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The Concept of Evil in Muriel Spark's Novels of the 1950s and 1960s

Předmět zla v románech Muriel Sparkové v období 50. a 60. let dvacátého století

Bachelor Thesis

By

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The aim of this thesis is to research the concept of evil occurring throughout Muriel Spark's novels of the 1950s and 1960, her early creative phase. Initially a philosophical perspective of evil based on its nature as well as on different moral values will be introduced. Significant consideration will be devoted to the manifestation of evil throughout Scottish writings. The thesis will further on take into consideration Muriel Spark's status as a Catholic writer of hybrid identity exploring religious factors in her novels. The final part is to apply the findings concerning the nature of evil in the early part of Spark's oeuvre.

I confirm that I wrote the submitted thesis myself and integrated corrections and suggestions of improvement of my supervising professor. I also confirm that the thesis includes a complete list of sources and literature cited.

In Olomouc
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Introduction

As Sholom J. Kahn states, boundaries between good and evil in literature used to be strictly demarcated by religious doctrines, from which potential deterioration would indicate evil intent. Later on, scientific perspective introduced a new perception of evil as being strictly a symptom of either physical or mental illnesses, directly responsible for one's harmful demeanour. Nevertheless the concept of evil as a phenomenon has always been primarily a concern of the question of morality. Therefore, in order to examine the rendition of evil in Muriel Spark's novels throughout the period of 1950s and 1960s, it is essential to firstly scrutinize the notion as such, namely from philosophical as well as theological perspectives and contextualize it within the frame of Scottish literature.

Since Dame Muriel Spark was highly influenced in her oeuvre by her conversion to Catholic faith as well as by her passion for Scottish mythology in border ballads tradition and both gothic and psychological fiction of namely Robert Louis Stevenson and James Hogg, even her rendition of evil is to large extent based on these approaches, or at least carries some signs of them. As a sceptical Catholic writer she primarily kept on questioning absurdities resulting from extreme and blind following of Catholic doctrines, including evil and savage demeanour as secondary effects. She was also strictly sceptical toward Calvinist teleology and its concept of predestination, which entitles the elect ones to commit all sorts of crimes, always justifiable by their church and not being frightened by potential severe punishment.

From psychological perspective Muriel Spark incorporated in her novels the concept of hybrid identities or split personalities, based on both scientific as well as spiritual causes. Even the notion of doubleness, nearly omnipresent with respect to Scottish literature, often plays quite an important role in her works, especially in the form of demonic doubles. Muriel Spark is intransigent when it comes to dealing with evil. She does not search for a potential mitigating circumstance or artificial environment, in which it might be perceived as justifiable or understandable, nevertheless, she does not strictly condemn it

either. She simply describes the scene with a certain detachment, leaving space for ambiguity.

Following the tradition of Scottish ballads, even signs of supernatural evil may be noticed in Muriel Spark's works, whether pagan or Christian. Nonetheless, not always creatures with supernatural origin are of evil nature, Muriel Spark refers to them in her works as potential catalysts simply inciting evil in human minds, or even as a necessity for the emergence of goodness, nevertheless, on the other hand also as the ultimate malefice described in Scripture.

I. Evil as a Phenomenon

Philosophical Perspective

Etymologically, evil corresponded in the Old English to an expression for “extreme moral wickedness”¹, even though this association evolved into the main sense as late as the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, morality as such is a relative notion, based on a viewpoint of an individual. Lars Svendsen distinguishes in his typology of evil an inclusion named Idealistic evil, which is characterized by humans perpetrating evil acts in order to secure higher goodness. To illustrate his allegation he states that “many Nazis were also idealists driven by an ambition to create a better society, and the SS considered themselves to be *moral elite*.”² Quite similar and often confused with Idealistic evil is a different type, labelled Instrumental evil. It shares with the Idealistic inclusion the aspect of goal accomplishment, nevertheless, the intentions might be considered morally good, neutral, or completely evil as well as a combination of all these alternatives.

Concerning morality, Svendsen further on suggests an idea of being born morally neutral and only after that becoming good or evil, depending on external influences. This conception, albeit more specifically demarcated, may be traced back into the eighteenth century, being a principal message of Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality among men* (1755). The general notion of external influences is concretized to civilization, which is directly blamed by Rousseau for enforcing unjust social stratification and introducing vicious demeanour to mankind by stealing one's freedom. Civilization, as Haruki Murakami states in *Kafka on the Shore* (2006), can be defined simply “as when people build fences.”³ Jean Jacques Rousseau expands this allegation quite harshly even further by stating in *Emile: Or, On Education* (1762): “Our wisdom is slavish prejudice, our customs consist in

¹ Online Etymology Dictionary, s.v. “evil”, accessed June 9, 2013, <http://www.etymonline.com/>.

² Lars Svendsen and Kerri A. Pierce, *A Philosophy of Evil*. (Champaign Ill: Dalkey Archive Press, 2010), 86.

³ Haruki Murakami, *Kafka on the Shore* (Ebookbrowse, 2010) <http://ebookbrowse.net/gdoc.php?id=578244666&url=0483a4cc46e0a69313ff65f818a52320> (accessed November 19, 2013), 232.

control, constraint, compulsion. Civilised man is born and dies a slave. The infant is bound up in swaddling clothes, the corpse is nailed down in his coffin. All his life long man is imprisoned by our institutions.”⁴

With regards to social stratification, or more accurately feudal system Friedrich Nietzsche presents a completely different perspective on the question of morality, introducing the term of Master morality. It is not social sentiment the moral duties of nobility are based on, the true reason lies in their affluence concerning every single aspect of human life including power or wealth. From Nietzsche's point of view Master morality authorizes noble people to be in charge of deciding the value with respect to what is considered good or wrong. Remorse and repentance are not the pillars of morality, the key elements are strength and power, as Nietzsche himself states: “A strong and well-constituted man digests his experiences (deeds and misdeeds all included) just as he digests his meats, even when he has some tough morsels to swallow.”⁵ Therefore, feeble individuals with no sense for self-discipline are not worth moral compassion. What more, nobles adhere to moral duties only when their equals are concerned and it is simply the morality of gratitude or vengeance. Summary term for an antithesis of this approach, also introduced by Nietzsche, is Slave morality, which is quite typical in its features for Christianity and altruism. Its basis lies in general preference of other one's needs over yourself.

In general, evil can be perceived only “as characteristics of something, not something that exists in its own right,”⁶ states Svendsen as he examines this phenomenon in his work *A Philosophy of Evil* (2010). Therefore it serves only as a describing element of human character, and the ultimate decision whether to become good or bad is up to each individual. This approach makes evil purely a product of human free will. However, not all evil in the world is caused by men.

⁴ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile* (Project Gutenberg, 2002)
http://intersci.ss.uci.edu/wiki/eBooks/BOOKS/Rousseau/Emile_Rousseau.pdf (accessed November 18, 2013).

⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals* (Internet Archive, 2009)
<https://ia600404.us.archive.org/3/items/genealogyofmoral00nietuoft/genealogyofmoral00nietuoft.pdf> (accessed November 18, 2013), 137.

⁶ Lars Svendsen and Kerri A. Pierce. *A Philosophy of Evil*. (Champaign Ill: Dalkey Archive Press, 2010), 48.

That is when David Ray Griffin comes with an idea of distinction between nature evil and moral evil, the first being a result of natural forces, the latter including the element of human will to intentionally hurt someone. Taken into extreme, this notion of committing evil fully aware of one's conduct and just for the evil's sake, is aptly labeled by Svendsen as Demonic evil.

Theological Perspective

Theodicy, or more specifically a "vindication of the divine attributes, esp. justice and holiness, in respect to the existence of evil; a writing, doctrine, or theory intended to 'justify the ways of God to men'"⁷ is an expression dated back to the eighteenth century to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. Nevertheless, probably the oldest argument concerning the clash of God's omnipresent love and goodness toward the mankind vs. the world's suffering was formulated by Epicurus at the dawn of the fourth century. He encapsulated his theory into four final alternatives, often collectively called Epicurean paradox – God existence is questionable, there is no proof of it and thus one of the possible answers would be that God does not exist at all. Assuming he does exist, his indifference toward evil might be explained either by an allegation that he is evil himself or that he is powerless. The ultimate possible explanation provided by Epicurus then lies in the non-existence of evil as such.

From a spiritual perspective none of these alternatives would provide a satisfactory explanation for theists. Therefore their general choice, as Svendsen concludes, is often represented with a complete denial of evil and elevation of world's suffering onto a necessity in order to attain higher goodness – a principle associated with Irenaean Theodicy. John Keats himself hinted the necessity of evil as an instrument for shaping human soul in order to be worth salvation by writing: "Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a Soul? A Place where the heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways."⁸

⁷ Oxford Dictionaries, s.v. "theodicy", accessed May 24, 2013, <http://www.oed.com/>.

⁸ John Keats, *Letters of John Keats to His Family and Friends* (London: MACMILLAN AND CO., 1925) <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/35698/35698-h/35698-h.htm> (accessed October 4, 2013), 256.

Lars Svendsen, however, points out an interesting allegation opposing this interpretation, stating that “Usually, good leads to more good, while evil leads to more evil. Suffering isn’t something that makes us grow, as a rule, suffering is purely destructive.”⁹ He refers to the fact that there is no language, which would describe agony beside basic interjections expressing pain or dirty language. Pain, as an aspect often associated with evil, destroys and weakens human beings at all levels. This process may be reflected as well on the ability of speech, as Svendsen states: “When pain becomes too intense, you lose the ability to speak and you descend into a pre-linguistic state.”¹⁰

In order to answer the question of evil presence on earth, it is essential to ponder upon the range of mankind ability to even understand such a concept. Taking basic principles of epistemology into concern, there is no true knowledge unless it is based on a justified true belief. Sources of human knowledge and its consequent justification must be considered reliable, which means not influenced by any psychological factors such as anger, prejudice or partiality. These sources are perception (based on five senses), introspection, memory, reason and testimony. Nevertheless, none of these is infallible, nor always applicable. As C.S. Lewis writes in his *Mere Christianity* (1952): “My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust?”¹¹ This way it all comes to a certain point, in which human understanding is considered too limited regarding certain phenomena.

⁹ Lars Svendsen and Kerri A. Pierce, *A Philosophy of Evil*. (Champaign Ill: Dalkey Archive Press, 2010), 53.

¹⁰ Lars Svendsen and Kerri A. Pierce, *A philosophy of evil*. (Champaign Ill: Dalkey Archive Press, 2010), 53.

¹¹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001), 38-39.

II. Manifestation of Evil in Scottish Literature

The concept of evil in its very miscellaneous forms may be noticed throughout the entire spectrum of Scottish literary heritage; starting from later medieval period characterized by back then popular dance-songs – ballads, spanning over the dawn of gothic literature in the second half of the eighteenth century, consequently reaching its flourishing in early nineteenth century with authors such as Robert Louis Stevenson or James Hogg, and still keep on progressing. Concentrating on the initially mentioned Scottish ballad tradition distributed according to regional affiliation primarily into Border Ballads and ballads of North-East area, the main attribute of evil manifestation would be underpinned by supernatural elements. Since the language of ballads is based significantly on images and symbols, indirectly responsible for its meaning instability, there are numerous types and depictions of supernatural evil, in fact creating an entire hierarchy of ominousness.

Ballads

Scottish highland legends, superstitions and folklore, being important attributes of ballads, introduce fairies or elves as typified spirits of a lower class, still outside a diabolical inclusion. These representatives of sylvan deities are considered generally harmless, besides having pleasure in mischief and malicious joy. Still, during time their existence has been altered in a way, especially with arrival of Christianity. These changes are chiefly of bad character, but there is an exception with Richard Corbett, Bishop of Oxford in 1628 and Norwich in 1632. His unique rendition of elves in his so called “A Proper New Ballad” actually entitled “Farewell, Rewards and Fairies” (1647), addresses fairies as good Catholics, which fled from England due to spreading Protestantism:

Lament, lament, old Abbeys,
The Fairies' lost command!
They did but change Priests' babies,
But some have changed your land.
And all your children, sprung from thence,
Are now grown Puritans,
Who live as Changelings ever since

For love of your demains.¹²

Corbett, therefore, quite clearly degrades the malevolent trait of elves to trivial mischief in comparison to England's new wave of belief. Nevertheless, there is still quite strong unfavourable approach toward these spirits. Unlike their sisters in the south – England, Scottish fairies are in many cases considered much wilder and of a more repulsive character, which as William Gunnyon suggests is a result of austere nature of people in Scotland and omnipresent Presbyterian control. Several interpretations of their origin even include a possibility of them being vassals of Prince of Tophet, referring to a Biblical locality near Jerusalem, also known as burning place, since that is where Jews sacrificed their children through fire to Moloch.

Another reprehensible activity often ascribed to fairies in ballads is an abduction and consequent exchanging of children in their cradles. This practice is usually referred to as a ritual performed every seven years in order to secure a soul for the devil. In Gunnyon's words this whole act serves "as a paying the 'kane' or 'teind' – that is tithe or tenth – to hell."¹³ The number seven serves as a strong indicator occurring frequently throughout ballads in relation to Elfland's power, standing for a period of time after which abducted persons are granted freedom to reunite with their homeland. Even Thomas the Rhymer himself was held in Elfland for the period of seven years, as the eponymous ballad describes:

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair o' shoon of the velvet green;
And till seven years were gane and past,
True Thomas on earth was never seen.¹⁴

"Thomas the Rhymer" or "True Thomas" is also a ballad presenting quite unusually affable nature and beautiful appearance of fairies, more

¹² Charles William Eliot, *English Poetry I: From Chaucer to Gray*. Vol. XL. The Harvard Classics. (York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1909-14). <http://www.bartleby.com/40/179.html>

¹³ William Gunnyon, *Illustrations of Scottish History, Life and Superstition from Song and Ballad* (London: Hamilton, Adams, 1877), 302. <https://archive.org/details/illustrationsofs00gunn> (accessed March 12, 2014)

¹⁴ Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch, "Thomas the Rhymer" in *The Oxford Book of English Verse: 1250–1900*, ed. A. T. Quiller-Couch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1919), <http://www.bartleby.com/101/367.html> (accessed March 12, 2014)

accurately of the Fairy Queen. It is due to her heavenly beauty that when Thomas encounters her for the first time, he takes her mistakenly for the Mother of Christ and therefore immediately kneels down before her:

“Hail to thee, Mary, Queen of Heaven!
For thy peer on earth could never be.”
“O no, O no, Thomas,” she said,
“That name does not belong to me;
I’m but the Queen o’ fair Elfland,
That am hither come to visit thee.”¹⁵

There is also an apparent hint of an intercourse between the human and the fairy queen, about which he is told to remain silent whether he wishes to see his homeland ever again. Similar depiction of a fairy queen may be spotted also in the south, in William Shakespeare’s comedy *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1600) where beautiful and powerful fairy queen Titania and her partner Oberon are introduced.

One class higher toward genuine demonism or at least inclusions having devilish connotations are witches / witchcraft and wizards / wizardry. Witches or hags were believed to have a close relationship with demons, whether being their mistresses or vassals. With their abilities to perform metamorphosis on their victims or a transformation of themselves into different kinds of animals, most commonly into cats, crows and hares, they kept on doing harm and acting as demon agents. A traditional ballad named “Alison Gross” tells a story of “the ugliest witch i’ the north countrie”,¹⁶ which allures a man to become her “lemman”¹⁷ — loved one, and due to her failing to do so, she consequently punishes him by turning into a worm. He remains in this shape till the Halloween night, during which he is saved by the queen of a “seely court”¹⁸ — good fairies, which were passing by:

¹⁵ Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch, “Thomas the Rhymer” in *The Oxford Book of English Verse: 1250–1900*, ed. A. T. Quiller-Couch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1919), <http://www.bartleby.com/101/367.html> (accessed March 12, 2014)

¹⁶ Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch, “Alison Gross” in *The Oxford Book of Ballads*, ed. A. T. Quiller-Couch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), <http://www.bartleby.com/243/12.html> (accessed March 12, 2014)

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

She took me up in her milk-white han',
An' she's straik'd me three times o'er her knee;
She changed me again to my ain proper shape,
An' nae mair I toddle about the tree.¹⁹

A ballad featuring even more unbelievable metamorphosis as well as sorcery is entitled "The Two Magicians". For the reader this may appear as a story of sexual violation since the two protagonists, a lady and blacksmith are in apparent sexual tension. As Sarah M. Dunnigan points out both of them symbolize two contraries, their descriptions "convey an image of female uprightness (symbolic purity) and masculine aggression."²⁰ He desires to gain her maidenhood as she refuses him and tries to escape via diverse metamorphosis, indicating her ability to perform spells and therefore referring to a struggle of two powerful magicians. The blacksmith, however, answers with similar transformations always more dominant to hers. At the end the most deadly entrapment turns out to be just one of her new forms:

Then she became a gay grey mare,
And stood in yonder slack,
And he became a gilt saddle,
And sat upon her back.²¹

Manifestation of the devil himself, as a representative of the demonic class is also quite popular attribute of supernatural ballads. In "The Daemon Lover" he appears as a man returning to his loved one after the period of seven years, again a powerful number indicating possible supernatural element. Consequent unexpected revelation of the lady breaking her vows and already being married to a carpenter and a mother to her son enrages her former lover immensely. He tries to persuade her to abandon her family and flee with him on one of his ships awaiting them on the sea. He allures her by promises to "show

¹⁹ Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch, "Alison Gross" in *The Oxford Book of Ballads*, ed. A. T. Quiller-Couch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), <http://www.bartleby.com/243/12.html> (accessed March 12, 2014)

²⁰ Sarah Dunnigan, *The Scottish ballads*. (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2005), 33.

²¹ Francis James Child, and Helen Child Sargent, "The Twa Magicians" in *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and company, 1904) <https://archive.org/details/englishandscott10kittgoog> (accessed March 12, 2014), 78.

where the white lillies grow / On the banks o' Italie"²² and other appealing destinations such as "the hills o' Heaven"²³ and "the mountain of o' Hell."²⁴ When she steps on the board and they finally reach the sea the true nature of her lover comes out and a monstrous disaster follows immediately:

He's tane her by the milk-white hand,
And he's thrown her in the main;
And full five-and-twenty hundred ships
Perishd all on the coast of Spain.²⁵

As the ballad points out the devil or his demon agents often in disguise cannot claim human souls gratuitously. Even in this particular situation the lady was tempted to break her sacred vow toward her husband sealed by marriage and just upon doing so she condemned herself to hell. Blind to all indicators of possible supernatural power such as the number of years of her lover's absence, or in some versions the nonexistence of the crew aboard the ship, making it a ghost vessel, she succumbed to evil temptation.

A similar situation, yet with a different result is depicted in "The Fause Knight on the Road" ballad. The devil in disguise of a noble knight asks a wee boy on the road about his destination and consequently about "the sheep on yonder hill"²⁶, trying to outsmart him and deprive him of his flock. Nevertheless, the wee boy turns out to be smarter than the devil as he aptly answers to every single statement of his and eventually sends him to where he belongs:

'How many of them's mine?'
'A' them that has blue tails.'
'I wish you were in yonder well.'
'And you were down in hell.'²⁷

²² Frank Sidgwick, "The Daemon Lover" in *Popular Ballads of the Olden Time. Second series*. (London: A. H. Bullen, 1904), 114. Kindle edition.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Frank Sidgwick, "The Daemon Lover" in *Popular Ballads of the Olden Time. Second series*. (London: A. H. Bullen, 1904), 114. Kindle edition.

²⁶ Francis James Child, "The Fause Knight on the Road" in *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/eng/child/ch003.htm> (accessed March 12, 2014)

²⁷ Ibid.

Gothic literature

The onset of Gothic literature in general is marked with publication of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), considered the very first Gothic story. Even though written by an English novelist, its Gothic storyline is set into Scottish context, since journey north was a frequent motif in early gothic literature due to the prejudices of being barbarous and appalling. Similarly, Mary Shelley sought a setting for her gothic novel *Frankenstein* (1818) among ghastly Scottish landscape as the eponymous protagonist's pursuit of the monster leads him into remote Orkneys. Scottish castles, lochs, moors and highlands in general were a fount of setting inspiration even for other English gothic writers such as Anne Radcliffe, Mathew Lewis or Clara Reeve.

Nevertheless, the Otranto landmark may be treated also as a trigger for new trends in perception of Gothic features. As Hamish Mathison points out after Walpole "a Whig space emerges for an attack upon superstition, Catholicism, Jacobitism and French tyranny, alongside the enthusiastic proposal of British Protestant values"²⁸, which restricts Gothic to "monkish dungeons and far flung abbeys, to Catholic chapels or proto-Tory castles."²⁹ This may be noticed especially during an intersection with eighteenth century gothic poetry in Scotland, based significantly on supernatural elements presenting haunting of the past with respect to historic events, carrying a political and patriotic overtone. These features are typical for authors such as Robert Burns, Robert Fergusson and also Allan Ramsay's gothic poem "A Tale of Three Bonnets" (1722), representing quite clear satirical allusion to Union of Crowns in 1603 and the Union of the Parliaments in 1707. In the poem, there is a reappearance of an indignant ghaist of a dead father when Rosie (as an embodiment of England) outsmarts his three sons and throws their family bonnets into the fire – England triumph over Scotland.

With the first half of the nineteenth century the tradition of Scottish Gothic writers, which in fact has always been there since medieval ballads and

²⁸ Hamish Mathison, "Gothic Poetry in Scotland: The Ghaistly Eighteenth Century." in *Gothic Studies* 14, no. 1 (May 2012): 34-46. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 3, 2014), 35.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

legends, finally returns to its heyday. Among the most dominant gothic authors of this period can be rank names such as Sir Walter Scott, James Hogg or Robert Louis Stevenson, all of them being inspirational icons even for contemporary authors such as Iain Banks or Muriel Spark. Sir Walter Scott set out for the rather Romantic path than the true Gothic, nevertheless, these two movements are often associated or even considered identical and there are purely Gothic features traceable in Walter's prose as well, especially in *Waverley* (1814).

Proceeding to the examination of evil presence in the nineteenth century gothic fiction, it is essential to mention Robert Louis Stevenson as one of the pioneers of a new approach toward gothic fiction elements. He shifted the traditional gothic attributes known since medieval times into current fears of modern civilization. He provided more rational explanation to the frightening, putting an emphasis on psychological and social forces rather than superstitions and supernatural unknown. With his novella *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) he examined potential evil concealed deep inside human subconscious minds, referring to double personalities introduced about sixty years before by James Hogg in *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824). Nevertheless, it is fundamental to mention that, even though Hogg may be considered the true founder of psychological novel, his split of a personality was of a rather more spiritual and supernatural affiliation.

Contrary to Hogg's protagonist Robert Wringhim, Stevenson's split of a personality is based on more scientific grounds. Dr Jekyll, as a man of science, believed in duality of human soul, stating that "man is not truly one, but truly two."³⁰ He alleged that soul contains two elements, good and evil one, from which one of them is always dominant over the other. This conception may have its roots in the existence of two hemispheres comprising human brain, one of them always being dominant over the other, however, expanded even further by assigning them a potential struggle due to emission of contrary commands.

In order to support his allegation with evidence Dr Jekyll performs experiments on himself using a drug to extract, separate the evil element of his

³⁰ Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Stories* (London: Everyman's Library, 1992), 61.

own soul. As a result of this endeavour he ends up turning into a monstrous immoral creature, a murderer – Mr. Hyde. His inner metamorphosis of mind becomes later on visible also on the outside, as his appearance changes into indescribable shapes: “There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something down-right detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why. He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point.”³¹ Since it was the darker side, which eventually prevailed, Mr. Hyde is far from normalcy with respect to human being appearance. Its outward look may be aptly described with William Blake's words from “The Tyger” (1794) as a “fearful symmetry”³² of a demonic doppelganger.

Toward the end of the novella Dr. Jekyll ceases to have control over his transformation into Mr. Hyde, being unable to produce the exact drug composition capable of reversible process. His last thoughts written down in his diary, which functions also as a preserver of his confession, belong to his second-self devil Mr. Hyde. He is wondering whether his devilish twin will have the courage to face justice and accept public execution on the scaffold or whether he will end his life himself.

Similar dichotomy with respect to purity and corruption personified in a single character may be noticed even in English literature, more accurately in Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890). In both of these novels there is an apparent reference to a theological approach of sin being distinguishable by its impurity and possibly noticeable even at the external appearance of a sinner, in his deformity. Nevertheless, with Wilde's Dorian Gray this interpretation is expanded even further putting an emphasis on dissimilarity of art, as an icon of utmost beauty, and the concept of morality, for beauty may as well stand for a self-regarded hedonism of a dark and self-destructive protagonist. It does not solely reflect purity of one's soul.

³¹ Ibid., 8.

³² William Blake, “The Tyger” in *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (New York: Avon Books, 1971), 101.

Another depiction of a second-self devil, this time based primarily on supernatural basis is presented in Stevenson's short story "Markheim" (1885). Eponymous protagonist enrages immensely upon receiving an advice in an antique shop to purchase a hand-mirror as a Christmas gift for his lady: "I ask you," said Markheim, 'for a Christmas present, and you give me this—this damned reminder of years, and sins and follies—this hand-conscience!'"³³ Markheim is frightened of looking at his own reflection and consequently a quarrel arises, which results in a homicide of the shop owner.

After recovering from the first shock, Markheim's intention is to rob the man as well, and upon assuring himself that the doors are locked and he is alone in the house, he heads toward the upper rooms. This is the moment when he encounters a stranger suddenly appearing from nowhere, claiming to know Markheim his whole life and being proud of him, calling him his favourite. After a long conversation between them Markheim is certain of the stranger being a devil and he realizes he succumbed to evil acts, even though he despises devil more than anything. A maid appears and the stranger incites him to kill her as well to avoid punishment, but Markheim responds:

'If I be condemned to evil acts,' he said, 'there is still one door of freedom open—I can cease from action. If my life be an ill thing, I can lay it down. Though I be, as you say truly, at the beck of every small temptation, I can yet, by one decisive gesture, place myself beyond the reach of all. My love of good is damned to barrenness; it may, and let it be! But I have still my hatred of evil; and from that, to your galling disappointment, you shall see that I can draw both energy and courage.'³⁴

Firmly determined he confesses the maid he murdered her master and asks her to call the police. For an unaccountable reason there is an apparent change in the visitors face expression. As if he triumphed and was fully satisfied, his features softened and became amiable.

As for the aforementioned James Hogg's novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, the reader may encounter another

³³ Robert Louis Stevenson, "Markheim" in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Stories* (London: Everyman's Library, 1992), 135.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 150-151.

manifestation of the devil, Gil Martin. Even though the word devil is never uttered throughout the whole novel, there are strong indicators for such a claim. From Robert Wringhim's perspective, however, the newcomer is nothing but his loyal assistant supporting him in accomplishment of necessary feats in the name of God. With this twisted logic underpinned by a Calvinist doctrine of antinomianism he considers himself beyond the reach of secular as well as spiritual punishment, no matter what unspeakable crimes he commits. There is an apparent dichotomy of good and evil being represented by Robert and his brother George, in which Robert stands for the concept of evil and his brother for the goodness. Gil Martin is not classified as a third agent, since from certain angles it seems that Gil Martin and Robert are in fact the same person, indicating another case of double personalities and haunting second-self demons:

I generally conceived myself to be two people. When I lay in bed, I deemed there were two of us in it; when I sat up I always beheld another person, and always in the same position from the place where I sat or stood, which was about three paces off me towards my left side. It mattered not how many or how few were present: this my second self was sure to be present in his place.³⁵

At this point there may be certain similarities spotted between aforementioned James Hogg's story and Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae: A Winter's Tale* (1889); especially the presence of two brothers and the concept of omnipresent persecution, as James Durisdeer keeps on pursuing his brother Henry whenever he tries to elude him. The same pattern of behaviour was noticeable even with Robert and his half-brother. What more, the reader is once more acquainted with a theme from the Bible, only this time it is not the manifestation of a devil, but the concept of a prodigal son. James as the first born is always favoured by the old lord and forgiven no matter what crimes he indulges to, whereas his younger brother Henry is never appreciated enough.

James does not know any limits as he keeps on pushing his evil acts further and further beyond the horizon of possible, as he even let himself being buried alive, and then consequently resurrected again – "I tell you I bury him

³⁵ James Hogg, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (Sioux Falls SD (USA: NuVision Publications, 2007), 102.

alive,”—said Secundra.—“I teach him swallow his tongue. Now dig him up pretty good hurry, and he not much worse. You light a fire.”³⁶ James has never had any reason to perpetrate harm to the others and yet he kept on doing so. These deeds with no apparent justification or goal accomplishment therefore classify him as a representative of a motiveless evil, with respect to Svendsen’s typology of evil he would stand for the inclusion of Demonic evil.

³⁶ Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Master of Ballantrae* (London: Collins Clear-Type Press, 1889), 310.

III. Muriel Spark as Catholic Writer

Muriel Sarah Camberg was born in Edinburgh in 1918, into a bifurcated family with respect to religion. Her father Bernard Camberg was of Jewish faith and her mother had been raised as Presbyterian. Muriel herself was also brought up in the spirit of her mother's faith, nevertheless, in 1954 as an adult she decided to convert to Roman Catholicism. This decision, supported by both her colleague writers Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh gave birth to her true literary career, as she commented on her belief in an interview with John Tusa on BBC Radio 3: "It's just that Catholicism gives me an inner stability which enables me to write better, I feel."³⁷ Three years later Muriel Spark finished her first novel *The Comforters* (1957), reflecting besides other things also her recent conversion. As the protagonist, Caroline Rose, struggles with everyday difficulties in order to adjust herself to Catholic rules, and suppress her own desires. There is an apparent tension and clash of spiritual and secular, as Caroline is forced to either give up her uniqueness as a person, her dreams and desires or her church.

There is a high probability that *The Comforters* may carry certain signs of autobiography and Caroline Rose, a newly converted Catholic, being a portrayal of Dame Spark herself. During 1950s Muriel Spark suffered from serious drug poisoning of Dexedrine. It was a dark period for her, as she kept on living on an extreme diet of coffee and pills, which should keep her focused and preserve the speed of progress in her work high. Consequently she suffered from malnutrition, depression and even delusional states, in which she could not recognize what is real and what is just a deceit. At that time she was working on a project concerned with T. S. Eliot and as a part of her delusional believes she imagined him sending her threatening messages. Moreover, her paranoia had absolutely no limits and she began to see miscellaneous codes everywhere, even between the lines of the everyday press. As Martin Stannard states, she was

³⁷ John Tusa. Interview with Muriel Spark. BBC Radio 3. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00nc8vq> July 31, 2006. (accessed March 12, 2014).

convinced that „words jumped about on the page, rearranging themselves into frightening anagrams. The word "veil", for example, became 'evil'.“³⁸

Therefore, an apparent similarity may be spotted between her delusional or paranoia and Caroline's auditory illusions concerned with a mysterious voice of a typing ghost. Caroline is the only person in the novel, who can actually hear it constantly describing her life and everyday activities, as if she was not in charge of her own actions, but simply a character in someone else's story.

The reader may also consequently become acquainted with another creation of Caroline's mind, the true evildoer in the novel, Mrs Hogg herself. It seems that she is not real at all, since “she becomes alive only through Caroline's involvement.”³⁹ She keeps on disappearing and then performing sudden unexpected reappearances, as with Mrs Hogg visit at Caroline's house: “For a second Caroline got the impression that nobody was there, but then immediately she saw the woman standing heavily in the doorway and recognized the indecent smile of Mrs Hogg.”⁴⁰ She also disappears several times from the back seat of a car in the presence of Helena and the Baron, however, her ultimate departure is marked by her death from drowning in a lake at the end of the novel.

As Ruth Whittaker states, Muriel Spark is generally ranked along with Graham Greene, David Lodge and Frederick Rolfe among sceptical Catholic writers, concentrating primarily on criticism and scrutiny toward Catholic faith. Her own annoyance and irritation with some too dogmatic co-followers of Catholic faith may be rooted in the actuality that she herself was not born into the faith as the others, making her different and fulfilling with a bitter feeling. Nevertheless, in comparison to Graham Greene she is not that challenging and audacious toward Catholicism, as she avoids situations, in which evil might be

³⁸ Martin, Stannard. 'A girl of slender means' (The Guardian, 18 July, 2009).
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/jul/18/muriel-spark-books-martin-stannard> (accessed 25 March 2014).

³⁹ Fotini Apostolou. "Textasy: The Seduction of the Text in Muriel Spark's Work(n1)." *Critical Survey* 13, no. 1, (January 2001): 94. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed March 25, 2014).

⁴⁰ Muriel, Spark. *The comforters*. New York: New Directions Pub. Corp, 1994, chap. 8.

justifiable or somehow understandable. Graham Greene indulges himself in his novels to constant shifting of Catholic doctrine tolerance beyond its limits. He shows certain compassion to an evildoer, taking circumstances into concern and blaming them for one's actions. As for instance in *The Heart of the Matter* (1948) he presents a protagonist Henry Scobie, who is disgusted with himself and strongly determined to end his life with a suicide, therefore committing a mortal sin. At the end of the novels there is a conversation between his devout wife Louise and a priest, which does not condemn Henry's deed entirely and shows certain sign of understanding saying that: "The Church knows all the rules. But it doesn't know what goes in a single human heart."⁴¹

As was mentioned before, Muriel Spark is milder with her criticism of Catholic dogmas, using primarily her ingenious grave humour and light satire and irony to highlight its absurdities. In her short story "The Black Madonna" (1958) she discusses the topic of racism, religious conflicts and human hypocrisy. A married Catholic couple Lou and Raymond Parker who cannot have children are trying to hide their jealousy toward everyone else in their vicinity, who has them; as well as their prejudice toward black people by befriending two newcomers from Jamaica and introducing them to all their friends.

Consequently Lou finds out in a parish magazine that there is a newly consecrated Black Madonna in the local church, making prayers come true. She immediately starts to pray for a baby ignoring her husband's vehement warnings: "You have to be careful what you pray for,"—he said.—"You mustn't tempt Providence."⁴² When she finally gets pregnant and gives birth it turns out to be a black one. The suspicion immediately falls on one of the Jamaican men, Oxford, being responsible for this abomination. However, eventually, using the blood tests, it is clear there is no blame on his side. There had been certain black ancestors in Lou's bloodline and it simply came back after several generations.

⁴¹ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* (New York: The Viking Press, 1948) <https://ia700502.us.archive.org/21/items/heartofthematter031009mbp/heartofthematter031009mbp.pdf> (accessed March 12, 2014), 306.

⁴² Muriel Spark, "The Black Madonna" in *The Stories of Muriel Spark* (London: The Bodley Head, 1987), 44.

Nevertheless, Lou keeps on ignoring all the medical evidence telling her husband that they are irrelevant since no matter what “the baby’s black and your blood tests can’t make it white.”⁴³ Lou and her husband eventually decide to give the baby to adoption to prevent their hypocritical fears of being discredited and a subject of gossips to come true.

Similarly, in Spark’s short story “The Portobello Road” in her *The Complete Stories* (2001) there is a bitter and absurd interpretation of a horrible deed, more specifically a murder, being in fact taken as a potential chance for salvation. The storyline is narrated by a dead person called Needle, a nickname established on a childhood injury with a needle, which she found in a haystack and accidentally pricked her thumb with. This has been taken ever since by everyone else as a good omen bringing luck, nevertheless it also foreshadowed her unfortunate death. Needle retrospectively shares with the reader her life story, featuring her lifelong friends Kathleen, Skinny and George, the last one being the perpetrator of her demise. She was killed in a fit of rage, when she was (as a true Catholic) about to prevent bigamy by exposing George’s valid marriage with a black girl, making it impossible for him to marry their friend Kathleen. As she depicts her demise in her own words: “He stuffed hay into my mouth until it could hold no more, kneeling on my body to keep it still, holding both my wrists tight in his huge left hand.”⁴⁴ Therefore the thing that should keep odds in her favour throughout her whole life paradoxically turned out to be fatal for her. In order to make this situation even more bitter and absurd Spark mentions toward the end of her short story a consequent murder report appearing in the newspapers entitled “‘Needle’ is found: in haystack.”⁴⁵ However, true irony with respect to Catholic faith lies a commentary of Needle’s friend Kathleen, which makes a shocking remark on this tragedy, saying: “She was at Confession only the day before she died – wasn’t she lucky?”⁴⁶

⁴³ Ibid., 49.

⁴⁴ Muriel Spark, “The Portobello Road” in *The Stories of Muriel Spark* (London: The Bodley Head, 1987), 17.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 17.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

IV. Muriel Spark on Nature of Evil

Muriel Spark is uncompromising regarding evildoers in her novels. Unlike Greene she is not trying to create artificial circumstances, under which doing harm might be excusable. Her evil characters usually resort to perpetration of Instrumental evil in order to accomplish their own higher goals. In her early novels Spark highlights the paradoxical necessity of evil as a fertile ground essential for the emergence of goodness.

Goodness Germinated out of Evil

In relation to her first religiously orientated novel *The Comforters*, there is a clear manifestation of a “holy devil” embodied into an evildoer Mrs Georgina Hogg, whose surname may remind the reader of the novelist James Hogg and his sinister literary character, the Calvinist elect Robert Wringhim. Caroline despises Georgina’s narrow-minded nature immensely, even though she is a fellow Catholic. What more, she also has a feeling that there is something corrupted about her. Mrs Hogg keeps on accusing Caroline from her immense immorality, as if she herself was the only pure Christian soul far and wide. It also seems that she herself suffers from auditory delusions like Caroline, even though it is not a typing ghost who haunts her, but the voice of Virgin Mary. She later on also considers herself to be not only the true voice of hers, but the performer of her will as well. Despite all these antipathies and the fact that Georgina almost succeeded in drowning Caroline in a lake at the end of the novel, she turns out to be an important figure in terms of Caroline’s spiritual progress. Since Caroline eventually leaves Lawrence and subordinates herself entirely to a proper Roman Catholic way of life.

Similarly with Spark’s novella *Girls of Slender Means* (1964), set into a post-war London in 1945, the reader is acquainted with a notion that “a vision of evil may be as effective to conversion as a vision of good.”⁴⁷ There is a boarding house for young ladies, specifically under the age of thirty, called The May of Teck Club, providing shelter for women in want of work in London. One of the main characters, Nicholas Farrington, shares bed with one of aforementioned

⁴⁷ Muriel Spark, *The Girls of Slender Means* (New York: New Directions Publishing, 1998), 140.

women, a sensual and sinful Selena. She is truly a slender girl with respect to body, spirit and also pocket. She is quite well known for warming more than one body since her calculating wicked heart is set on a potential wealthy marriage.

There was a horrible tragedy of a bomb explosion in the yard of the club, during which most of the innocent girl tenants died in flames, with Joanna reciting to them from the psalter of Anglican order. They were incapable to squeeze their way out through a small window. Paradoxically, it is right the sinful Selena with her slender body, who succeeds in escaping on time. After this terrible event Nicholas himself decides for conversion and consequent life as a missionary. The true reason for his decision remains unknown, but Jane, one of the survivals, deduces from a line in Nicholas' manuscript mentioning evil as an effective mean for conversion to goodness, that it was due to his immense disappointment in Selena.

In *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961), one of the student girls of the eponymous teacher, specifically Sandy Strange, indulges herself to adultery with Teddy Lloyd, who is not only one of her mentors as well, but more importantly a married Roman Catholic with six children. While sharing his bed during the summer, she becomes accidentally interested in Catholicism. With time as she eventually frees herself from Lloyd, she is determined to fulfil her new vocation, which aroused paradoxically from sin. Sandy becomes a Catholic convert embracing a new name of Sister Helena, shortly afterwards her abandonment of the adulterer.

A different occasion when goodness eventually emerges out of evil is portrayed in Spark's work *The Bachelors* (1960). There is an apparent clash of human desires and the divine providence. Alice Dawes prays for an acquittal of her boyfriend she is immensely and blindly in love with – Patrick Seton. He is a medium against whom charges from fraudulent conversion are brought. The irony lies in Alice's nescience of her lover's intentions to murder her and her unborn child once he is freed. In her naive illusions of Patrick being her true love she proclaims: "I pray for Patrick, and that's the test. If Patrick doesn't get

off, I don't believe in God."⁴⁸ From Alice's perspective therefore an unspeakable harm was done by the eventual conviction of Patrick, not knowing about the goodness emerging out of it in the image of her and baby's lives being saved.

Evil with Foundations in Superstitions and Legends

Spark has a tendency to often underpin storylines of her novels by supernatural elements, usually of a sinister influence. Concentrating on *Memento Mori* (1959), there is a mysterious voice from anonymous phone calls, announcing deaths of all the main characters with a line: "Remember you must die."⁴⁹ It is later on that the police inspector himself comes to a conclusion the unknown offender must be the Death itself. With her second novel in sequence *The Bachelors*, the reader is acquainted with a character of a psychic performing spiritual séances; and with Spark's *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* (1960) even the manifestation of the Devil himself comes to the scene.

With the last-mentioned novel, there is a strong resemblance with a ballad right from the very commencement, which may indicate its Scottish mythology undertone as foundations for the manifestation of evil. The reader is acquainted with several versions of a Peckham Rye legend, featuring a man, Humphrey Place, who disgraced his fiancé Dixie by leaving her at the altar. After this unfortunate event local people started to utter a peculiar line "It wouldn't have happened if Dougal Douglas hadn't come."⁵⁰ Therefore every single misfortune that happened ever since was referred to as a misdeed of the strange newcomer and friend of Humphrey's Dougal Douglas.

As Bryan Cheyette indicates, there are certain hints in *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*, referring to the aforementioned protagonist as to a diabolical figure based on Border ballads tradition. His reddish hair, inter alia being the hair colour of Muriel Spark herself, "the two horns"⁵¹ he allegedly had removed

⁴⁸ Muriel Spark, *The Bachelors* (New York: New Directions Publishing, 1999), 158.

⁴⁹ Muriel Spark, *Memento Mori* (New York: New Directions Publishing, 2000), 10.

⁵⁰ Spark Muriel, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), 9.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 77.

in a surgical procedure, his “deformed shoulder”⁵² or his peculiar research concerned with human inner lives are indirectly pointing at his supernatural origin. Throughout the novel the reader is acquainted with even more equivocal indicators such as his unnaturally reversed name or the constant changes of shape, since one time he appeared to his employer as a professor and then he “leaned forward and became a television interviewer.”⁵³

In addition, with his utterance “I don’t like crossing the water”⁵⁴, he also meets a superstition from Scottish highlands alleging that evil spirits including witches, warlocks or even the devil himself cannot cross running water. This phenomenon may be noticeable in many border ballads, as for instance in Robert Burns’s version of “Tam O’ Shanter” when the eponymous protagonist is fleeing from supernatural beings to search refuge on the other bank of River Doon:

Now, do thy speedy-utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stone o’ the brig;
There, at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross.⁵⁵

Despite all these signs, Dougal himself once utters in a friendly conversation with Humphrey an interesting line referring to his nature, which seems contradictory toward all the evidence:

‘You supposed to be the Devil, then?’
‘ No, oh, no. I’m supposed to be one of the wicked spirits that wander
through the world for the ruin of souls. ’⁵⁶

With these lines he comments on how the local people see him, what he is supposed to be like according to the others, but not who he truly is. Moreover, there is a certain passage in the novel mentioning Dougal wandering on a cemetery and posing “like an angel on a grave which had only an insignificant

⁵² Ibid., 17.

⁵³ Ibid., 16.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 76.

⁵⁵ Robert Burns, ‘Tam O’ Shanter’ in *Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1279/1279-h/1279-h.htm> (accessed March 2, 2014), HTML.

⁵⁶ Muriel Spark, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), 77.

headstone.”⁵⁷ Ruth Whittaker expands this concept even further with her classification of Dougal Douglas under the notion of “an ambiguous creature, half–angel, half–devil, whose function is to act as a catalyst on the inhabitants of Peckham Rye. Dougal is amoral, but like the telephone–call in *Memento Mori* he acts as a stimulant.”⁵⁸ Therefore, he does not stand for the manifestation of evil as such, nevertheless, his presence in the novel incites superstitious natures of the local people to eventually recognize evil cause in every single ill–fated event.

Biblical Evil

As a Catholic writer Muriel Spark occasionally integrates biblical subtexts into her oeuvre, including even the concept of evil, which is also frequently clothed into a biblical disguise. With her first novel *The Comforters*, she concentrates on a reference to the Book of Job. It is the title of the novel itself, which serves as an indicator. It creates an allusion to Job’s useless friends, who tried to comfort him in desperate times when his patience was being tested by God. Each of them thought they were right with respect to their advices, as well as all of Caroline’s comforters are convinced that only they know what is happening around her. Her lover Lawrence is persuaded there is a smuggling plot led by an old woman, the Baron sees the devil around every corner due to delusional signs of his vivid imagination and Mrs Georgina Hogg is certain of being spoken to by Virgin Mary. Similarly, this piece of scripture may be as well noticeable in Spark’s short story *The Black Madonna*, in which the climax is represented by an ultimate choice, whether to rise from a racist society and raise a black child or not, resembling a test of belief as with Job.

Concentrating on *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, the reader may come across an allusion of a biblical scene featuring the Gadarene swine. One of the leading characters, Sandy Stranger, is described as having “little pig–like eyes”⁵⁹ and later on in the novel she also indulges herself to a porcine activity of sharing

⁵⁷ Ibid., 30.

⁵⁸ Ruth Whittaker, *The Faith and Fiction of Muriel Spark* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 59.

⁵⁹ Muriel Spark, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 13.

bed with a married Roman Catholic. Due to these deeds she appears to have a character close to a blasphemous devilish animal – swine, associated with evil since Christ's eradication of demons from a man into Gadarene swines. Moreover, as Michael Gardiner states, Sandy also carries a "sinister outsider signifying surname – Stranger – and her sibilant, serpentine moniker generally as somewhat demonic."⁶⁰

Notwithstanding, what is quite typical for Scottish literature is a frequent occurrence of doubleness, creating in this particular case a fertile ground for potential involvement of another demonic double, specifically Miss Jean Brodie herself. In the beginning of chapter three there is a remark saying that "there were legions of her kind,"⁶¹ again a potential reference to a scene from the scripture depicting Christ during the act of aforementioned eradication. Jesus is asking the demon possessing the man's body: "What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many."⁶² This actuality thus implies a possible presence of two demonic doubles with a high probability of a sequence. Sandy has adopted a lot of her mentor's habits during the time of being under her supervision, and while doing so, she even may have become infected with Miss Jean Brodie's inner corruption.

It is also due to Miss Jean Brodie and her tendency to often devote her lessons to narration of her life story, that the reader becomes once more aware of the concept of doubleness in the novel, this time featuring herself and her alleged antecedent William Brodie. Known also under his title of Deacon Brodie, he used to be a respectable man, Edinburgh city counsellor, but similarly to Stevenson's Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, this was just part of his real life. During nights he indulged himself to a secret career of a burglar. Although true reasons for his living of two completely different lives still remain unknown, Deacon Brodie with his personality split plays an important role of another Miss Jean's demonic twin.

⁶⁰ Michael Gardiner and Willy Maley, *The Edinburgh companion to Muriel Spark* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 78.

⁶¹ Muriel Spark, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 42.

⁶² *The Bible, Old and New Testaments*, King James Version The Gospel According to Saint Mark 5:9. <https://archive.org/stream/thebibleoldandne00010gut/kjv10.txt> (accessed March 3, 2014).

Calvinist Teleology / Fanaticism

Adhering to Church scrutiny as one of the themes of Muriel Spark's oeuvre, she often puts a strong emphasis on a critique of Calvinist teleology, specifically of belief in predestination. As Brian Cheyette points out Spark herself feels a strong distinction between destiny and destination. Since being predestined to something makes it impossible to have an open future and therefore it diminishes if not entirely destroys potential destinations. Such a notion is not a promising perspective for herself as well as for her protagonists. Her contempt and mock at Calvinist fanaticism as well as its portrayal as a potential source of evil manifestation is clearly noticeable in her novels *The Bachelors* and *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*.

With the latter novel, the reader is once more acquainted with the formerly mentioned female teacher Miss Jean Brodie, which like many other women of the interwar years remained a bereaved spinster, since her lover along with other men was conscripted due to the war conflict. Since then she is unable to face the true reality of life and she adheres to the only consolation she recognizes — constant remarks of her previous life and her delusions of grandeur and self-importance. She is also very manipulative, as if trying to live the life of her dreams through her “Brodie set”⁶³ also referred to as “crème de la crème”⁶⁴, in fact a group of her favourite girl students, which stands for her own self-realization and uniqueness.

However, this selection of the utmost perfect and talented students and their consequent preparation for being the future elite of society may as well convey the message of predestination and selection of so called elect ones, clear signs of extreme Calvinist teleology. Miss Jean Brodie herself behaves in a god-like manner, as she considers only her opinion to be the right one, for instance she refers in an art lecture to Giotto as the greatest Italian painter of all times instead of Leonardo da Vinci, simply because the latter is not her favourite one. Moreover, she also shows certain intention to remodel her students into her own

⁶³ Muriel, Spark. *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 6.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

image, promising: "If only you small girls would listen to me I would make of you the crème de la crème."⁶⁵

Similarly she never hesitates to address them with words "You are all heroines in the making. Britain must be a fit country for heroines to live in. The League of Nations. . ."⁶⁶ This utterance with indirect indicators of Calvinist doctrine concerned with the elect ones may also be perceived as a potential source for the emergence of fascist ideology in the novel, since the girls set functions as a "body with Miss Brodie as a head."⁶⁷ In addition, the art mentor Teddy Lloyd, which later on also turns out to be Sandy's lover and the target of Miss Brodie's secret sexual desire, keeps on painting various portraits of the girls, which are always marked with a striking facial resemblance to Miss Brodie, yet another indirect indicator of the evident cult of personality.

Even more apparent reference to Miss Jean Brodie as to an extreme follower of Calvinist doctrine is given through the mouth of her most favoured student Sandy, which is perceived from Brodie's perspective as her own potential mirror image: "She thinks she is Providence,—thought Sandy—, she thinks she is God of Calvin, she sees the beginning and the end."⁶⁸ Bryan Cheyette expands this perception of Jean Brodie as a spiritual leader even further by contextualizing her personality into the frame of Christianity and stating that: "Brodie is a bogus Christ-figure and Brodie set a caricature of the 'chosen' or the Christian apostles."⁶⁹

It is right the clash of Christian and Calvinist doctrines, which eventually causes Sandy's alienation from Brodie's principles and leads to the consequent betrayal of her beloved and admired teacher. As Benilde Montgomery states,

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 30.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 120.

⁶⁹ Bryan, Cheyette. *Muriel Spark*. (Tavistock, Devon, U.K: Northcote House, in association with the British Council, 2000), 56.

Sandy finally realizes that Miss Brodie not only “persists in insensitivity to sin, she also confuses respectability with morality.”⁷⁰ Disgusted with the twisted way her mentor lectured them and becoming aware of guilt being real and God being the only and ultimate authority, Sandy decides for her eventual conversion to Catholicism.

⁷⁰ Montgomery, Benilde. "Spark and Newman: Jean Brodie reconsidered." *Twentieth Century Literature* 43, no. 1 (Spring97 1997): 94-106. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed March 25, 2014), 103.

Conclusion

The selected novels and a few short stories, which were incorporated into this thesis are supposed to function as representative examples demonstrating different manifestations of evil occurring throughout Muriel Spark's early literary career. The primary aim of the thesis was to provide sufficient amount of aspects considering both origin and role of evil within a literary framework, specifically with Muriel Spark's novels of the period 1950s and 1960s.

Spark with her passion for medieval poetry, specifically ballads, and folklore presents in her *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* an evil with foundations in superstitions and supernatural images. Not indicating whether its mission is solely of good or harmful nature, Spark leaves marks of ambiguity to put the protagonist, evil-like deformed creature, into the position of an inciter, not direct evil doer.

Influenced by her life changing decision of conversion to Catholicism Muriel Spark incorporates into her works also a mark of biblical evil, based primarily on malefice described in Scripture with its ultimate destructive nature. With this concept the reader may become acquainted particularly in her novel *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. Still within the frame of her belief, Spark concentrates on evil caused by hypocrisy concealed behind the cover of religion as for instance in her short stories "The Black Madonna" and "The Portobello Road", as well as on evil rooted in extreme and blind dedication to a particular religious doctrine. As Dame Spark indicates, it can be both Christian or Calvinist fanaticism functioning as pillars for one's conviction of being superior or even the only true performer of God's will. With Calvinism this issue is particularly related to predestination (functioning also as a possible basis for the inception of fascism) as illustrated in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. With Christianity, the trigger is represented by imaginary voices, potential instruments of divine Providence exhorting to an action as in *The Comforters*.

Muriel Spark realizes, specifically in her novels *The Comforters*, *The Bachelors* and *Girls of Slender Means*, that there is also a certain necessity of evil as a fertile ground for eventual emergence of goodness, a concept very close to Irenaean Theodicy. In Spark's early oeuvre this conception of evil presence

on earth usually refers to the fact that the Providence is beyond human understanding and even if not realizing it, there is always a bright side of things. With Nicholas Farrington, a figure from *Girls with Slender Means* it is the experience of an evil feat that eventually changes his view of the world and leads him to his true vocation of a missionary, whereas with *The Bachelors*, the true goodness emerging out of the conviction of Patrick Seton remains a mystery to his pious girlfriend. Only the reader is privy to the planned murder of hers, which would certainly be carried out after his potential acquittal.

Toward the end of the 1960s and the dawn of 1970s Muriel Spark's focus on religion and the question of evil and morality slowly fades away. As Ian Rankin states, she does not "believe in good and evil so much any more. Now there is only one area of conflict left and that is between absurdity and intelligence."⁷¹ This is when the experimental epoch of her oeuvre begins, dealing with identity crises and rather more international issues. In words of Bryan Chyette, in this phase "Spark alludes either explicitly or implicitly to the Cold War, the Watergate scandal (1972-4), the Middle Eastern oil crisis (1973-4), the rise of political kidnapping and international terrorism."⁷² Her early writing period concerned with the clash of secular and spiritual in a life of an individual or examination of the imaginary line separating goodness from evil, inevitably came to its end.

⁷¹ Ian, Rankin. (1993) 'The Deliberate Cunning of Muriel Spark' in Wallace, G., and Stevenson, R. (eds) *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

⁷² Bryan, Chyette. *Muriel Spark*. (Tavistock, Devon, U.K: Northcote House, in association with the British Council, 2000), 84.

Resumé

Předmětem této bakalářské práce bylo na základě shromážděných informací vyhodnotit způsob ztvárnění a funkci předmětu zla v dílech skotské spisovatelky Muriel Sparkové, a to v období padesátých a šedesátých let dvacátého století. Výše uvedené romány a povídky, které byly vybrány a začleněny do této práce, slouží zejména pro ilustraci zmiňovaných pojetí konceptu zla.

Muriel Sparková, jakožto katolická spisovatelka začlenila do své tvorby mimo jiné vyobrazení zla v podobě, v jaké se nachází v Bibli a to se stejnou destruktivní povahou i absolutním zatracením. S tímto pojetím se může čtenář setkat kupříkladu v díle *Nejlepší léta slečny Jean Brodieové*. Sparková však věnovala svou pozornost i zlu zapříčiněnému přetvářkou skrývající se za oponou víry, na niž odkazuje v této práci povídka *Černá madona*. Jistý důraz v její tvorbě je také kladen na potřebu zla jakožto úrodné půdy pro vznik dobra, poukazující na fakt, že i ve zlých skutečích či událostech lze nalézt vyšší záměr božské prozřetelnosti, ne vždy zcela patrný lidskému chápání. S tímto pojetím se lze setkat zejména v dílech *Utěšitelé*, *Staří mládenci* či *Nezámožná děvčata*.

Muriel Sparková se v rámci své víry nezdráhá dotknout ani citlivých témat, jako je náboženský fanatismus a jeho možná participace ve vzniku extremistických ideologií. V jejích dílech je tato problematika vykreslena zejména na pozadí kalvinistického pojetí predestinace či klamných představ křesťanů, kdy špatný psychický či fyzický stav může stát za vznikem sluchových či jiných halucinací a jedinec, který jimi trpí, se poté považuje za pravého mesiáše, k němuž promlouvá duch svatý a nabádá ho vykonat boží vůli na zemi.

V románu *Balada z předměstí* dochází k začlenění nových klíčových prvků pro ztvárnění zla, a to jsou rysy balady, přesněji skotská mytologie a pověry, které utvářejí celkový obraz zla v tomto díle. Muriel Sparková se nechala do značné míry inspirovat středověkou skotskou poezií stejně tak jako folklorem a pověřivostí, proto je zcela přirozené nalézt i v její tvorbě prvky nadpřirozena jakožto základu pro zhmotnění zla. S nadpřirozenou stránku její

tvorby je také úzce spjat pojem d'ábelských dvojníků či hybridních identit, neboť ve Skotské literatuře hrají velice často důležitou roli prvky duality a duplicity.

Ke konci šedesátých let dvacátého století a počátkem let sedmdesátých nastává období, kdy Muriel Sparková jakožto katolická autorka ztrácí své zaujetí pro náboženskou tematiku a opouští náměty zabývající se střetem duchovní a světské roviny života jedince. V této době započíná její experimentální tvorba, zaměřena zejména na krize osobnosti a přímo či nepřímo odkazující na závažná mezinárodní dění jakými jsou Studená válka, aféra Watergate, ropná krize roku 1973 či mezinárodní terorismus. Její předchozí období zabývající se náboženstvím, otázkou morálky a tenké linie mezi dobrem a zlem se pomalu ale jistě chýlí ke konci.

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Anotace

Příjmení a jméno: Honsová Tereza

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Název práce: Předmět zla v románech Muriel Sparkové v období padesátých a šedesátých let dvacátého století

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Ema Jelínková, PhD.

Počet stran: 45

Klíčová slova: Muriel Sparková, Skotská literatura, koncept zla, katolictví, kalvinismus

Abstrakt: Bakalářská práce se zabývá ranou tvorbou Muriel Sparkové, konkrétněji obdobím padesátých a šedesátých let dvacátého století, kdy autorka ve svých dílech věnovala značnou pozornost otázce morálky, pojetí dobra a zla a také náboženství, jakožto silnému faktoru pro vznik těchto fenoménů. Mezi analyzovaná díla patří *Utěšitelé*, *Staří mládenci*, *Balada z předměstí*, *Nezámožná děvčata* a *Nejlepší léta slečny Jean Brodiové*. V této práci je kladen důraz především na vznik a funkci předmětu zla ve výše uvedených románech Muriel Sparkové, stejně tak jako na případné vnější vlivy, které přímo či nepřímo ovlivňují jeho chápání.

Annotation

Author: Honsová Tereza

Department: Department of English and American Studies

Title of the thesis: The Concept of Evil in Muriel Spark's Novels of the 1950s
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Supervisor: Mgr. Ema Jelínková, PhD.

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Abstract: This bachelor thesis is concerned with the early oeuvre of Dame Muriel Spark, specifically with the period of 1950s and 1960s, in which the author aims her attention primarily to the question of morality, concept of good and evil, and also religion as a strong factor with respect to the inception of these phenomena. Analyzed novels are *The Comforters*, *The Bachelors*, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*, *Girls of Slender Means* and *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. This thesis puts a strong emphasis in particular on the origin and function of evil in the aforementioned novels, as well as on potential external factors playing directly or indirectly an important role in its perception.