life, the loss of the plant devastates Gilgamesh who believes it to be his only opportunity for a second life. The ferryman, Urshanabi, offers Gilgamesh an understanding of life and the act of creation through which it persists: 'A cleft / rock may tremble, but still be home to seeds / if you will let yourself grow into deeds' (TPoG, 95). Gilgamesh's return to Uruk finds him wise to the 'wilderness of fireflies / that dances to deceive our yearning eyes', calling out to his citizens to 'challenge the night!' (TPoG, 97). The play leaves Gilgamesh recreating his former dictatorial city into something worthy, through which the memory of men may persist.

Jesus, in comparison to Gilgamesh, is wise throughout to 'the seed in darkness', understanding the need to establish the ideals of love and compassion so that they can flourish: 'the seed, the

bush, the tree: it's a process' (*A.D.*, 164). Morgan expands upon the parable of the mustard seed from the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke, with Kocot suggesting 'the level of ambiguity'⁶⁴¹ in the original parable is diminished as Morgan's Jesus sets forth his depiction of 'that old mustard-seed of mine':

If the seed had not been covered with the darkness of the earth, and become dead to the eye, there would be neither bush nor branch, nor anything green, anything full of savour, anything full of goodness, to spread throughout the light of the fields. If I die, I shall be with you to the end of the world. What is heaven? What is earth? Both - yes, even heaven - may pass away, but my words will not pass away. That is my kingdom.

(*A.D.*, 189)

Jesus returns here to the creation of the natural world to demonstrate how his teachings will germinate and flourish, a further example of humankind's interconnection with nature within the framework of love. Jesus claims that Caesar and Herod 'shall kick me into my second life', recognising that his sacrifice will incite the lives of 'followers called Christians. / They are going to be blown about the world / Like seeds - they hope -' (*A.D.*, 223). No physical second life occurs for Morgan's Jesus or Gilgamesh, but their existence continues through their creations.

Jesus's assertion that the moment in which nothing became something in the universe 'surely showed the power of love' resonates with Morgan's poem 'A Home in Space' (1979). The poem concludes with the idea of 'space that needs time and time that needs life' (*CP*, 388, l. 26). Space and time are abstracts of the universe and yet they become particularised when paired with life. Morgan repeatedly returns to this concept, the abstract, geological or inanimate made specific and offered further value by their interconnection with life and humankind. *The Play of Gilgamesh* demonstrates this in its presentation of nature made more valuable through its connection with humanity, their intertwining providing a framework for love. For Jesus of *A.D.*, life and creation is an act of love, and so love becomes the essential, particularising force, without which nothing can connect.

⁶⁴¹ Kocot, 174.

The idea of creation, or indeed creating, being an act of love, undoubtedly reflects on Morgan and his lifetime of work. He writes to Alec Finlay in 2002 of how he can ‘almost date my life from 1960 instead of 1920. I was productive in poetry; I was in love’ (*TML*, 485), highlighting the essential idea of life, love and creating being inherently intertwined. The creation of literature is a commitment not just to the subjects at hand but also to the essential act of production, one which rests in creative motivation rather than benign drudgery. McGonigal and Coyle write in *The Midnight Letterbox* of Morgan’s determination ‘to be as productive as his creative energy and strength of character would allow’ (*TML*, 463) following his cancer diagnosis. Morgan’s adaptations of Christ and Gilgamesh propose the fundamental idea that the act of creating, and therefore the act of love, grants perpetuity to the mortal man. Just as Gilgamesh learns that ‘immortality is open to him’ by the ‘recording of his deeds, the fixing of his quest in human memory’ (*TPoG*, xiv), Morgan, facing his own mortality, recognises his own continued existence through the presence of his creations, themselves a physical representation of Morgan’s own multitudinous loves. By crossing millennia, from the ancient world of Mesopotamia to the flourishing of Christianity in the Middle East, Morgan confronts his own mortality by establishing exactly ‘what lasts, what changes, what survives’ (*TPoG*, vi). As Anne Varty writes of *A.D.* and *The Play of Gilgamesh*, ‘Gone is the masked approach to forbidden love of *Cyrano*, gone is the torment which punishes the forbidden love of *Phaedra*; instead we hear a foreshadowing echo of Larkin, “what survives of us is love”’.⁶⁴²

Writing in *Eddie@90* (2010), a festschrift compiled for Morgan’s ninetieth, and final, birthday, Benno Plassman determines Morgan’s own existence persisting through ‘your love for your place, your time, your loves and your friends’, asserting that Morgan’s own connective force with humankind and his surrounding world ‘keeps you present in times past and future’.⁶⁴³ Morgan similarly endorses this idea of a continued presence. Uninterested in physical immortality, he puts forth his ‘stubborn irrational belief [...] that everything we do is somehow written into the fabric of the universe and cannot be destroyed even if it cannot be accessed’ (*TML*, 499). This idea, of the indestructible nature of our actions, prompts a

⁶⁴² Anne Varty, ‘Edwin Morgan’s Theatre’, *The International Companion to Edwin Morgan*, ed. Alan Riach (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2015), 145-58, 152.

⁶⁴³ Benno Plassman in *Eddie@90*, eds. Robyn Marsack and Hamish Whyte (Edinburgh: Scottish Poetry Library and Mariscat Press, 2010), 63.

connection with energy, the law of which states it cannot be destroyed. Morgan frequently engages not just with the love of individuals but with the love of things, such as the love of nation or the love of innovation. His love of energy, however, is a guiding principle of his work, with Morgan defining poetry as ‘the manifestation of energy in order’ (*E*, 81). Despite his physical difficulties following his cancer diagnosis, Morgan was, as Colin Nicholson determines, ‘a triumph of energy in dire straits if there ever was one’.⁶⁴⁴ One of his final poetry sequences, ‘Demon’, encapsulates this quality in a figure whose job it is ‘to rattle the bars’ (‘A Demon’, *C*, 93).

3.8. ‘Demon’

Morgan gifted his personal art collection to the Hunterian Art Gallery in 2004 after moving from Whittingehame Court, his home for over forty years, to a nursing home in Bearsden, before finally settling in Clarence Court Care Home in Broomhill. The gallery received some seventy artworks from Morgan, creations of artists such as John Byrne, Joan Eardley, and J. D. Fergusson, but half a dozen paintings remained with him. In this selection was Utagawa Kuniyoshi’s woodcut, ‘A Samurai Fighting a Demon’ (c. 1830), which was mounted on the wall above his desk at Clarence Court.⁶⁴⁵ It is speculative to suggest that Kuniyoshi’s work held a certain significance for Morgan over the artworks gifted to the gallery. However, the connection between the woodcut and Morgan’s ‘Demon’ sequence, published in the same year as Morgan’s cancer diagnosis, may have offered Morgan a reminder of what the figure represented for him in a time of physical struggle: ‘willpower, strife and striving, and what remains of us’ (*BTL*, 338). Like Morgan’s poetic responses to particular artists or artworks, found in texts such as ‘To Joan Eardley’ (1968), ‘An Alphabet of Goddesses’ (1985), or *Beyond the Sun: Scotland’s Favourite Paintings* (2007), the ‘Demon’ sequence incorporates the idea of art impelling poetry, with Morgan suggesting that ‘paintings sink into your mind and influence you in ways you’re not fully conscious of’.⁶⁴⁶ McGonigal suggests that Mikhail Vrubel’s paintings provide a source for ‘Demon’, the Russian artist creating images of a demon who is ‘an isolated rebel forever unwilling to accept social injustice and determined to oppose it in endless struggle’ (*BTL*, 343). This is certainly plausible given Morgan’s lifelong

⁶⁴⁴ Colin Nicholson in *Eddie@90*, 60.

⁶⁴⁵ Edwin Morgan, ‘A brush with genius’, interviewed by Peter Ross for *The Sunday Herald* (12 December 2004).

⁶⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

interest in the Russian arts, but Kuniyoshi's demon arguably manifests itself in the sequence as well. Morgan's and Kuyinoshi's figures are at once 'imaginative, surprising, esoteric, replete with restless energy', with Peter Ross comparing the woodcut to the poet himself.⁶⁴⁷ By placing significance on potential source material such as Vrubel or Kuniyoshi's paintings, 'Demon' merges the 'outward and inner eye' of artist and writer, determined by Morgan to be vital to 'the literature of the imagination' that is 'combine[d] to produce an image which is in its own way an image of the world' (E, 42).

The origin of the word 'demon' is thought to have evolved from the Greek *daiesthai*, 'to divide', and Morgan's demon embodies this pre-Christian division, a character divided in and defined by its role as mischief-maker but also celebrator of life. Rosemary Guiley suggests that 'monotheism creates a sharper polarization between good and evil',⁶⁴⁸ which correlates with the redefinition of 'demon' during the spread of Christianity. With Christian and apocalyptic writers coalescing *daimonia* with the Hebrew *malakim* to define demons as 'evil spirits',⁶⁴⁹ demons became linked to the devil. In contrast, pre-Christian societies characterised demons by their 'excessively passionate dispositions, near limitless energy, a preference to work from concealment, and shape-shifting capability',⁶⁵⁰ the figures bearing little if any relation to the devil. Morgan's demon embodies the pre-Christian idea, his figure 'more life-force than demonic presence'⁶⁵¹ with its fundamental concerns upheld by a survivalist conviction. James Robertson asserts in a review of 'Demon' that the titular figure 'sings hymns of sympathy to the devil',⁶⁵² but here the text's essential nature is arguably misread. The devil is inconsequential to the sequence, with Morgan's narrator admitting 'truthfully' to an enquiry about Lucifer that it has 'Never heard of him' (C, 99, 1.2). If the demon sings hymns of sympathy at all amidst its rebellious energy of protest song, it is to life and to living,

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁸ Guiley, xiii.

⁶⁴⁹ Jeffrey Burton Russell, 'Demons, Demonology' in *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, ed. Alan Richardson (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1983), 150.

⁶⁵⁰ Theresa Bane, *Encyclopedia of Demons in World Religions and Cultures* (Jefferson, NC; London: McFarland & Company, 2012), 5.

⁶⁵¹ Hamish Whyte, 'Into the Twenty-First Century: From Demon to Dream', *The International Companion to Edwin Morgan*, ed. Alan Riach (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2015), 159-68, 159.

⁶⁵² James Robertson, 'Demon: Poetry in Nation', *Scotland on Sunday* (5 September 1999).

embodying Morgan's own 'Blakean position' in its belief that 'everything that lives is holy' (*NNGM*, 53).

In Morgan's version of Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1592; 1999), Mephistopheles presents the Christian vision of a demon. He defines demons as 'Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer, / Conspired against our God with Lucifer, / And are for ever damned with Lucifer'.⁶⁵³ Mephistopheles, a demon acting as Lucifer's agent, encourages Faustus' bequeathment of his soul to the devil, with Mephistopheles' claim that 'it is for love of you I do this now' (*DF*, 19) acting in opposition to a previous statement revealing the purpose behind his encouragement, that demons 'suffer less when others suffer too' (*DF*, 18). Although this latter statement suggests that Mephistopheles is driven primarily by his own needs, his character is nuanced. He admits to Faustus the reality of Hell at their first meeting and his regret in falling with Lucifer is suggested, having 'tasted the joys / of an eternal Heaven' (*DF*, 14) and been subsequently haunted by them. These glimmers of transparency suggest that Mephistopheles is not entirely a manifestation of evil, and yet his manipulation throughout the text of *Faustus*' descent demonstrates a vindictive determination to drive others to Hell, a place that exists 'Deep in the four elements of nature / Where we are tortured, and remain for ever' (*DF*, 22). Like Mephistopheles, the demon of Morgan's sequence references its own suffering, proclaiming that human beings 'would shriek like wild things' if they were to suffer 'in all their lives / even a millionth part of what I bear / Every second' (*C*, 105, ll. 16-8). However, Morgan's demon is resilient and refuses to dwell on torment or inflict the same suffering on others. In comparison to Mephistopheles, for whom Heaven is an abstract 'everlasting bliss' and his existence outwith it tortures him in 'ten thousand hells' (*DF*, 14), Morgan's demon does not deem its suffering to be significant. Instead, it perceives torment to be transient as it calls 'to hell with it! / Winter's a season. Get through, get through!' (*C*, 103, ll. 37-8). Indeed, Morgan's vision here is closer to Goethe's Faustian play than it is to Marlowe's, Goethe's *Faust* (1829) being characterised by 'the avoidance of tragedy'.⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵³ Edwin Morgan, *Christopher Marlowe's Dr Faustus: in a new version* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1999), 14.

⁶⁵⁴ Erich Heller, 'Goethe and the Avoidance of Tragedy' in *The Disinherited Mind: essays in modern German literature and thought* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961), 33-58.

Heaven and hell are not antithetical in the demon's universe. They appear to intermingle at the periphery of the demon's domain, the figure unconcerned by the realms in its claim that it can 'take whatever is thrown at me / By heaven or hell' (C, 105, ll. 35-6). The demon continues, expressing a particularly human vulnerability in the statement that 'it is what is taken away / That challenges my iron and my arms' (C, 105, ll. 37-8). The demon never elaborates on what it has been eternally separated from, believing that after 'the poetry of departures / [...] you have, alone, to get on with your life' (C, 105, ll. 30-2). However, this glimmer of vulnerability suggests an underlying purpose behind the demon's objective to defeat death, as well as the demon's 'human capacity for good and ill'.⁶⁵⁵ This capacity is central to the demon's nature, the sequence displaying 'a pre-Christian signification of demon as form of conscious agency somewhere intermediate between imagined gods and imagining people'.⁶⁵⁶ Although humankind may be the demon's 'play', they are also 'my joy, my matter, my mystery' (C, 105, l. 4). By merging mischief and mission, the demon is characterised not by a propensity for evil but rather by a determination to reinvigorate humankind, caressing 'them / with poppies until they dream of great others' (C, 105, ll. 6-7). Although an agent of dissent, the demon embodies a certain humanity, highlighted in the affection it directs at sea-beasts, 'alive / In these impossible degrees' (C, 96, ll. 31-2). The demon rages against death, but to those who grasp life it is benevolent.

Just as the landscapes of heaven and hell are indistinguishable, the sequence does not differentiate the two realms by naming any leaders in them. Angels and demons are described, the intent of the 'militant seraphs' (C, 98, l. 21) conveying the angels' malevolence rather than their virtuosity. However, just as there is no Lucifer there is, correspondingly, no omnipotent God in this text. The demon argues that the universe is not 'made', the figure questioning derisively 'When were the stars not in life? / Do you think there was some bald big bang-master / Forcing them like sparklers from a poke?' (C, 112, ll. 8-9). Instead, stars are born '*lux* without *fiat*' (C, 112, l. 19), with Morgan referring to the Book of Genesis from which the phrase *fiat lux* translates into 'let there be light'. Stars are presented as singular agents of energy, who 'in dying seed a host' (C, 112, l. 17), and so, too, is the demon. It operates under

⁶⁵⁵ Nicholson, *Inventions of Modernity*, 189.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid.

its own direction throughout the sequence as it crosses the boundaries of time and space, never arbitrarily and always with the purpose to invigorate.

Throughout the sequence, the demon is motivated by the spirit of the perverse, purposefully punctuating moments of heightened vulnerability or propelling a sense of fear into those upon whom the demon has intruded. Edgar Allan Poe defines the spirit of the perverse in his short story 'The Imp of the Perverse' (1845) as a deliberate desire, 'a radical, primitive, irreducible sentiment'.⁶⁵⁷ In contrast, a reinvigoration of life drives the demon's perverse spirit. For Poe's protagonist, 'no intelligible principle'⁶⁵⁸ lies behind the murder he commits, believing instead that perverse actions are perpetrated 'because we feel that we should not'.⁶⁵⁹ As a figure of rebellion, Morgan's demon similarly commits certain acts with the purpose of violating rules. However, unlike Poe's protagonist, these are not acts of capricious brutality; they serve to highlight the value of life. In 'The Demon at the Brig o' Dread', the demon embodies the spirit of the perverse presented in Poe's short story, the figure 'cowp[ing]' unsuspecting victims over the bridge as it calls to them: 'don't complain / The water is coming up to hit you / For nothing, why why why. / There's no why / Except you never felt afraid till now / Or drank the dread that's worse than fear, and better' (C, 101, ll. 21-5). The demon's statement that 'there's no why' behind its action mirrors Poe's idea of the perverse spirit bearing 'no intelligible principle'. The subsequent stanza, however, determines purpose behind the demon's act. The demon defines the victims by their quotidian existence: 'they were going to make a speech, / They were going to put their stamp on it, / They were going home to set their alarms / For another satisfying day of managing' (C, 101, ll. 14-7). The repetitive litany of these lines mirrors the victims' monotonous lifestyles, in which they merely exist rather than embrace life. The demon, unlike Poe's protagonist, rescues the victims, not just from drowning but from the trivial life they have built themselves. 'The life returns' to them, 'that they can only / Live, the second one, the little one / They'd best be cradling in their arms, and fast' (C, 101, ll. 29-31). The inherent warning in these final lines determines the unmistakable purpose driving the demon's act: to re-energise the lives of those dwelling in wasted time. The demon has, as

⁶⁵⁷ Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Imp of the Perverse', *The Collected Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2004), 261.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid., 264.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid., 262.

McGonigal suggests, 'a remorseless drive for survival' (*BTL*, 341), but its actions underline its desire to enforce this same drive into the world around it.

'The Demon Sings' re-imagines this purpose in the form of a protest song, the rhyming quatrains delivering momentum to the message that 'Against is not for nothing' (*C*, 100, l. 9). The demon often operates as a singular agent, but here it is part of the collective 'merry dancers' who urge their audience to 'feel us hear us fear us / When the dark begins to spark!' (*C*, 100, ll. 19-22). Throughout the sequence demons are defined by this 'spark', which incorporates their power, curiosity, and energy, and this drives the titular demon. In 'Submarine Demon', the figure states 'I don't sink' (*C*, 95, l. 6) as it enters the ocean's depths, aware of the connotation of 'sinking' as being an unwilling act. Instead, 'I drive I fin I power' (*C*, 95, l. 6) into the sea, the demon's resolute force mirrored in the absence of punctuation. The earth resonates with this same energy, as 'like a breath' it 'struggles to pump through the sludge / but through it comes for all that' (*C*, 95, ll. 15-7). The demon states that 'the sun's not here, the sun's not needed', rejecting the solitary celestial object in favour of the earth, the ultimate living being which 'can't have enough of life' (*C*, 95, ll. 33-4). The earth holds 'one thick happy seething thrash / of every sex and every age and every lovely move / A body, a mortal body, can make' (*C*, 110, ll. 10-3), the demon's language encapsulating its relish for life in all of its inclusivity. With affection, the demon pictures 'an oasis with a little blue glitter of water' by which a couple is shown 'Gently, fiercely, gently, long and lovingly / Entwined' (*C*, 110, ll. 4-7), the physicality of love embodying life's beauty. This admiration of human interconnection drives the demon's loathing of Saint Anthony, whose eremitic existence as a Christian monk in the desert revered him to sainthood. In the demon's view, Saint Anthony is a 'solitary non-server / of the people' who 'hate[s] the brightnesses of the world' (*C*, 109, ll. 29-33). The desert, in which Anthony excludes himself from the world, embodies the demon's perception of a wasted life: existing in martyrdom but actively rejecting interaction with the same people he seeks to inspire.

Driven by life, death becomes the demon's ultimate enemy. The location of Oświęcim places the demon within a twentieth-century historical context, in which 'the winter fields [that] are hard, half-white' (*C*, 94, l. 2) prompt a reminder of the lives devastated by the Nazi regime.

The demon questions ‘the shallow crust of ice on the pond’, asking if it is ‘trying to be beautiful, that sullen shine?’ (C, 94, ll. 10-1). Taking ‘my quick sharp heel’ to ‘spur and smash / That shimmer to complaining splinters’, the demon vehemently states that ‘Nothing had better be beautiful while I am here’ (C, 94, ll. 12-7). This does not, however, demonstrate a mischievous or arbitrary destruction of beauty. Instead, for the demon who embodies Morgan’s own curiosity and relish of life, no beauty can be taken from the needless devastation of the living. The demon furthers this belief in its condemnation of weapons, the figure driven to ‘jam’ the ‘damnable guns’ of the angels in a display of active protection as it ‘spring[s] to wrap / Such things in my leathery dark as should never have been made’ (C, 98, ll. 13; 19-20). The demon ultimately subverts the recurring connection made throughout theology between demons and death, such as rabbinic sources that testify demons to be under the leadership of Azrael, the angel of death, or the demonic *piśācas* of Hinduism who are ‘eaters of raw flesh’.⁶⁶⁰ In ‘Another Demon’, the sequence’s titular figure meets a demon who aligns with these theological sources, a ‘bluish creature’ inhabiting the burial mounds of old Japan (C, 111, l. 5). The Japanese demon urges the titular demon to “‘Help me blight crops, dry udders, bring floods, [...] get some wet blood in my veins’” (C, 111, ll. 17-9). The antithetical nature of their characters is evident. The titular demon, for whom life is its central purpose, rejects the proposition and states that ‘the last thing I would drink was human blood’ (C, 111, l. 23). Its re-classification of the Japanese demon as ‘a zombie’ (C, 111, l. 25) suggests its abhorrence at sharing an identity with something that feasts on the living.

In the penultimate poem, death is personified as a woman who remains perpetually out of reach, emphasised by the refrain of the demon: ‘the one I was looking for was not there’ (C, 114, l. 6; 12; 18; 24). The demon’s search for her in graveyards, battlefields, hospitals, and harsh geological environments demonstrates both the mission’s futility and the unconquerable nature of death itself. Yet, the demon unfailingly perseveres. The demon’s resilience is, like death, insurmountable, the figure battling both ‘blizzard’ and ‘stench’ with the conviction that ‘I will never rest till I have found her’ (C, 114, ll. 25-6). One review of ‘Demon’ suggests that Morgan ‘frustrates any sense of progression’ in the sequence, in that the reader is left knowing

⁶⁶⁰ Alain Daniélou, *The Myths and Gods of India: The Classic Work on Hindu Polytheism from the Princeton Bollingen Series* (Rochester: Inner Traditions International, 1991), 143.

‘nothing deeper about [the demon’s] motives or purposes or feelings or thoughts’.⁶⁶¹ However, the demon’s quest to defeat death emphasises progression. The demon is not disheartened by this potentially everlasting pursuit, asking with a vigorous tone, ‘Is challenge the word or is it not? / Is it the climb of climbs, morning noon and night? / It had better be!’ (C, 115, l. 9-11). The demon climbs the walls of time with a rapidity that mirrors its scaling of the underworld in the opening poem. The continual motion of the demon highlights its unwavering tenacity, steadfast not just in its pursuit of death but also in its celebration of life. Although the demon means to defeat death, it is not as an individual quest for immortality. In ‘The Demon Admires the Stars’, the parenthesis and tone of the question asked by the demon, ‘(will I [die]? / I doubt it but who can tell)’ (C, 112, ll. 22-3), suggests that, in relation to its own self, the demon is unconcerned by death. Instead, it is driven by a desire to defeat death for the purpose of others, a singular agent but one who seeks to incite a collective energy.

The demon’s energy and drive form a poetic response to Morgan’s cancer diagnosis, but the sequence also encapsulates Morgan’s understanding of love. Just as Morgan highlights creation as an act of love in *A.D.*, ‘Demon’ portrays love informing energy. For all its mischief, the demon’s inherent love of existence urges the figure forward, its own energy focused on delivering a message of exclamative wonder that ‘It’s / All alive! [...] / [...] factories / Of particles bursting and burning through the darkness! / It’s all alive I tell you!’ (C, 95, ll. 23-9). If ‘Love / is the wolf that guards the gate’ (LL, 25, ll. 1-2), then the demon by its very nature is an embodiment of love, a protector who ‘dares to grapple’ death, asking in return of those for which it fights, ‘can / You live?’ (C, 103, ll. 63-4).

By dedicating ‘Demon’ to Mark, Morgan highlights the connection between love and energy, their relationship inciting Morgan’s creativity in his final decade. The poet writes to Mark in 2003, stating:

My gratitude to you is more than I can say, though something of it is in the poems. You gave me a new lease of life, and without you there wouldn’t have been the last book [*Cathures*, in which ‘Demon’ was published] or the recent sequence [‘Love and a Life’].⁶⁶²

⁶⁶¹ ‘Review: Edwin Morgan’s “Demon”’, *Edinburgh Review* 103 (2000), 155.

⁶⁶² ASC MS Morgan, DS/6/1, Letter from Morgan (8 January 2003).

Morgan's creativity is propelled by love, the rejuvenating force without which 'I would be *invecchiando*', with Morgan stating that 'when I'm writing poetry, writing letters indeed, talking to friends, I don't feel any age in particular'.⁶⁶³ Morgan encapsulates his vision of love's intrinsic connection to energy through a written response to Botticelli's painting *La Primavera* (c. 1477-82), a postcard of which Mark sent to the poet in 2001:

If [Venus] is pregnant, it must be because she is the mother of all, what Lucretius called at the beginning of his great poem *alma Venus*, nurturing/nourishing Venus, *hominum divomque voluptas*, delight of men and gods, coming with the primavera to renew the life of things, producing, reproducing, generating through love.⁶⁶⁴

In *La Primavera*, Venus, a symbol of love, is the central component of nature, with Cupid's arrow above her head ready to shoot and restart the cycle. Arnolfo B. Ferrulo suggests that the painting reflects the humanist Renaissance philosopher Marsilio Ficino's Neoplatonic concept of love, 'the everlasting bond and knot of the world, the immovable support of its parts and the firm foundation of the whole machine'.⁶⁶⁵ The ideal of love's centrality is fundamental to Morgan's own understanding of it, highlighted in the above extract in which he determines love to be 'the mother of all'. Lucretius' work intrinsically connects to the ideal of love depicted in *La Primavera*, with scholars having 'long linked the venus of Botticelli's *Primavera* with the Venus of Lucretius' invocation as a symbol of the renewal of nature'.⁶⁶⁶ Although there is not an absence of god in Lucretius' world, the Epicurean philosophy he develops in 'De rerum natura' denies divine intervention, believing there to be an essential disconnect between humankind on earth and the gods in their celestial sphere. Being ultimately oblivious to the existence of humankind, the gods do not drive life into being. In Lucretius' belief, it is 'Venus the life-giver' alone who is 'pilot to the nature of things'.⁶⁶⁷

⁶⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid., DS/6/2, Letter from Morgan (4 September 2001).

⁶⁶⁵ Marsilio Ficino, qtd. in Arnolfo B. Ferrulo, 'Botticelli's Mythologies, Ficino's *De Amore*, Poliziano's Stanze Per La Giostra: Their Circle of Love', *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 37, no. 1 (March 1955), 17-25, 17.

⁶⁶⁶ Elizabeth Asmis, 'Venus and the Passion for Renewal in Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things*' in *Venus as Muse: From Lucretius to Michael Serres*, ed. Hanjo Berressem (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 41-56, 53.

⁶⁶⁷ Lucretius, 'De rerum natura', transl. Cyril Bailey in *Lucretius On the Nature of Things* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), 27.

As Irving Singer explains,

For Lucretius [Venus] is an energy through which all living things come into being, a natural force more elemental than the wind or the rain, a ruthless mechanism that instills fierce longing into all species, throbbing passion that leads to wild and infinite growth.⁶⁶⁸

Venus is not inherently a symbol for love in ‘De rerum natura’, but for Morgan the energy of life driven through Venus is indicative of love, being not just the ‘everlasting bond and knot of the world’ but the essential force through which humankind and the universe exists. Although Morgan states that he has never been ‘out in the cold, in the wastes of atheism’,⁶⁶⁹ his essential worldview is never filtered through a religious lens. For Morgan, it is love that ‘rolled out’ the stars, gilding a ‘dark that would truly scare / If nothing was there’ (*LL*, 54, ll. 11-3).

The demon’s admiration of the stars comes ultimately from their existence being in a constant state of rebirth, an embodiment of energy which once created can never be destroyed. To consider love as a form of energy means that it, too, can never be destroyed. Just as Morgan believes in his actions being ‘written into the fabric of the universe’ and therefore ultimately everlasting, the inherent connections constructed through love in all its various forms are imperishable. Every facet of love, repeatedly experienced by many but made specific to people and their individual contexts, becomes an enduring part of the universe. ‘Common as light is love’, reads the epigraph of *Love and a Life*, taken from Percy Shelley’s lyrical drama *Prometheus Unbound* (1820) and crucial in its summation of love in Morgan’s work. Love, like light, is common in being a continual presence within the universe, recurring with each connection. So, too, is love common by its existence as a shared phenomenon, not just shared between people but by the multitudinous connections that bear similarity with each other. *Love and a Life* makes evident the partiality of Morgan’s singular life and loves, more so than any previous collection, through its identification of particular people. Despite its specificity, the sequence still provides an essential familiarity, exploring recognisable facets of love. Throughout his work, Morgan documents ‘the common things’ which ‘in our feeling / became

⁶⁶⁸ Irving Singer, *The Nature of Love: Plato to Luther*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA; London: MIT Press, 2009), 130.

⁶⁶⁹ Robert Thomson, ‘From Byres Road to Damascus: Jesus as Leader and Lover: prepare for the gospel according to Edwin Morgan’, *The Herald* (19 September 2000).

extraordinary' (*CP*, 183, ll. 41-2), personal in their significance but universal when plotted amongst humankind's overwhelming experience of love in all its forms.

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, transformation is a definitive attribute of Morgan's final three decades. The concept of a 'second life', the transformative act of regeneration, resurfaces numerous times after Morgan's first documented interaction with it in the 1940s.⁶⁷⁰ As highlighted in this chapter, the concept emerges significantly in the later texts of *A.D.*, *The Play of Gilgamesh* and 'Demon', but the phrase 'the second life' is also woven into earlier standalone poems from this period, such as 'Nineteen Kinds of Barley' (1988) and 'Instructions to an Actor' (1990), determining its relevance in Morgan's corpus. A 'second life' similarly exists for the historical, literary and mythological figures of Morgan's work in this period, their established narratives reimagined to offer new perspectives on different lives. Greek and Roman deities are defamiliarised and reconstructed in 'An Alphabet of Goddesses' (1985) to offer 'a radically gendered classical pantheon',⁶⁷¹ alongside a reimagining of global figures within the context of Morgan's home city in the sequence 'Nine in Glasgow' (2002). By envisioning Scotland and the wider world in their different historical, geological and social contexts, as in *Sonnets from Scotland* or 'Planet Wave', Morgan suggests the transformative potential of place. He states that 'belonging to the city' enables him to 'renew myself too, and keep extending out into some new area', with Morgan incorporating Glasgow's ability to 'get over its difficulties and transform itself'.⁶⁷² Optimism underpins Morgan's meditations on change, transformation and regeneration, responding in part to the positive changes witnessed in his wider society.

In Morgan's own life, regeneration consistently occurs within the context of love, often in response to new relationships but also to society's shifting boundaries in which he experienced new forms of feeling. As evidenced in this chapter, Scotland's legislative changes regarding homosexuality and the subsequent shift in social attitudes allowed for Morgan's own regeneration, or transformation. The socio-historical contexts examined significantly affect

⁶⁷⁰ ASC MS Morgan, C/2, 164.

⁶⁷¹ Nicholson, *Inventions of Modernity*, 11.

⁶⁷² 'The many realities of Edwin Morgan', *The Independent* (25 November 1997).

Morgan's writing in the final decades of his life, epitomised in the willing exposure of the self and the essential relationships of his lifetime. By opening lines of connection in these final decades, Morgan's work is representative of Scotland changing as a nation, its growing independence balanced by its intrinsic links to wider international contexts. Although sections of Scottish society rejected the liberalisation of laws regarding homosexuality, their outspoken repudiation incentivised Morgan to develop his essential message of love. Through his adaptations and translations of European literature and foundational texts, Morgan presents an ideal of love that rejects the guilt or shame perpetuated by certain religious and social structures and instead calls for inclusivity, essential to Morgan's vision of love. Writing of Mayakovsky's love poems, Morgan suggests that 'they speak of ageing, of history, of the universe; of poetry and the power of words' (*E*, 65), and this conclusion arguably epitomises his own literary demonstration of love. Not only does Morgan perceive love to be the driving force of the universe, love is depicted by Morgan as neither painless nor utopian, yet all-encompassing. Love is an endless, multi-faceted experience that mirrors the demon's own effortless spanning of spatial and temporal boundaries. Morgan's own understanding of love comes from his exploration of it through ancient global literature to his imaginings of distant galaxies, from the turquoise gulf of Cape Found to the bus shelters of Glasgow. Essential, too, are the numerous people who help to form Morgan's conception of love. 'To those and to these', he writes, 'we must still answer and be true' (*LL*, 6, l. 12).

Conclusion

Since the 1960s and the emergence of a modern gay liberation movement, significant positive developments regarding LGBT rights have occurred across the western world. Scotland, particularly, has demonstrated itself to be a place of radical transformation regarding attitudes towards homosexuality and subsequent legal changes. Following the Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act in 2004, the Scottish Social Attitudes survey reported a steady increase in the Scottish public's agreement of the right for same sex couples to marry, rising from 41% in 2002 to 61% in 2010 and 68% in 2014,⁶⁷³ the year in which the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act was passed. Although England and Wales passed the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill earlier in the year, the final vote in favour of same sex marriage was considerably greater in Scotland, with MSPs voting 105 to 18 in comparison to MPs voting 366 to 161 in England and Wales.

The figures are indicative of a wider social shift. As Morgan notes, in comparison to 1967 being 'the great year of liberation' for homosexuals in England and Wales, in Scotland 'we were still in a kind of inhibited state all through that time'⁶⁷⁴ and remained so, despite the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1980. However, by the turn of the millennium, a shift towards a more progressive attitude regarding LGBT rights occurred in Scotland, reflected in legislation and social policy. In 2015, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) ranked Scotland as the most progressive country in Europe regarding the legal protection of LGBT people. Scotland met 92% of the ILGA Europe-Rainbow Index criteria, which the Equality Network concluded 'was down to the Scottish government's willingness to consult properly with LGBTI people'.⁶⁷⁵ Indeed, in 2016 Scotland's political landscape reflected the diversity heralded by the ILGA, with three of the five major political parties led by openly LGBT people.

⁶⁷³ ScotCen Social Research, 'Attitudes to same-sex marriage in Scotland', *Scottish Social Attitudes* (2014) https://www.equality-network.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/141216_SSA- Same-Sex-Marriage-Brief.pdf [accessed 05.04.2019].

⁶⁷⁴ Edwin Morgan, 'Edwin Morgan in Conversation', interviewed by Gerry Cambridge for *The Dark Horse*, Summer 1997, 34-43, 38.

⁶⁷⁵ 'Scotland Tops League for Gay Rights', *The Guardian* (10 May 2015).

Despite the positive trend regarding LGBT rights in Scotland since 1980, it is crucial to recognise the precarious nature of socio-political priorities. Responding to Scottish legal changes regarding homosexuality in the twentieth and twenty-first century, Bob Cant writes,

It is important to remember that human rights are social creations and are, therefore, subject to the forces of history; history tells us that what is accepted as a human right today will not necessarily be accepted as a human right tomorrow unless it is monitored, defended and embedded within the dominant culture.⁶⁷⁶

Cant's cautionary statement urges civic responsibility to uphold the changes that have been actively fought for, and continue to be fought for, in relation to what Morgan calls 'this inescapable part of human experience'.⁶⁷⁷ To take for granted what has been achieved regarding LGBT rights trivialises the experiences of those who lived through eras of profound marginalisation, and it may also limit further progress. In 2017, Scotland failed to secure the top position in the Europe-Rainbow Index, their matched criteria having fallen by 10%. In May 2019, the annual ranking showed Scotland having fallen to third place, matching only 72% of the ILGA criteria. Tim Hopkins, director of the Equality Network Scotland, warned that although Scotland's position in comparison to the rest of the UK reflects 'our good progress on equality since devolution [...] both the UK and Scotland are likely to drop further in future years', citing the necessary improvement of gender recognition legislation. Here, the potentially damaging effects of complacency are underlined. Evelyne Paradis, the executive director of ILGA-Europe, stated that 'political backbone' is essential for each country and further emphasised that 'this isn't about "reinventing the wheel" every year',

[I]t's about living up to your basic human rights obligations. In short, it is about having the courage of your convictions and doing what needs to be done so that all LGBTI people get the equality they deserve.⁶⁷⁸

As Paradis highlights, political vigilance is essential for liberal progress. Legislative changes and shifting social attitudes are indicative of Scotland's advancement regarding LGBT rights, but the acknowledgement of further duty must duly be recognised.

⁶⁷⁶ Cant, 11.

⁶⁷⁷ Morgan, *And Thus I Will Freely Sing*, 12.

⁶⁷⁸ Evelyne Paradis, qtd. by Nick Duffy, 'Scotland is no longer the "best place in Europe" on human rights', *Pink News* (17 May 2017) <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2017/05/17/scotland-is-no-longer-the-best-place-in-europe-onlygbt-rights/> [accessed 12.02.2019].

Cant's emphasis on the 'cultural embedding' of values is similarly important. Although political action is the fundamental necessity for change, civic progress occurs through an outspoken populace using both individual and collective platforms, however minor, to urge transformation. Morgan speaks in interview of 'political romanticism', suggesting that 'there are those who believe in action, in doing it, and those who want to withdraw and meditate' (*NNGM*, 52). He associates himself with the latter but with recognition of his capability for action, 'even if I don't go around with placards or joining societies' (*NNGM*, 52). Morgan's civic engagement with LGBT rights was firmly asserted following the public declaration of his sexuality. He embraced diversity in poems written for the opening of the Glasgow Gay and Lesbian Centre in 1995 and Pride Scotland in 2001 and engaged more openly with public debate surrounding LGBT rights, such as the repeal of Section 28. As highlighted in the final chapter of this thesis, gay subtexts emerged more overtly in his writing, which in turn emphasised the necessity of interconnection and compassion. As a leading cultural, and gay, figure, Morgan's public platform allowed him to defend and embed the principles he valued most highly.

This is not to say, however, that only as a publicly gay figure were these emphasised in his work. From as early on as the scrapbooks, Morgan's output urges the crucial values of empathy and tolerance in its continual response to Scotland as a changing nation. His poetry, particularly, offers insight into repression. Although specific to his personal experience, by embedding his concealed life within Scotland's literature, Morgan's writing encapsulates the struggles of an unspoken many and 'the love that dare not speak its name'. In *Tales from Baron Munchausen* (2005), Morgan as himself pens a letter to the tale-spinning Baron, in which he salutes 'your semi-visibility'.⁶⁷⁹ He continues, 'you make us think about what is real and what is not real, what is possible and what is not possible, what is good and what is problematic'.⁶⁸⁰ Morgan's assessment of the Baron could, indeed, be read as a summary of his own work. The half-hidden self in Morgan's creative output ignites crucial discussion on the homosexual experience in the twentieth century, a recognition of both hardship and the 'power of things not declared'.

⁶⁷⁹ Edwin Morgan, *Tales from Baron Munchausen* (Edinburgh: Mariscat Press, 2005).

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid.

‘Change!’, Morgan states, ‘that is the writer’s apple that he sinks his teeth into with a kind of energetic anguished delight’.⁶⁸¹ Indeed, change is a crucial force in his own trajectory, not simply regarding its variety but also in relation to the changing social frameworks in which his work is produced. The submerged strands of forbidden feeling in his poetry from the 1960s and 70s merge into a greater openness in the final decades of his life, echoing Scotland’s socio-political change. Morgan demonstrates through this that each sphere of experience is valuable. An outspoken honesty is crucial in the propulsion of social change, and yet, crucial too, is the ‘half-hidden and half-spoken’⁶⁸² emotional life to which we, as readers, are made witness. The vulnerability of his earlier writing demands compassion and a recognition of the difficulty faced by those for whom love, an already precarious thing, was further destabilised by the society in which they lived. Morgan’s work shows itself to be not one of a divided self, separated by his pre- and post-coming-out, but as spheres of experience inherently connected with one another. It is important to note as well that Morgan’s poetry, as with all poems, is not solely confessional. It is also a creative artifice, through which he moves back and forth between the personal and intimate and the wider universe.

James McGonigal writes of Morgan that, ‘in life as in art he chose optimism - not an option but a duty’.⁶⁸³ Indicative of this is Morgan’s eventual decision to risk, at the age of seventy, being, for the first time, truly open about his sexuality. Arguably, this move was demonstrative of his belief in ‘the future, of further, onward, better’,⁶⁸⁴ of change and possibility: ‘so now that we are so scoured and open and clean’, he asks in 2002, ‘what shall we do?’ (*LL*, 55, ll. 10-1). In his essay on the poetry of Soviet writer Andrei Voznesensky, Morgan writes that,

Man transforms both himself and his world, and what characterizes Voznesensky is the joy he takes in envisaging the transformations; but there is nothing vapidly optimistic about the joy. Where he goes and whatever he does, man takes with him his handful of earth, his handful of pain, of history and remembrance.

(*E*, 77)

⁶⁸¹ Morgan, *Identities: An Anthology of West of Scotland Poetry, Prose and Drama*, x.

⁶⁸² Watson, ‘Messages and Transformations’, 191.

⁶⁸³ McGonigal, ‘The Once and Future Pilot’, 20.

⁶⁸⁴ Kathleen Jamie, ‘The lifeline of love’, *The Guardian* (3 March 2007), <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2007/mar/03/featuresreviews.guardianreview27> [accessed 28.02.2019]

This evaluation of Voznesensky, of his ability to blend time's hardships with optimism to create something meaningful and valuable, resonates with Morgan's writing not only in relation to love but also to his perception of humanity. Morgan's work responds to hardship through frameworks that are both personal and social, and yet his recognition of the peak that follows the trough is inherent, evident of his characteristic optimism. Duly balancing this, however, is his comprehension of what has been overcome and what may lie ahead. In 'Sunset' from *Cathures*, located in a sequence that absorbs notes of hope within old-age reflections, Morgan's recognition of history and the necessity for reappraisal is evidenced: 'Dear light of evening, breaking through / To where I stand in dark review / Of things to come, and things undone / That should be done' (C, 56, ll. 1-4). Here, the 'handful of pain, of history and remembrance' is implied in the sombre imagery of the speaker standing in 'dark review', a bleak acknowledgment of what has occurred and what difficulties remain. Despite an awareness of potential future hardship, the speaker still turns to meet the sunset's 'orange and your red, those miles / In millions, giving fire to tiles / And spires and windows, and to me / A burning coat of hope' (C, 56, ll. 7-10). For humankind, with whom Morgan travels from its ancient beginnings to its galactic futures, he rekindles this hope continuously.

No more apparent is this sense of careful optimism, contextualised by the significance of previous hardship, than in Morgan's writing on love. Love is rarely sentimentalised; even the triumphant sensuality of the love poems from *The Second Life* is balanced by potential future anguish. Iain Crichton Smith suggests in 'The Public and Private Morgan' that the strength of Morgan's poetry,

does not lie, I think, in the sometimes too obvious images of love which he creates. It emerges more clearly from a sense of loss, of unreasoning possibilities [...] Beyond Morgan's apparent optimism there are strange movements of solitude, random messages of love.⁶⁸⁵

Morgan did not experience love and sex existing in stable equilibrium until his forties, and therefore his acknowledgement of the destructive elements of loneliness resonates. Loss, too, exists, nowhere more evident than in his reflections on John Scott. Crichton Smith terms Morgan's optimism as 'apparent', implying that its existence is uncertain because it veils

⁶⁸⁵ Crichton Smith, 45.

something resoundingly dark, but arguably hope endures in Morgan's reflections of love because of his essential recognition and understanding of loss and solitude. Optimism is, ultimately, not an annulment of hardship; instead, it is qualified throughout Morgan's life and work in a number of ways. As this thesis has demonstrated, love for Morgan had to be a self-conscious choice, the surrounding social and legal contexts enforcing limitation and selective attachment. Both commitment and uncertainty are acted out by Morgan in his work, which in turn highlights love's own contradictions. Accident, choice, and negotiation underline Morgan's different experiences of love, which individually propel his exploration of different aspects of love, of unpredicted loss, jealousy, joy, and pain. The focused nature of love is a further qualifier; although love can be pluralistic, Morgan is arguably not relaxed in the plurality. Value is taken in Morgan's work from the specific people and specific experiences that create his overall experience of love, to which he continually returns despite his overt understanding of potential tribulation. By demonstrating his continual willingness to risk the troughs for the peaks, love is ultimately defined by Morgan as the triumphant force, encapsulated in the closing line of 'A View of Things': 'What I love about many waters is their inability to quench love' (*CP*, 202, l. 27).

Morgan's writing on love and loss frequently depicts a central human experience in which no particular sexuality has to be necessarily defined, its universality essential to his own understanding of love as all-encompassing. However, when acknowledging its homosexual relevance and the socio-historical frameworks through which Morgan lived and loved, his essential optimism becomes arguably more valuable. As documented in this thesis, Morgan's 'coming out' coincided with the emergence of an increasingly liberal legislative framework for the LGBT community in Scotland. His post-1990 work balances the relief and release of openness with an awareness that, as Cant states, 'the passing of laws which favour equality does not, of itself, usher in equality'.⁶⁸⁶ Morgan acknowledges the barriers still to overcome, not least the specifically homosexual social history that has only recently begun to emerge: 'No plaques will be forthcoming, only poems, / Only the voices you hear in poems' (*HHAA*, 37, l. 21-2). Despite this, a hope for love remains. It is, after all, as Morgan demonstrates,

⁶⁸⁶ Cant, 10.

a form of indestructible energy. Love, Morgan concludes with quiet confidence,

will not be denied

In this life. It is a flood-tide

You may dam with all your language but it breaks and bullers through and
blatters all platitudes and protestations before it, clean out of sight'

(LL, ll. 6-8).

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