Introduction

‘A Clean Contrair Spirit’: What Makes Contradictions Distinctively Scottish

> If therefore Scottish history and life are, as an old northern writer said of something else, ‘varied with a clean contrair spirit’, we need not be surprised to find that in his literature the Scot presents two aspects which appear contradictory. Oxymoron was ever the bravest figure, and we must not forget that disorderly order is order after all.[1]
>
> — George Gregory Smith —

Literature dealing with contradictions and conflicting opposites is certainly not an exclusively Scottish domain, yet there has been a complex interplay of multiple factors peculiar specifically to the sociocultural development of the Scottish nation, all of which conspired to promote contradiction to an especially and characteristically Scottish preoccupation.

First there is the fact of the Scots being a stateless nation settled in the less favourable northern regions of the British Isles and continuously subjected to ‘inferiorisation’ following from the historically established prominence and prosperity of the southern part of Great Britain.[2] The contemporary standing of Scotland has been variously related to a postcolonial condition[3], which on one hand may seem strained and excessive, on the other hand this shows to be the actual mode of thinking of some of the insiders. ‘Colonising’ is the very word used to describe the tense relationship between the English and the Scottish for instance in the now-classic outpour of Irvine Welsh’s junkie character in *Trainspotting* (1993):

1 George Gregory Smith, *Scottish Literature, Character and Influence* (London: Macmillan, 1919) 4–5.

2 Carla Sassi, *Why Scottish Literature Matters* (Edinburgh: The Saltire Society, 2005) 35.

3 See Stefanie Lehner, ‘Towards a Subaltern Aesthetics’, *eSharp* 5 (Summer 2005), 31 July 2010 <http://www.gla.ac.uk/departments/esharp/issues/5/>.

> It's nae good blamin it oan the English fir colonising us. Ah don't hate the English. They're just wankers. We are colonised by wankers. We can't even pick a decent, vibrant, healthy culture to be colonised by. […] Ah don't hate the English. They just git oan wi the shite thuv goat. Ah hate the Scots.[4]

The quotation brilliantly illustrates the twisted workings of 'an internalised parochial status',[5] as a result of which the subject of inferiorisation transfers the hatred originally targeted at the oppressor to oneself, where the accumulated emotion may find a more ready release. An excessive sense of inferiority obviously collides with the natural inclination of the human being to love oneself the best, thus personal integrity is at stake by a constant oscillation between the extreme poles of self-hatred and self-love. A nice illustration of the other opposite provides the opening of Hugh MacDiarmid's poem 'The Difference' (1971):

> I am a Scotsman and proud of it.
> Never call me British. I'll tell you why.
> It's too near brutish, having only
> The difference between U and I.[6]

The slight hysteria creeping in between the lines is effectively relaxed by the sardonic wit, which actually seems to be the favourite mode employed by many Scottish authors in order to relieve a serious theme. A fine choice of Scotland-bred mordant humour will presented later in this thesis, relating to the discrepancy between subject matter and its treatment.

Leaving aside the ambivalent attitude to England as the 'auld enemy'[7], there are still enough divisions springing from within Scotland herself. There is the polarity between the Highlands and the Lowlands, initially conditioned by the simple fact of geography but increasingly amplified by the different paths that the two regions took in terms of social development. The Highlands remain very

4 Irvine Welsh, *Trainspotting* (1993; London: Vintage, 1999) 78.

5 Lehner, op. cit., 6.

6 Hugh MacDiarmid, 'The Difference' (1971), quoted in Marshall Walker, *Scottish Literature Since 1707* (London: Longman, 1996) 23.

7 Walker, op. cit., 16.

much the picturesque countryside immortalized in Walter Scott's tales, whereas the Lowlands underwent a transformation from rural to industrial economy and experienced a considerable urban growth. The contrast between country and city counts indeed as a universal occurrence, it is however the accentuated difference in culture and even in language of the the Highlanders and the Lowlanders that makes this duality Scotland-specific. The Highlands region engendered and preserved the traditional folk culture whose predominantly romantic sensibilities prove incompatible with the present-day Lowlands environment.

This condition projects into literature in what MacDiarmid phrases as the 'polar twins of the Scottish Muse', referring to the competing impulses towards the fantastic versus the realistic between which the Scottish creative genius is split.[8] If two poles suffice to describe the dilemma concerning the choice of method, there are at least three options with respect to the language. Heirs to a 'polymathic linguistic tradition'[9] which allowed for the coexistence and confluence of Scots, Gaelic and English as the three major streams, Scottish writers may still today feel awkward and self-conscious about the language in which they address their audience. Choosing a native minority language means reaching a lesser reading public, yet choosing English implies surrendering one's distinct identity. Another aspect arises from the inevitable interaction between the languages resulting in the spontaneous emergence of hybrid forms. As Iain Crichton Smith puts it: 'I write in English which is probably, in some ways, unknown to me, a Highland English'.[10]

There is one more major factor which has been shaping Scottish thought for four and a half centuries — the teachings of John Calvin, introduced into Scotland by John Knox. Calvin's theological doctrines emphasize especially the belief in the total depravity of man and the idea of predestination with God arbitrarily picking a set of elect for salvation, regardless of their merit. Sticking to these points of faith and acting upon them brings about a series of confusing questions for the believer. The main danger lies in the controversial divorce of religion and morality: presuming that man is innately hopelessly depraved, why

8 Hugh MacDiarmid, quoted in Sassi, op. cit., 148.

9 R.D.S. Jack, quoted in Sassi, op. cit., 34.

10 Iain Crichton Smith, 'The Double Man' (1989), quoted in Sassi, op. cit., 151.

should he attempt to be otherwise and seek to get along with himself and the society? Or providing that an individual comes to be convinced of his being unconditionally chosen by the virtue of God's grace, what is the extent of the liberties that he can take? The latter question in particular has received ample attention in literature, most notably in James Hogg's seminal novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824)[11], which continues to inspire numerous responses and imitations, as will be seen later in this thesis.

11 James Hogg, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner: Written by Himself: With a Detail of Curious Traditionary Facts, and Other Evidence, by the Editor* (1824; London: Cressnet Press, 1947) henceforth *Justified Sinner.*

‘Whaur Extremes Meet’:
How Duality Projects Into Literature

I’ll ha’e nae hauf-way hoose, but aye be whaur
Extremes meet — it’s the only way I ken
To dodge the curst conceit o’ bein richt
That damns the vast majority o’ men.[12]

— Hugh MacDiarmid—

Good, Evil and Beyond

The most common thematic implication related to the idea of duality involves the eternal conflict between the good and the evil, famously explored in Robert Louis Stevenson’s novella *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886)[13], one of the few works of Scottish literature to have attained a classic status. The achievement of the novella lies the original treatment of the otherwise rather conventional subject matter, that is the struggle for dominance between contradictory impulses in the human mind. Stevenson dramatises the conflict by dividing the tormented character, Dr Jekyll, quite literally and bringing on the scene pure evil endowed with physical substance, Mr Hyde.

The general antithesis of the good and the evil covers a series of closely related specific dichotomies, including that of the sinner and the saint, of guilt and innocence or of an angel and the devil. *Justified Sinner* examines all these concepts in religious terms, focusing on a self-righteous sinner who holds himself for a saint, who is guilty of fratricide but claims innocence and who is accompanied by a mysterious entity first giving an air of a guardian angel only to turn out the very opposite. Muriel Spark offers a secularized rendering of these issues in *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* (1960), a satirical novel following the exploits of Dougal Douglas, aka Douglas Dougal, who storms the stale small town of Peckham Rye, turns the lives of its inhabitants upside down and walks away contentedly. Early in the novel he mockingly poses on a grave ‘like an

12 Hugh MacDiarmid, *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* (1926), quoted in Walker, op. cit., 15.

13 Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886; London: Campbell, 1992), henceforth *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

angel-devil'[14], which foreshadows the reputation that he is to earn and the radically opposing opinions that his person will inspire.

The Creator and His Creation

Continuing in the tradition of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), Stevenson builds the story of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* on a misshapen scientific experiment which gives life to a monster and on the subsequent failure of responsibility which binds the creator to his creation. Bearing in mind the notion of God as the ultimate creator and considering the historically influential position of the Kirk in the Scottish society, it seems natural that contemporary writing frequently translates the creator–creation relationship into domestic terms as a father–son relation.[15] For instance Iain Banks's startlingly original first novel, *The Wasp Factory* (1984), interconnects the scientific, religious and familial aspects in presenting as the protagonist a young girl manipulated by doses of male hormones and by her father's demagoguery into believing that she was a boy and coping with her complicated life by practising a primitive ritual religion of her own making.

In terms of literature, it is the author who becomes the God-like creator, although he or she may exploit this superior status with a Satan-like malevolence. Abuse of authorial power and removal of free will are common complaints of fictional characters whose authors grant them self-awareness enough to make them suspect that they are fictional. Towards the conclusion of Alasdair Gray's monumental epic novel *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* (1981) the eponymous protagonist encounters his author, has his plead for a happy ending resolutely denied and learns instead that 'The Conjuror Plans to Kill Everyone'.[16] What Gray interweaves as a relatively minor motif into the complex tapestry of his narrative, Spark raises to a major theme in several of her novels, all of them variously preoccupied with 'Puppets of Thwarted Authority'.[17] In Spark's first novel, *The*

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14 Muriel Spark, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* (1960; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963) 30.

15 See Alan MacGillivray, *Iain Banks'* The Wasp Factory, The Crow Road *and* Whit (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2001) 27–8.

16 Alasdair Gray, *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* (1981; London: Paladin, 1987) 496.

17 Ian Gregson, *Character and Satire in Postwar Fiction* (London: Continuum, 2006), 99.

Comforters (1957), Caroline finds that her future actions have been already predetermined in the past by 'some unknown, possibly sinister being'[18], whom she at one point fears to be Satan[19], and deliberately seeks to spoil the neat scenario prepared for her to act out. Spark's later novel, *Loitering with Intent* (1981), uses the same basic premise but further complicates the perspective by introducing as the protagonist a young novelist who watches as the characters and incidents previously described in her book subsequently materialize in her life.

Spark's occupation with metafiction relates to the generally perceived duality between fact and fiction, reality and fantasy, and the specifically aesthetic concern with the relationship between art and life. The distinction between fact and fabrication is the main interest of the mystery and crime novel, and Spark indeed incorporates these genre elements into much of her writing. For instance her penultimate novel, *Aiding and Abetting* (2000), both willingly embraces and ironically dismisses the conventions of the detective story in introducing two characters who could have been twins and who uniformly state their identity as that of the culprit wanted. The dispute concerning the degree of interdependency between life and art occurs as one of the issues in *The Comforters*, whose haunted protagonist apparently does not think much of her creator, for she judges the plot of her life as 'phoney', 'cheap' and 'slick' and the characters of the story 'implausible'.[20] Whereas Spark's Caroline requires that art be a faithful imitation of the probable course of an ordinary human life, Gray's Duncan Thaw, the alter ego of Lanark, advocates a non-mimetic view of art as a medium to capture the artist's highly subjective vision of the world revealed in moments of inspiration. Deciding between realism and fantasy applies besides characters to their very authors, and it is again Gray's *Lanark* that provides the most elegant solution of the dilemma in effectively mediating and drawing links between the strictly realistic world of Duncan Thaw and the surreal surroundings of Lanark's story.

Duality and Duplicity in Character

The level of character representation offers almost as many possibilities

18 Muriel Spark, *The Comforters* (1957; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963) 105.

19 See ibid 124.

20 Ibid 103–4.

of developing duality as the choice of the theme, considering that characters usually serve as specific enactments of particular general themes. The starting point for duality in character relies on the existence of conflicting tendencies manifested in human beings, which may not necessarily involve the polarity between the good and the evil but may be based on such other universal dichotomies as the Cartesian split between the body and the mind or the seemingly clear distinction between the male and the female. An occasional inclination to indulge in quite harmless pleasures of the body appears to be the only flaw of the respectable Dr Jekyll, whose mechanical attempt to achieve moral perfection leads to abstracting a terrifying perfect evil rather than the desirable perfect virtue. The categories of male and female become blurred especially in Emma Tennant's *The Bad Sister* (1978), a novel which teems with mirror characters and alternative identities and whose protagonist keeps on shifting uneasily between male and female until finally settling on a 'completely hermaphroditic' form in the grave.[21] Tennant's novel also nicely illustrates the ambiguity typical of fiction concerned with duality in characters: it is frequently impossible to state whether the double haunting a character actually exists in the the fictional reality of the story or whether it shows merely in the character's tortured imagination.

As the title suggests, *The Bad Sister* revolves around a markedly hostile relationship of sisters, one a legitimate child and the other illegitimate, which seems to be one of the characteristic configurations in Scottish literature:

> [T]he Scottish experience of cultural dislocation finds expression in narrative terms in plots of biological uncertainty or familial displacement. Such conditions are the breeding ground of those schizophrenics, amnesiacs, and hypocrites who have so often been taken to represent the essence of Scottish culture.[22]

The position of Scotland within Britain could be figuratively compared to that of a rejected and unloved child, and these feelings are manifested in Scottish

21 Emma Tennant, *The Bad Sister* (1978; London: Faber and Faber, 1989) 220.

22 Cairns Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination* (Edinburgh: University Press, 2002) 111.

writing not only in plots dealing with illegitimacy but by extension also in tales of inadequate relationships within the family unit. The common constellation involves a dominant parent and an oppressed child, usually a tyrannous father and a fearful son, reflecting once again the 'Calvinist doctrine of an authoritarian God laying down an uncompromising set of laws to His children', which 'became the model for family life'.[23] A fine example of such mutually frustrating relationship provides James Robertson's curious novel, *The Testament of Gideon Mack* (2006), whose protagonist grows up in unquestioning obedience to his father, a rigid clergyman exercising absolute power over both his young son and intimidated wife. The motifs of illegitimacy and God-like authority of the father meet interestingly in 'Sheer Big Waste of Love', one of the interwoven short stories in Kate Atkinson's collection *Not the End of the World* (2002). Here the father figure is enlarged into frightening proportions as seen from the perspective of a small boy dragged by his impoverished mother to the imposing home of his prosperous father, presently married with children. The quest to win acknowledgement of paternity for Addison the junior ends up with Addison the senior dealing his unwanted son 'a blow like a thunderbolt'[24], an image strongly resembling the unleashing of God's wrath, especially when considering that at this occasion the father is the sole arbiter of the child's future fate.

A particular manifestation of duality in character occurs in stories focused on protagonists leading double lives, be it the case of double-dealers who practice deceit deliberately and with pleasure or the case of victims of circumstances whose duplicity is unsought for and unenjoyed. Muriel Spark created some brilliant instances of the former, many of her major and minor characters being in secret sly weavers of plots hiding behind a façade of respectability. Besides the exasperating diabolic protagonist of *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*, her perhaps most memorable and most savagely funny double-dealer is Louisa Jepp, the grandmother-gangster of *The Comforters*, a vivacious seventy-eight-year old who presides a small but well-organized band of diamond smugglers. Spark's hypocrites tend to be perfectly content with themselves, which cannot be said for

23 MacGillivray, op. cit., 28.

24 Kate Atkinson, 'Sheer Big Waste of Love', *Not the End of the World* (2002; London: Black Swan, 2003) 145.

the unfortunate protagonist of Robertson's *The Testament of Gideon Mack*, who becomes a hypocrite out of necessity rather than a natural bent for duplicity. Despite his agnostic convictions, Gideon Mack decides for priesthood as his vocation, his chief motive being apparently that of social security, however modest, enjoyed by an ordained priest of the Church of Scotland.

Character Metamorphosis

The exploration of character duality in fiction is often formally reinforced by employing the motif of physical transformation in the character subjected to a divided mind. Accepting the view of man as hierarchically the highest order of being, it follows that a metamorphosis of the human creature into something else will likely be a degenerative process.[25] This is best seen in cases of transformation involving a literal change of a human being into a beast, associated with the thematic implications of the Fall.[26] Themes of moral decline and failure of humanity inform much of Gray's *Lanark*, which uses the idea of people turning into dragons, connoting coldness, torpor and lack of feeling, as a powerful metaphor for emotional sterility and the destructive separation of human beings from one another. Lanark himself suffers from this condition, a disease called dragonhide, which epitomizes his desperate desire to establish contact with fellow human beings and at the same time his constant shrinking from commitment for fear of being hurt:

> Dragonhide is an attempt at impermeability that leads to the eventual self-immolation of bodies that become all dragon. […] The afflicted body wants no connections with either the external world or with other bodies and so becomes completely encrusted until the built-up heat within causes the body to explode.[27]

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25 See Michal Peprník, *Metamorfóza jako kulturní metafora: James Hogg, R. L. Stevenson a George MacDonald* (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2003) 12.

26 Ibid.

27 Cristie March, 'Bella and the Beast (and a Few Dragons Too): Alasdair Gray and the Social Resistance of the Grotesque', *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 43:4 (2002): 323–46. *ProQuest Central*. Knihovna Univerzity Palackého, Olomouc, CZ. 30 July 2010 <http://www.proquest.com/pqdauto/>.

The moment the shielding from the surrounding world is complete, the sufferer both ceases to be human and ceases to exist. Naïve though it may sound, the cure proves to be simple compassion and affection, combined with patience: Lanark succeeds in healing a hopeless dragonhide patient by refusing to leave the ward when the dragon is about to explode, and through his unselfishness and willingness to give up his life for another, he wins the beautiful Rima who emerges as the dragonskin falls apart.

Character metamorphosis serves however not only to illustrate a moral fall but also to suggest a psychological descent, a quest undertaken in order to acquire a deeper knowledge of the Self and the Other.[28] The idea of descent forms the core of the various transformations described in Tennant's *The Bad Sister*, a multifaceted work which also applies metamorphosis as a challenge to the conventional perception of the world, that is in poststructuralist terms as a subversion of the official discourse.[29] Tennant's protagonist, Jane Wild, suffers from a syndrome that her mentor Meg dubs 'two-women-in-one', referring to 'the suppression of masculinity in women and of femininity in men'.[30] Jane sets off for a journey, both literally and figuratively, with an aim to get rid of her bad sister, the one superfluous woman in her, physically represented by a blank-faced woman who follows her footsteps. At the same time Jane must explore and accept the Other, the male element, which she does by assuming a man's form during her night trips, equipped with a gun and wearing a pair of jeans normally too tight to fit her woman's body. By startling shifts of perspective, the novel manages to examine a wider history of oppression, in particular female, for instance when transforming Jane into Jeanne, an unvalued and unjustly punished maid-servant in a wealthy landowner's mansion. Jane and her alter egos cope with an inheritance of social injustice and persecution, with 'ghosts' who are her 'legitimate heirs'[31], and her actions effectively undermine our stereotypical ways of thinking about what we tend to take for granted, especially the category of male and female.

In *The Bad Sister* and elsewhere, metamorphosis takes on the function

28 See Peprník, op. cit., 12.

29 Ibid 11.

30 Tennant, op. cit., 40.

31 Ibid 109–10.

of identifying a particular aspect of the human mind which has been repressed usually for reasons of social unacceptability.[32] Jane Wild continues the series of strong women who did not fear to confront human existence in all of its aspects and who, as Meg observes, have always been ‘execrated as witches’.[33] Those women who conformed to the demands of the patriarchal society were ‘elevated to virtuous wives’[34], but suffered an irreplaceable loss of a vital part of themselves, which rendered them incomplete. Thus Jane’s transformation into a male figure will be interpreted as an identification of her suppressed masculine element. It would be perhaps more appropriate to describe this metamorphosis as isolating rather than identifying, so as to account for the point of the novel that each human being contains elements of both sexes, which are ideally merged. A similar case of isolating metamorphosis occurs in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, where the unfortunate Dr Jekyll attempts to isolate the good and the evil, to separate moral action from the decision-making process and enactment of free will, without realizing that it is impossible to know the good without the knowledge of the evil.

32 See Peprník, op. cit., 10.

33 Tennant, op. cit., 40.

34 Ibid.

Powerful Precedents: Hogg and Stevenson

'To the Just, All Things are Just':
Hogg and His Imitators

> 'To the wicked, all things are wicked; but to the just, all things are just and right.'
> '[...] How delightful to think that a justified person can do no wrong! Who would not envy the liberty wherewith we are made free?'[35]

— James Hogg, *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* —

Aspects of the Form in *Justified Sinner*

Hogg's *Justified Sinner* stands out among the writing of the time with its successful combination of disparate, seemingly incongruous narrative approaches, 'its startlingly modern amalgamation of comedy, satire, pathos, violence and the supernatural'.[36] A unifying effect is achieved not merely by the continuous development of the main plot line but also and especially by the prevailing satirical mode. Beginning as a relatively light-hearted, exuberantly witty satire targeting at the stern piety of the new Lady Dalcastle contrasted to the lively vigour of her husband, the mood gradually darkens and the tone grows bitterly harsh as the novel proceeds to record graver offences cloaked in the habit of faith than Lady Dalcastle's fleeing her bridal bed. The novel turns on the paradoxes of Calvinist faith, particularly on the Antinomian beliefs of faith being superior to law, religious or moral. Manifestations of the supernatural occur throughout the book, but become denser towards the conclusion and it proves increasingly difficult to explain them by natural means. The sinner's confessions end with a complete disintegration of the writer's mind and break into a series of frantic diary entries as the haunted sinner counts down the last days of his existence.

Hogg frames his narrative with an extended editorial commentary,

35 Hogg, op. cit., 14.

36 Walker, op. cit., 143.

supplying background information and gathering witnesses' testimonies to what purports to be an authentic manuscript retrieved from the grave of a suicide. Presenting fictional material with claims to authenticity is no original idea in itself, what makes Hogg's rendering so remarkable is the complexity of means employed to bring the deceit to perfection. Hogg variously refers to a body of traditional accounts, historical facts and judiciary records, so that an unsuspecting reader cannot otherwise but to accept the confessions as genuine.[37] To make the device even more elaborate, Hogg smuggles himself into the novel in the persona of a peculiarly articulate shepherd whose letter describing the discovery of the grave is published in a local paper and reprinted in the book. However, when the editor confronts the letter writer in person, the Ettrick Shepherd turns out to be rather a prose commoner intent on his own business and bluntly refuses to aid the editor in his enterprise: 'I hae mair ado than I can manage the day, foreby ganging to houk up hunder-year-auld banes.'[38]

Assuming the appearance of a found document allows the author to take a distance from its controversial content and frees him from the responsibility to account for the unaccountable, be it the morbid perversion of religion or the discomforting occurrences of supernatural phenomena. As has been pointed out, Hogg's editor holds on to liberal and rationalist views, which clearly makes the bulk of the confessions beyond his understanding.[39] The editor's insistence on a rational explanation shows in his lack of susceptibility to possible evidence hinting at the work of supernatural agents: exhuming the suicide's body, he remarks in one breath that the skull was perfectly regular and uninteresting, but for 'a little protuberance above the vent of the ear', and drops the matter.[40] The editor considers this detail inconsequential, yet allowing for the existence of the Devil, it might be that he had just encountered one.

Influence on Tennant and Robertson

Justified Sinner has proved to have a lasting effect on Scottish letters and

37 See Walker, op. cit., 146–7.

38 Hogg, op. cit., 223.

39 See Peprník, op. cit., 61.

40 Hogg, op. cit., 225.

even prompted some modern writers to produce their own versions based on the story, among the most notable Tennant's *The Bad Sister*, which reworks the tale with a strongly feminist bias, and Robertson's *The Testament of Gideon Mack*, which transposes the story into a distinctly contemporary setting and adjusts it to fit into modern conditions. Both Tennant and Robertson deploy plot elements as well as the specific shape of Hogg's novel, disguising their narratives as an authentic document accompanied by an explanatory preface purportedly written by a neutral editor. Hogg's editor makes a point of not having altered a single word of the confessions, 'there being a curse pronounced by the writer on him that should dare to alter or amend', and absolves himself from responsibility in case the text should give offence.[41] Similarly Robertson's editor, signed Patrick Walker, claims to publish the manuscript as it is, though he does so with a sharp sense of contemporary detail: 'I make no additions, alterations or deletions other than those insisted upon by my legal advisers'.[42]

Robertson and Tennant's editors alike take a reserved attitude to the contents of their manuscripts and affect a naïve ignorance as to the implications of these writings. If they choose to offer a hint concerning the interpretation of characters or incidents, they resort to quoting authorities other than themselves. Patrick Walker expresses debt to his informant, Dr Hugh Haliburton, who enlightened him with respect to the references and allusions in Gideon Mack's records, including the earlier usage of the name Gil Martin by Hogg. With perfect gullibility, Walker casually mentions that he never read Hogg's novel and suggests that neither did Gideon Mack, or else he would have noticed the correspondence of his friend's name with that of Hogg's devil figure. Whereas Robertson's Walker leaves it to the reader to judge the credibility of Mack's story for oneself, Tennant's anonymous editor presents Jane Wild's journal as a psychological case study, furnishing it complete with a psychiatrists' report. At the same time however the editor challenges the reductive reading of the journal in terms of the writer's mental affliction in beautifully conceived moments such as the following friendly nod to her literary predecessor:

41 Hogg, op. cit., 229.

42 James Robertson, *The Testament of Gideon Mack* (2006; London: Penguin, 2007) 21.

> I was forced to wonder: if Meg did indeed have these powers, had she perhaps summoned up a certain personage, well known in the Ettrick area for many hundreds of years, called Gil-martin, who, if I remember, had plagued a young man in the seventeenth century, and whose memoirs were discovered by James Hogg.[43]

The editor pursues the trail of her thoughts for a while, admitting an interpretation on the level of supernatural occurrences, but her tone remains tentative, and she finally self-ironically dismisses the ideas as 'over-tired and agitated wanderings of my mind after the drama of the day'.[44]

Employing the perspectives of two different direct narrators — that is the editor and the author of the manuscript — and supplementing them with a large number of intermediate voices in the testimonies of alleged witnesses allows for presenting and above all contrasting multiple viewpoints. Hogg's would-be impartial editor clearly takes sides with the murdered brother, for all the accounts of George available to him give a uniform impression of the deceased as an amiable and upright man. Robert alone regards his brother as a corrupt creature predestined to damnation, nevertheless Robert's capacity of judgement has been obscured by Gil-Martin's persistent influence. A significant tension of perspectives arises especially when it comes to recording the particulars of the mortal duel between the brothers. According to the statement of a witness, George begged in vain for reconciliation with Gil-Martin in the shape of a friend with whom he had just quarrelled, the sneering opponent challenged him and charged, but the deadly blow was dealt by Robert who had lingered in the background and stepped forward only to stab his bravely fighting brother in his back, twice. Robert's (Gil-Martin's) version of the events reverses the roles, making Gil-Martin the patient persuader, George the arrogant attacker and Robert the rightful victor of the duel. It could be said for Robert exactly what Tennant's editor says for her murderer: 'there can seldom have been so forceful an example of the effect a fanatical mind can have on an impressionable one'.[45]

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43 Tennant, op. cit., 221–2.

44 Ibid 212.

45 Ibid 44.

Robertson's novel begins with supplying an after-story to Gideon Mack's testament, consisting in the curious reports of witnesses who claim to have spotted Gideon Mack after this very person's remains had been positively identified and he had been declared a dead man. Such an opening succeeds in arousing interest, and the reader is likely to choose to participate in the mystery, consenting to accept occurrences of seemingly unexplainable events with the prospect that these will be cleared in the course of the story. Gideon Mack's voice proves quite persuasive, and the reader will be tempted to identify with his point of view, however, the editor's afterword qualifies as a masterly stroke in severely impairing Mack's reliability as a narrator and then restoring it again with the same force. The discrediting moment is brought about by a quite incidental revelation that whereas Mack admits spending one single night with his friend's wife, Elsie Moffat, the same woman owes that theirs was an affair continuing for years. In the other surprising reversal, it is ironically Elsie again who reestablishes Mack's credibility and supports at least a part of his story in confirming that she, too, has seen the devil's stone that nobody else seems to have. The overall impression of the story remains ambiguous, steering a midway course between disbelief and acknowledgement, fancy and reality.

From Victim to Aggressor

The narrative of the *Justified Sinner* reflects the essence of the repressive Scottish Presbyterianism in that it is underpinned by an acute sense of fear of a powerful higher authority perceived as whimsical and menacing.[46] It has been observed that such extremities of fear may initiate a defence mechanism consisting in the person's transformation 'from a God-fearing into a fear-inspiring creature':

> Hogg's novel dramatises precisely the dialectic of the fearful self: Robert Wringhim, repressed by a terrifying religion of almost inevitable damnation, transforms himself from victim of a fearful God into the fear-inspiring companion of the devil and terroriser of his own family and

46 See Craig, op. cit., 37–8.

friends.[47]

The character of Robert Wringhim, the justified sinner of the novel's title, has been moulded since his earliest days by a restrictive religious upbringing and an awareness that he was the outcast, possibly illegitimate, son. A communication that he was confirmed to be one of the God's elect suddenly separates him from the society of the reprobates and promotes him, as he believes, to God's equal. Having disposed of his own fears, he compensates by invoking fear in others, and his subsequent actions show him acting as a self-appointed God's agent. Encouraged and sustained by the manipulative argumentation of his new mysterious friend, Gil-Martin, Robert embarks on the task of chastising his libertine brother George.

Robert pursues George on every move 'as regularly as the shadow is cast from the substance, or the ray of light from the opposing denser medium'.[48] The imagery reinforces the impression of Robert embodying the divine light which fails to penetrate the sinning George because it is literally repelled by his body. Robert's relation to his brother is repeatedly described in terms of shadowing, significantly again in connection with George's frightening experience on the top of Arthur's Seat, where George encounters an unnaturally magnified apparition of his brother. A friend insists on a rational explanation of the event and suggests that the vision must have been the natural shadow of George's brother and pursuer. The shadow can be seen as a metaphorical representation of the conscience haunting a morally aware person who transgresses against the norms of proper conduct.[49] In George's case Robert's shadow serves as a reminder of the Puritan morality which disapproves of earthly enjoyments such as George's fancy for tennis matches and drinking nights.[50] Despite Gil-Martin's efforts to exorcise Robert even of the least glimpse of morality, Robert still retains a certain notion of basic moral laws, as shown in his reluctance to commit murder whose propriety Gil-Martin eloquently argues. Shortly before Gil-Martin starts urging him to kill,

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47 Ibid 38.

48 Hogg, op. cit., 35.

49 See Peprník, op. cit., 74.

50 See Peprník, op. cit., 63–4.

Robert comes to perceive his companion's presence as 'constant' as his 'shadow', using these very words[51], which favours the view of Gil-Martin as an impersonation of Robert's dark impulses whose social and moral acceptability Robert privately doubts.

Tennant's Hogg-inspired novel exploits images of shadows in a similar yet interestingly different manner. Here the shadow seems to be interchangeable with the substance, which Jane poignantly sums up when describing her relationship with her half-sister Ishbel: 'I was her shadow, and she was mine.'[52] Like in Hogg, the shadow in Tennant's story bears negative connotations, unlike in Hogg, the emphasis lies on the psychological rather than the moral aspect. *Justified Sinner* draws a distinct line between the good and the evil, and each of the major characters strongly inclines to one of these poles, as seen from the point of view of the ideal reader who adheres to common sense, appreciates personal integrity and acknowledges a few universal moral principles. *The Bad Sister* challenges the concept of the good and the evil as neatly defined opposing categories, as much as it subverts the notion of the male and the female as mutually exclusive conditions.

It is not even clear to which character 'the bad sister' of the title refers: is it the fair-haired legitimate child Ishbel, whom Jane wishes to eliminate, or is it the dark-haired illegitimate Jane, who manages to put to death several female figures in the course of the novel, including literally sinking her teeth into the neck of poor Miranda? Jane rehearses the climactic murder of Miranda in what appears like a dream vision half-recalled and half-reinvented while Jane is lying in her bed. Jane becomes a young girl again, hiding in a closet with Ishbel, and coming across a pin in a dress hanging over her head, she stabs her serene-looking mate right into the middle of her breast. The next thing Jane does is finding herself walking in the street hand in hand with her artistic friend Gala and facing the disbelieving stares of passers-by:

> Gala and I walking without shadows, vulnerable in the extreme, shadows ourselves, spreading terror as we went! We were invisible except for our laughter, our nervous systems, our X-ray spines. If we had no shadows we

51 See Hogg, op. cit., 120.

52 Tennant, op. cit., 74.

couldn't be alive. […] We drove away our shadows, and look at us now![53]

Jane has disentangled herself from the oppressive presence of her shadows, which triggered her transformation from a victim of circumstances into the aggressor who sets the circumstances as she likes. The nature of her newly emerging identity — which is that of a vampire — becomes obvious from a series of hints interspersed throughout the narrative. There are all the necessary popular props, ranging from the lack of shadows and reflections in a mirror to night wanderings, blood sucking, daylight intolerance, daytime weakness and the eventual impaling on a stake.

From Inferior to Superior

The turn of a fearful, down-trodden man or woman into an unabashed, fear-inspiring monster stripped of human qualities is accompanied by a radical change not only in the way the society perceives this person but also in the way the person perceives him or herself. In Robert Wringhim, the sense of inferiority sustained by the Calvinist doctrine of the man's total innate depravity and by Lord Dalcastle's disownment gives way to an affirmation of his privileged status in the eyes of God and to a subsequent sense of superiority to the ordinary course of humankind. Gil-Martin nurses Robert's selfishness and pride, which leads to his renunciation of the needs of the social body and eventual total disregard of the rights of the individual, including the quintessential right to life. It has been suggested that Gil-Martin represents 'the exteriorized development of our own desires, of our pride, of our most secret thoughts. It consists throughout in the indulgence we accord to our own selves.'[54]

Robert's first murderous assault claims the life of a more or less incidental victim, an old man regarded as 'a worthy, pious divine, but quite of the moral cast'[55], the latter quality reinforcing Robert's disengagement with moral laws and his embrace of pseudo-religious ones instead. The first killing serves the purpose of testing Robert's loyalty to Gil-Martin, but the following murder of George

53 Ibid 184.

54 André Gide, 'Introduction' to *The Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1947), quoted in Walker, op. cit., 145.

55 Hogg, op. cit., 119.

effectively removes Robert's rival in claiming their father's affection and approval and clears the path to Robert's inheritance of Lord Dalcastle's fortune. It might be argued that Lord Dalcastle is perhaps not Robert's natural father and that Robert does not seek to win his recognition, nevertheless Dalcastle remains Robert's legal father, and Robert refers as 'father' both to him and to Reverend Wringhim, the other candidate for Robert's paternity and the man who provided him with a home and a name. From the point of view of psychological analysis, Lord Dalcastle could be furthermore interpreted as a substitution of the universal overarching father-figure, which is God, whose favour Robert certainly wishes to ensure.

Tennant also implies a sense of inferiority in the protagonist of her novel but continues to elaborate on the related concepts of envy and jealousy. Young Jane regards her decidedly better-situated half-sister with a peculiar intermixture of hatred and envy: 'She had what I wanted. She had what should have belonged to me.'[56] Ishbel occupies the indeed enviable position of 'the laird's real daughter'[57] with all the comforts and conveniences attendant on it, including having a dance party thrown in the house especially for her. The equally 'real' but unfortunately illegitimate other daughter of the lord, Jane, spends her days isolated in a humble 'exile's cottage' in the forest[58], with only her anxious and timid mother for company. Jane fights with her half-sister mercilessly at school and out of it, giving way to her frustrations, but it also seems that she attempts to approximate Ishbel at least in appearance when she starts dyeing her own black hair blond, Ishbel's natural colour. Intermingled hatred and jealousy create in Jane a particularly explosive combination, as epitomized by her fitting last name, Wild.

Jane Wild's alternative female identity, Jeanne, incorporates in herself issues of wider resonance than Jane's narrowly personal problems of illegitimacy and impoverishment. Jeanne appears to be an Irish immigrant employed as a servant girl with a wealthy family which subjects their servants to maltreatment, cruelty and humiliation. When Jeanne is caught crossing the formal rose garden, forbidden for the servants to enter, she and her fellow maid Marie earn the abuse

56 Tennant, op. cit., 76.

57 Ibid 73.

58 Ibid 73–4.

'Irish sluts!' and consider themselves fortunate to get away without beating.[59] Jeanne's suffering springs from narrow-mindedness and intolerance on the part of the owners of the wealth and their exploitation of the less privileged; whereas Jane's difficulties derive from the wickedness and immorality of a single representative of this social class. Jeanne gets rid of her shadows similarly as Jane disposes of hers, though Jeanne and Marie's killing of their mistress and her daughter with a pair of scissors and a piece of piping does not quite match the nearly ritual quality of the murders of Ishbel by a sharp pin and of Miranda by a vampire bite. The underlying motives of Jeanne and Jane's violent actions remain however the same, that is envy and rage at the injustice incurred by them.

Gil-Martin and His Agents

It has been noted that one of the characteristically Scottish features of the *Justified Sinner* is the rendering of the Devil as a friendly, likeable gentleman who tempts to sin by the way of carefully constructed arguments rather than the stereotypical representation of the Evil One as a cloven-footed beast with a pair of horns set on his crown.[60] Gil-Martin makes his first appearance to Robert in the form of Robert himself, a shape especially flattering to a person who has just been confirmed in his (self-)righteousness by learning that he was predestined for salvation. Gil-Martin addresses the astonished Robert with the following ambiguous speech:

> 'You think I am your brother,' said he; 'or that I am your second self. I am indeed your brother, not according to the flesh, but in my belief of the same truths, and my assurance in the same mode of redemption, than which I hold nothing so great or so glorious on earth.'[61]

Gil-Martin's assertion of kinship to Robert foreshadows the transformation of the latter into the 'devilish-looking youth'[62] as George perceives Robert when he

59 Ibid 104.

60 See F. R. Hart, *The Scottish Novel From Smollet to Spark* (1978), quoted in Peprník, op. cit., 72.

61 Hogg, op. cit., 107.

62 Ibid 21.

starts pursuing his footsteps. Robert's constant habit of wearing black reinforces the Satan-like impression that he gives.

Shortly after succeeding to the ownership of the late Lord Dalcastle's estates, Robert establishes his reputation as a wicked, unscrupulous and tyrannous master, although he shows genuine surprise at the reported accounts of his exploits. Robert suspects Gil-Martin of mischievously assuming his appearance and raising terror among the peasants, which may be one way of explaining the puzzle, but there is also the possibility that the extent and nature of Robert's crimes simply went beyond the scope of his conception, which makes him unable to recall and re-imagine them. Robert after all seems to have ceased to count as a human being, for he causes houses where he lodges to be haunted as if by the Devil, and the beasts which he comes near to respond to him as if he indeed were one. Another point for regarding Robert no more as man is supplied by Gil-Martin's promise of protecting him against the power of man, which he duly does, but fails to interfere when Robert takes his own life. Robert's suicide, besides being a deadly sin, is the work of a devil rather than that of a man. Towards the close of his confessions, Robert observes the impossibility of parting with Gil-Martin because they are 'incorporated together — identified with one another'[63], so whatever Gil-Martin stands for, Robert stands for the same.

Robertson's *The Testament of Gideon Mack* draws on Hogg's novel in focusing on an encounter with the Devil of a man dubiously involved with religion. Gideon Mack's association with the Church manifests the opposite extreme from Robert Wringhim's fanaticism: where Robert is inflamed with faith, Mack lacks any faith whatsoever, despite his wearing a clerical collar. Where Hogg's Devil persuades his agent to take away lives, Robertson's Devil paradoxically appears to save Mack's life in the first place and does not seem to ask anything in return, save Mack's good pair of jogging shoes to replace his own worn trainers. Robertson's representation of the Wicked One defies conventions, to say the least. An otherwise unenthusiastic reviewer pregnantly sums up the characteristics of Robertson's devil-figure in the following way:

A peevish, vaguely homosexual lout, altogether lacking in grandeur or

63 Ibid 166.

> style, he takes evil to new levels of banality, sounding less like a lost archangel, and more like a pub moron.[64]

Here the Devil is secularized to the utmost degree, evoking pity rather than fear, wanting in ambition and passion. The mundane portrayal of the Devil as a common man, though with uncommon powers, seems to be strangely appropriate to the realistically rendered present-day setting where the existence of Satan sounds as unlikely as the existence of God. The irritating ordinariness of the Devil puzzles the reader as much as the novel's protagonist and provides for a series of humorous scenes showing Mack's disappointment for instance at the reluctance of his rescuer to prove his identity by displaying his hoof-foot.

Mack spends with the Devil three days in his refuge and enjoys some nice conversation, or 'pub talk', as the cited review would have it, occasionally marred only by the Devil's inclination to fits of sullenness. The Devil proves to share with Mack his characteristic scepticism and inability to commit oneself wholeheartedly to a cause, be it divine or devilish. The curious dialogue of the two contains some of the most brilliant passages of the novel, including the outrageously witty proposition that the Mouth of Hell is located in Scotland and the general impression that the poor Devil is a prey to the burnt-out syndrome. This is how the Devil explains his special fancy for Scotland:

> 'But I do like Scotland. I like the miserable weather. I like the miserable people, the fatalism, the negativity, the violence that's always just below the surface. And I like the way you deal with religion. One century you're up to your lugs in it, the next you're trading the whole apparatus in for Sunday superstores. […] Oh, yes, this is a very fine country.'[65]

Besides exploiting his keen sense of dark humour, Robertson undertakes the serious task of examining the role of religion in modern society. The novel turns on the paradox of Mack's being excommunicated from the Church after he publicly confesses to his experience and relates the details of his strange meeting.

64 Lewis Jones, 'No Laughs in the Absence of Religion', *The Daily Telegraph* 1 July 2006: 9. *ProQuest Central*. Knihovna Univerzity Palackého, Olomouc, CZ. 30 July 2010 <http://www.proquest.com/pqdauto/>.

65 Robertson, op. cit., 283.

There is much irony in the fact that the official representatives of the Church do not seem to believe in the possibility of making acquaintance with the Devil while they profess to believe in the existence of an unseen God.

Encounters with Gil-Martin turn out to be a family tradition when Mack comes across a book inherited from his father, with the dedication ‘To remind you of better days and other worlds’ and the initials G.M..[66] The implication is that Mack’s father, a priest and a paragon of religious devotion, went through a war experience so traumatizing that it deprived him of the capacity of genuine feeling and caused his sincere faith to degenerate into a mechanical habit. Unlike his son, the father managed to conceal the terrible secret as long as he lived and coped with his own fears by the way of raising fear in his parishioners and terrorizing his family under the pretext of a higher divine purpose. Mack’s devil-friend explains that the initials in the book stand for Gil-Martin, the ‘G’ ‘as in Gideon, or God’, and the ‘G.M.’ itself identical with Mack’s own initials.[67] This singular coincidence further blurs the distinctions between the God, the Devil and the man. Gil-Martin prompts Mack to look for answers into his mother’s eyes, and regarding the blank stare of the senile old woman, Mack realizes what his one-time lover puts so poignantly after Mack’s disappearance:

> ‘There’s nothing. No God, no Devil, nothing. No damnation, no redemption. There’s just us and what we do. The things we achieve or the mess we make.’[68]

This suggestion not only expresses the apparent loss of faith to which the modern man is subjected, but also marks the shift of responsibility for one’s actions from an intangible and incomprehensible higher being to the person who makes choices and acts accordingly. Disposing of the doctrines of predestination and election brings about the advantage of exercising free will as much as it demands the obligation of facing the possible consequences.

The unanswered, perhaps unanswerable, question of the presence or absence of ‘something’ is symbolically represented by the mysterious menhir

66 Ibid 355.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid 385.

whose appearance in a place where there was nothing before disturbs the placid course of Mack's life for the first time. Mack would swear that his Stone is as real as anything else, and Elsie Moffat believed the same at the moment when she saw Mack leaning at the Stone in the forest and invoking the Devil. Revisiting the location, Elsie finds that the Stone has disappeared and she doubts whether she was not deceived by her senses. Mack unsuccessfully attempts to record the standing stone in a photograph, but the negative remains blank and the pictures show darkness. Playing with the Christian imagery which associates darkness with ignorance and light with the faith, Robertson deliberately confuses these poles and leaves open the possibility that blind belief, after all, may be the darkness while Mack's sticking to proven knowledge may be more of a light. Inconclusive as it is, the novel seems to suggest that if there is something, it exists within man rather than in the external world and that it consistently defies proof.

Whereas Hogg's and Robertson's respective novels mostly comply with the interpretation of Gil-Martin as the devil-figure, Tennant's book introduces his namesake, Gil-martin printed with the lower-case 'm', as a character whose presence is reported or who is glimpsed by other characters, but who never gets the chance to speak for himself. This fact makes it difficult to determine his identity, let alone his motives. He may be a devil, he may be a god, or, as his closest associate, Meg, says:

> 'Whatever you care to call him. He may be my brother, he may be yours. Use the initial K for him, if you wish. A bent line that comes in on a straight line and shoots it to pieces! Or Gil-martin, that's my name.'[69]

To the novel's protagonist, the enigmatic Gil-martin stands for the 'missing male principle'[70] which she seeks to attain under the guidance of Meg, whose manipulative relationship to Jane closely copies the constellation of Gil-Martin and Robert in Hogg's model story. The first time Jane comes near to her Gil-martin is in a hallucinatory vision of herself and a strange yet familiar figure in the middle of a forest clearing, which however dissolves the moment Jane approaches the man to address him. In order to reach Gil-martin, Meg explains,

69 Tennant, op. cit., 132.

70 Ibid 43.

Jane must get rid of her shadow sister, her rotten half, only then she will be able to embrace him and incorporate him into her own being.

Jane envisions Gil-martin in terms of sunlight beaming over his head, an image implying an unattainable God rather than a prince of darkness. Jane makes preparations for the triumphant murder of Miranda in the name of Gil-martin, as if in the name of the God, for Meg promises her to procure Gil-martin's favour in exchange for Miranda's life. It is Meg rather than Gil-martin who qualifies as the truly devilish figure of the novel. This quality is further reinforced by a vampiric equivalent of concluding a blood pact with the Devil, with Meg overcoming Jane and inflicting a bloody bite wound on her throat. Another option, in keeping with the schizophrenic mood of the novel, is to regard Gil-martin as a manifestation of the masculine element in Meg rather than as a separate character. Mrs Marten after all refers to Meg at one point as 'Meg Gil-martin', the given name denoting the woman herself and the family name indicating her belonging to '[a]n old Scottish family' going back to the time of the *Justified Sinner*.[71]

71 Ibid 187.

'Man is Not Truly One, but Truly Two': Science against Nature in Stevenson and Banks

> With every day, and from both sides of my intelligence, the moral and the intellectual, I thus drew steadily nearer to that truth, by whose partial discovery I have been doomed to such a dreadful shipwreck: that man is not truly one, but truly two.[72]
>
> — Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* —

Good and Evil, Public and Private in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*

Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* concentrates on the moral dichotomy of the good and the evil, but the novel teems with hints at numerous other cases of duality and contradiction. To begin with, it opens with an account of the unlikely friendship of Mr Utterson and Mr Enfield, distant kins who privately consider their regular Sunday walks 'the chief jewel of each week', though they mostly avoid conversation and appear desperately bored with each other.[73] The narrative quickly proceeds to describe another contrast, that of a decaying windowless building which spoils the pleasant impression given by a row of well-kept, neat houses in a quiet by-street.[74] It has been noted that notwithstanding the London setting, the author of the novel draws on the divisions that he perceived in his native Edinburgh:

> Half a capital and half a country town, the whole city leads a double existence; it has long trances of the one and flashes of the other … it is half alive and half a monumental marble.[75]

The ugly tall house, which moves even the untalkative Mr Enfield to address his friend with a story connected to it, turns out to contain Dr Jekyll's laboratory, the site of his misconducted pseudo-scientific experiment.

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72 Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, op. cit., 61.

73 Ibid 4.

74 See Peprník, op. cit., 88–9.

75 Stevenson, 'Edinburgh: Picturesque Notes' (1879), quoted in Roger Luckhurst, 'Introduction' to *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (Oxford: University Press, 2006) xx.

Dr Jekyll counts as a morally upright man, which makes the outcome of his experiment all the more pitiable, for his premise was not to reform a wicked person but to enhance and perfect a person already judged virtuous. As his own statement of the case reveals, Jekyll was plagued by feelings of guilt for his suppressed immoral impulses, by a sense of being a 'double-dealer' when posing as a good man for the public eye.[76] Jekyll hastens to add that he however regards himself 'in no sense a hypocrite'[77], which may be very well the truth, because in the first place it is not against society that Jekyll transgresses, but against nature. Jekyll's offence consists in promoting science at the expense of nature, which brings to mind a similar case of severely impaired natural balance, namely Robert Wringhim's morbid separation of professed faith from moral principles. Jekyll's sin is that of pride and egoism, for he relies solely on his own intellect in achieving his goal and he seeks to improve himself alone rather than the society at large. The impression of a selfish pursuit is further reinforced by the fact that Jekyll rejoices at the new opportunities open to him by assuming the form of Mr Hyde and resolves to abandon Hyde only when he senses that the experiment got out of his control. Jekyll starts transforming into Hyde spontaneously, without taking the potion, and the scope of Hyde's rampage extends so far as to a brutal murder of an incidental victim.

It has been observed that Jekyll's duality covers not only the opposition of the good and the evil but also the discrepancy between the public and the private identity[78], thus exposing 'the hypocrisy of a society in which the outwardly respectable Victorian drank and fornicated discreetly out of the public eye'.[79] Mr Hyde can be accordingly viewed both as an embodiment of Dr Jekyll's evil side and as a manifestation of his socially unacceptable inclinations, the two of which may or may not overlap. A useful example of a man who, unlike Dr Jekyll, admirably controls his undesirable tendencies is provided by Mr Utterson, reported to drink gin in order 'to mortify a taste for vintages' and to avoid theatre

76 Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, op. cit., 60.

77 Ibid.

78 See Peprník, op. cit., 87.

79 Walker, op. cit., 207.

despite his actually enjoying it.[80] Transgressing against social propriety ranks as the lesser evil than discarding moral principles, the actions of Jekyll aka Hyde however break all ethical, moral and legal laws alike. Hyde's first recorded exploit, the trampling upon the body of a little girl, counts as both unethical and immoral, but his later murder clearly qualifies also as illegal on the top of it.

The result of Dr Jekyll's experiment gives the initial impression of success but gradually proves to be a failure in all respects. Jekyll manages to extract pure evil and endow it with a physical body, his own person however retains all the original unfavourable traits along the favourable ones, he remains 'still the old Henry Jekyll'[81] without additions or improvements. The creation of Mr Hyde furthermore does not follow from Jekyll's mastery of science or control of its methods, Hyde comes to existence by mere chance, when the powder supplied for the potion happens to be impure. Jekyll shares with Hyde his body, consciousness and memory, and it must be said for him at least that from the beginning he acknowledges Hyde as a natural part of his own being. The observation of Hyde being 'in many points identical' with Jekyll occurs early in the story, pronounced by Mr Guest on comparing the handwriting of the two and discovering that Hyde's hand is the same as Jekyll's, only sloped backwards.[82]

Jekyll disowns Hyde symbolically and ineffectually by ceasing to refer to his other self in the first person and introducing the third, but this only happens when Hyde has already established complete dominance over Jekyll and neither can be delivered from their plight. Jekyll's benevolent indulgence of Hyde leads to deterioration of the former and prosperity of the latter, accompanied by Hyde's originally light and small stature gaining in strength and height and his wickedness becoming even more profound. Jekyll eventually recognizes the nature of his tragic mistake, admits that he 'severed in [him] those provinces of good and ill which divide and compound man's dual nature'[83] and so owes that the good and the evil constitute contradictory as much as complementary qualities which cannot exist separately from each other. An early description of Mr Hyde

80 Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, op. cit., 3.

81 Ibid 65.

82 Ibid 31.

83 Ibid 60.

draws attention to '[s]omething troglodytic' in his air[84], implying a property that has always been present in human constitution and cannot be wiped out simply by swallowing down a potion. Dr Jekyll's experiment is an outrageous act of rebellion against both the workings of nature and the creations of God, whichever one chooses to consider the superior authority.

Good and Evil, Male and Female in *The Wasp Factory*

Iain Banks's first published attempt at serious fiction writing, *The Wasp Factory*, effectively divided critical opinion between those who 'condemned the novel as a sick piece of sensational exploitation, making a joke out of cruelty' and those who 'hailed it as a brilliant first novel, presenting a very skilful picture of obsession and psychological disturbance'.[85] On the surface, the novel provides a discomforting account of the exploits of its teenage protagonist, a murderer at the age of six and triple murderer at nine, who infamously dismisses his experiments with killing people as 'just a stage I was going through'.[86] Underlying the surface sensationalism, there is a thought-provoking exploration of the serious issues of personal identity, scientific manipulation and the defence mechanisms of human beings activated in moments of crisis. The pattern of violence winding through the protagonist's life may at first seem unmotivated, a closer reading will however confirm the protagonist's own statement: 'It was all for a purpose, of course; little that I do is not, one way or another.'[87]

On the level of narrative strategies, *The Wasp Factory* delightfully toys with the reader in supplying seemingly incongruous bits and pieces of information which only come to fit together in the novel's surprising conclusion. The bouts of brutal violence on animals, humans and whatever in reach will certainly not suit a tender-hearted reader, but keeping in mind that this is a work of fiction, after all, it allows one to appreciate Banks's morbidly inventive black humour as well as the wider thematic implications conveyed by these means. The novel interestingly interweaves the dualities of the male versus the female and of the good versus the

84 Ibid 16.

85 MacGillivray, op. cit. 13.

86 Iain Banks, *The Wasp Factory* (1984; London: Abacus, 1990) 49.

87 Ibid 54.

evil, the former from the point of view of the protagonist and the latter from the point of the view of his father. To begin with, the novel's protagonist is not actually a boy but a girl, although this knowledge is withheld both from the character concerned and from the reader until the very last pages. Keeping with the perspective of the protagonist-narrator, Frank will be referred to as a 'he' to avoid clumsiness as well as to enable a more emphatic reading of his motivation.

Frank traces 'the root cause of it all'[88] to an unfortunate confrontation with Old Saul, the family dog, which according to the father's version of events resulted in Frank's being deprived of his male genitals. Old Saul's supposed intervention therefore turned Frank into the literal victim of the castration complex, to which Freudian psychology likes to ascribe childhood frustrations in both sexes. Frank indeed diagnoses a strong 'penis envy'[89] in himself, and from various hints interspersed throughout the narrative it becomes clear that all of his actions aim to compensate for his imagined physical defect and confirm him in his artificially constructed male identity. Apart from his lack of the apparent attribute of manhood, Frank would qualify as the perfect model for demonstrating all the common stereotypes associated with the male sex. Frank despairs over his rather plump body and subjects himself to the routine of rigorous physical exercise. He habitually gets drunk on beer, in spite of his obvious alcohol intolerance. His chief complaint about the absence of the penis seems to be motivated by his incompetency in using the urinal as well as by his being excluded from the favourite male sport of urinating.

Frank cultivates in himself what he holds for the crucial aspects of masculinity, eventually constructing a perversely perfect macho persona, though he does not quite succeed in suppressing his feminine nature, whose manifestations occasionally puzzle him and the unwitting reader alike. Peculiarly female qualities show especially in Frank's moving tenderness towards his wayward half-brother Eric, whose escape from a mental institution and eventual reunion with his brother-turned-sister forms the backbone of the plot. Another trait more commonly attributed to the female rather than the male sex is Frank's

88 Ibid 133.

89 Ibid 243.

obsession with order, pattern and ritual. The emphasis on symmetry and precision could have been produced by the highly idiosyncratic education provided to Frank by his father, who trained his child in memorizing the exact measures of furniture and other items in the household. The father's Measurement Book can however hardly stand the comparison with Frank's Wasp Factory, an elaborate piece of machinery, located in the loft of the house, around which the whole of Frank's life revolves.

The Wasp Factory stands at the imaginary centre of Frank's self-invented pseudo-religious cult, a complex system of personal myths and rites, all of them sharing the worship of death associated in Frank's view with man, as opposed to life associated with woman. The Factory itself serves primarily as a device for foretelling future, based on the path taken by a wasp placed inside, and there is no need to say that all the corridors ultimately lead the helpless creature to death. Frank explains his twisted perception of life defined in terms of death shortly after discovering his actual identity in the following way:

> Having no purpose in life or procreation, I invested all my worth in that grim opposite, and so found a negative and negation of the fecundity only others could lay claim to. I believe that I decided if I could never become a man, I — the unmanned — would out-man those around me, and so I became the killer.[90]

Putting to death small animals, besides wasps mostly hamsters and rabbits, means demonstrating one's strength and bringing a proof of one's mastery over life, if not one's own, then at least someone else's. It has been pointed out that Frank chooses to dispose of the weakest members of his family[91], which is supported by Frank's own admission that he does not feel ready as yet to eliminate his father. Frank's human victims include mere children, ranging in age from five to ten, but Frank gives quite different motives for their killing than their vulnerability.

Strangely enough, Frank's murder of his cousin Blyth was intended to bring comfort to Eric, because Blyth had mischievously destroyed Eric's much-loved pet rabbits. Eric does not seem gratified for what Frank presents as a

90 Ibid 242–3.

91 MacGillivray, op. cit., 23.

just punishment imposed on Blyth by God, so the next time Frank sticks to selfish motives and kills Paul, probably for the reason that Paul's birth coincided with Frank's crippling accident. The last victim was wanted in order to introduce a balance between the sexes, and Frank's cousin Esmerelda happened to be the most readily available target. 'I haven't killed anybody for years, and don't intend to ever again,'[92] Frank calmly asserts to round up the dispassionate account of his killing 'score to date'[93], but he does not foresee that there will arise the necessity of making away with another person, himself. Having cleared the misconception concerning his gender, Frank considers a literal suicide but for the present contents himself with a figurative one. The turbulent novel concludes with an inconsistently peaceful image of Eric sleeping quietly with his head on Frank's lap and Frank smiling down on him: a brief remembrance of his former apocalyptic existence flashes through Frank's mind, but he discards it by recalling his newly found female identity and his new responsibility as a sister to Eric.

The nature of Frank's duality lies primarily in the clash of the feminine and the masculine aspect, whereas Frank's father mostly demonstrates a perverted version of the division between the good and the bad. There are however occasional remarks on Frank's peculiar perception of the wrong and the right, as well as on the father's strangely mixed male and female features, which together provide for a subsidiary motif of the novel. Frank considers himself essentially in the right, for 'if you know you're doing something wrong, you miss'[94], and he excuses his violent actions by the injustice inflicted on him by his castration. Even while planning the murder of his lovely little cousin Esmerelda, Frank retains the possession of a 'genuinely clear conscience'[95] which ensures his being regarded an incidental witness of a series of fatal accidents rather than a serial killer. On discovering doses of male hormones in his father's locked drawer, Frank does not suspect that these are meant for himself and instead forms the terrible thought that his father might be really his mother. The father's appearance indeed suggests a womanish aspect, especially his delicate facial features and the air of weakness

92 Banks, op. cit. 49.

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid 28.

95 Ibid 112.

reinforced by his limp and the necessity of using a walking stick.

It was Frank's father, a misled Frankensteinian creator with a degree in biochemistry, who steered his child into the uneasy split state of existence:

> His role in *The Wasp Factory* must be seen as a dual one, as father (with all the associations of authority that paternalism carries) and as scientist (with the associations of the irresponsible use of knowledge and power).[96]

Mr Cauldhame's double role ends up in a double failure, for his chronic lying discourages the child's trust in the parent and his despotic approach shatters any sense of security that Frank could have felt at home. Frank's father exploits scientific knowledge to pursue the selfish goal of taking revenge on womankind in general for the wrongdoings that he suffered by one woman in particular. This woman, the second Mrs Cauldhame, abandoned her husband and their infant without a word of explanation and reappeared three years later in the same fashion only to give birth to a baby of an unknown father and disappear for good. Eager to get away, she went two days after delivering her child, and when her husband attempted to stop her by blocking the path by his own body, she broke his leg by running him over with her motorbike. Mr Cauldhame was left with a bad limp as a constant reminder of the incident, and then three-year-old Frank with a new brother whose name, Paul, rhymed with that of his castrator, Saul.

Mr Cauldhame embarks on the task of repudiating the female element from his life, in which he succeeds to the extent of infecting his daughter, now transformed into son, with his own deeply rooted misogyny. It is perhaps unsurprising that Frank fails to feel physical attraction to women, his repulsive reaction on any closer contact with a specimen of the female sex however verges on the extreme. Frank associates woman with life and its continuation, which would be quite natural only if he did not worship death as a symbol of permanence. His view of woman as a fleeting presence and of life as an aborted affair parallels the brief appearance that his mother made in his life and her role in the accident that supposedly deprived him of the chance to grow up a complete male. It was during Mrs Cauldhame's labour that Frank was left unattended with

96 MacGillivray, op. cit., 25.

the old sulky dog, which bit him. Frank's scars prove that the confrontation with Old Saul occurred, only the consequences were somewhat slighter than what his father gave in.

The father's simplifying view of women as the root of all evil could be interpreted as a means of shielding oneself from a sense of loss and a way of preventing further disappointment. The untimely demise of the first Mrs Cauldhame at childbirth must have invoked strong feelings in the widower left alone with an infant to his own devices, but the deliberate departure of the second wife probably gave rise to a more clearly defined mixture of rage and resentment. The medical manipulation of Frank's gender represents the culmination of Mr Cauldhame's increasingly desperate attempts to come to terms with women. The first tentative tries could be however traced back to his dressing the eldest Eric in girls' clothes and then '[packing] him off to a boarding school out of the way'[97], as if seeking to revise his wife's death by switching the roles and pretending that it was himself who sent the woman away and this by his own choice. As the novel's conclusion suggests, any mechanical attempts at isolating the male from the female do not stand the test of time and eventually prove as ineffective and impractical as a permanent separation of the good from the evil.

97 See ibid 27.

Selected Cases of Duality

Case #1: Commitment v Withdrawal

> To go back to the beginning, the Scot, as pundits will tell you, is an individualist. His religion alone is enough to make him so. For it is a scheme of personal salvation significantly described once by the Reverend Mr Struthers of Barbie. 'At the Day of Judgement, my frehnds', said Mr Struthers; 'at the Day of Judgement every herring must hang by its own tail!'[98]
>
> — George Douglas Brown, *The House with the Green Shutters* —

Lanark

Alasdair Gray's admirable achievement, *Lanark*, presents alternately what gives the first impression of two disjointed stories, a strictly realistic rendering of the life of Duncan Thaw and a strikingly surrealistic story of Lanark. A closer reading will reveal apparent connections between the two protagonists as well as between their life stories. The author writes himself into the novel in the persona of a distracted and ill-humoured conjurer of the plot, who nevertheless poignantly sums up the underlying theme manifest in both Thaw's and Lanark's books. 'The Thaw narrative shows a man dying because he is bad at loving,' he explains to Lanark, 'It is enclosed by your narrative which shows civilization collapsing for the same reason.'[99] The multifaceted novel ingeniously interweaves the private and the public sphere and indeed perceives both as equally marred by heightened individualism and isolationist inclinations. Lovelessness serves here as a cover term for a wide range of ills, reaching from the inability or unwillingness of an individual to enter in relationships with others to the ignorance and incompetence of institutions and governments which prevent them from acting upon their proper

98 George Douglas Brown, *The House with the Green Shutters* (1901), quoted in Walker, op. cit., 5.

99 Gray, op. cit., 484.

purpose.

The division of the novel into two separate worlds and the split of the protagonist into two distinct identities is perhaps symptomatic of the divided state of the Scottish mind. As has been however observed, the division in itself must not necessarily suggest an unhealthy condition, provided that the individual parts remain in interaction with each other:

> [T]he 'divided self' is the self which has taken itself *out* of dialogue, *out* of dialectic. The divided self is a self which refuses to acknowledge its dependence on the other, whereas a healthy 'self', a 'person', is always an interaction with the Other.[100]

Lanark portrays a series of suffocating, hermetically sealed settings which enclose the characters and isolate them inside without allowing for any means of escape besides death. Duncan Thaw seeks relief from the unbearable pain of his existence in suicide, which erases his memories but transforms him into Lanark and confines him in yet another version of prison, the decaying city of Unthank. In the extremity of his despair, Lanark cries for a way out and proceeds to imprisonment in the Institute, which he leaves by crossing the nightmarish Intercalendrical Zone only to find himself back to Unthank verging on the edge of apocalypse. The lives of Thaw and Lanark move in a vicious circle from which they fail to be delivered even by death.

The actions of Thaw and Lanark manifest ambivalent attitudes especially towards establishing contacts with fellow human beings, be it family members, friends or members of the opposite sex. Thaw's painful shyness spoils his chances of getting to know a prospective girlfriend, and he eventually prefers to pursue his artistic vision, which results in his almost absolute detachment from the rest of humanity. His self-containment shows in particular in the deeply moving scene describing the visit of Marjory, his unattainable sweetheart, to the church where Thaw works at his ambitious mural. Marjory arrives with a fiancé, but Thaw remains composed, unemotional and unresponsive, continuing in his work without as much as glancing over his shoulder as Marjory departs. Thaw's immersion into

100 Craig, op. cit., 112.

art effectively isolates him from other human beings, hastens his deterioration and leads him to a double murder. Trapped in a hallucinatory mode of vision, Thaw either kills or believes that he has killed a woman in the form of Marjory and, interrupted by a short and ineffective hospital stay, proceeds to kill himself. This is in keeping with Thaw's own metaphorical statement of man's self-destructive nature: 'Men are pies that bake and eat themselves, and the recipe is hate.'[101]

Thaw even more than Lanark contains in himself a contradictory mixture of inferiority complex and a sense of superiority to the ordinary run of life. Thaw's self-consciousness, abrupt manners and chronic skin ailments, not to mention his severe asthmatic fits, exclude him from a mutually satisfying engagement with society. His intellectual inclinations, attendant growing erudition and involvement with artistic expression in part justify his feelings of superiority to his more down-to-earth peers, which further contributes to his isolation. 'His energy had withdrawn into imaginary worlds and he had none to waste on reality,' [102] observes the oracular nonentity which tells Lanark about Thaw's history. The sense of detachment is reinforced by moments such as when Thaw's disembodied mind wanders over the landscape and he sees himself 'as if from the sky, a small figure starting across the moor like a louse up a quilt'[103], or when his consciousness merges with that of a soaring crow which literally steers Thaw to the murder of Marjory. Thaw's story concludes with his ultimate withdrawal, the surrender of his life to the sea.

Lanark reenacts Thaw's withdrawal by avoiding company and courting loneliness, spending his time sitting at the empty balcony of the Elite Café and watching out for the return of the sunlight, occasionally biting on the knuckle of his thumb, one of Thaw's neurotic habits that Lanark retained. Abandoning the active stance and abolishing communication with the world brings about diseases, literal and figurative, manifested in Thaw's skin trouble and asthma and Lanark's dragonhide. Symptoms of the disease subdue and the disease ceases spreading only when the patients resume the usual activities, when Thaw commits himself to painting and Lanark to writing, thus reestablishing at least partly the contact with

101 Gray, op. cit., 188.

102 Ibid 157.

103 Ibid 140.

the surrounding world. Lanark does not lack commiseration with the suffering, but he does not aspire to become a heroic figure that would save the mankind. He becomes a delegate representing Unthank at a crucial conference unwillingly, the more amazing then his genuine commitment and sincere desire to accomplish the task entrusted to him. Lanark however discovers himself a mere puppet in a monstrous plot with his mission doomed to fail and concludes the novel sitting abandoned on the top of a hill, with a view of the city virtually collapsing into ruins in a sweeping natural disaster.

The Testament of Gideon Mack

The tension between commitment and withdrawal underlies much of Robertson's controversial novel, *The Testament of Gideon Mack*, whose priest protagonist has been by early reviewers, perhaps in pursuit of sensation, incorrectly described as an atheist.[104] Gideon Mack may not be a rigid believer, but in a conversation with his favourite parishioner, the liberal Catherine Craigie, he confirms his views to be agnostic, not atheistic, such as Catherine's:

> 'I'm not an atheist, I wouldn't be so presumptuous. How do I know what's out there and after this? I'm an agnostic. I'm only concerned with what we know, what we *can* know.'[105]

Mack's distrust of ready-made doctrines renders him all the more humane and decidedly more efficient in the role of a spiritual father than some of his orthodox fellow churchmen. Peter Macmurray, to name but one, disapproves of Mack's visits to Catherine because the woman would not be converted, which makes any further contact with her dispensable. Macmurray extends the scope of his mercy solely to the faithful churchgoers and ignores those in need who happen not to conform to his religion. Despite his professed lack of faith, Mack engages in charitable enterprises and whatever his motives, his actions serve an unselfish purpose. Mack's commitment without faith proves to more helpful and benefiting to believers and nonbelievers alike than Macmurray's proclaimed faith without commitment to further obligations.

104 See Jones, op. cit.

105 Robertson, op. cit., 181–2.

Gideon Mack gives the impression of a person willing to embrace faith if given sufficient proof that his belief is not misled. His accidental fall into the Black Jaws, a steep chasm connected with a local folk legend, and his subsequent struggle in the wild stream roaring at the bottom of the chasm resembles the quest of a prospective believer in search of faith. The imagery used to describe the accident juxtaposes darkness and light, with Mack's battered body drifting on the current through a black tunnel and approaching a source of bright light. Ironically, there is no God at the end of the tunnel, but a Devil. It is the the Devil, and not God, who fishes Mack out of the stream and saves his life. The black tunnel may also be associated with the darkness of blind faith, as represented by Peter Macmurray, whereas the light at its end could imply the enlightenment by proven knowledge, as represented by Gideon Mack himself. Mack does not relent in his efforts to procure evidence for the existence of a supreme being, be it God or Devil, and though he generally accepts the identity of the mysterious stranger as the Devil, he keeps on plaguing him with questions. To Mack's request to deliver a proof of his identity, the Devil gives the following angry reply:

> 'Oh, for fuck's sake,' he said. 'What do you want me to do, show you a cloven hoof? Horns in my head, a forky tail and live coals for eyes? [..] Do you want me to show you my supposed greatest achievements? Battlefields, wars, torture chambers, famines, plagues, snuff movies, blitzkriegs, child porn, multiple rapes, mass murders? I can do that too, but what's the point? You know it all already.'[106]

To Gideon, the existence of the Devil eventually proves to be more likely than that of God, who seems to have abandoned earth, and he commits himself to spreading the news of his encounter with the Devil in the same way as he used to spread the word of God.

Besides coping with his absence of religious faith, Mack struggles with his inability of experiencing authentic emotions, fostered by the despotic upbringing practised by his father. Mack leads a double life not only in pretending religious zeal but also in faking tender feelings for his wife. Mack makes a kind,

106 Ibid 282.

considerate husband, but the actual experience of devotion and love seems to be beyond his capacity. He does not particularly mourn the early demise of his wife and observes with curiosity and a hint of guilt the deep grief manifested by the surviving relatives and friends. After his wife's death, Mack gets the closest to experiencing genuine emotion, this being the possibility of developing a passion for a mistress. The affair with his best friend's wife promises at least excitement, but their only described amorous encounter remains somewhat mechanical, lifeless, lacking in spontaneity and powerful feelings. Elsie Moffat, the woman concerned, confirms this impression, saying about Mack: 'He wasn't capable of loving [his wife] or me or anybody, including himself. He'd had that terrible upbringing that strangled love at every turn.'[107] In all respects, Mack spent his life pretending commitment where he was uninvolved, and the person most harmed by this arrangement was he himself.

107 Ibid 383.

Case #2: Real v Fictitious

> I told her that Sir Quentin was conforming more and more to the character of my Warrender Chase; it was amazing, I could have invented him, I could have invented all of them — the lot. I said Edwina was the only real person out of the whole collection.[108]
>
> — Muriel Spark, *Loitering with Intent* —

Loitering with Intent

Muriel Spark's characteristically spare and intricate *Loitering with Intent* blurs the dividing line between a fictional character and a real person in presenting as the protagonist a young writer, Fleur Talbot, working at her first novel and suspecting that her characters have entered the physical bodies of people around her in order to reenact the plot of her novel. Another complication arises from Fleur's employment with the sectarian Sir Oliver Quentin, the head of a carefully selected set of personages occupied with producing their own autobiographies. Fleur's work consists in editing the autobiographies and adding interest to the dull accounts, in which she succeeds to the extent that the autobiographers themselves come to believe in the authenticity of her outrageous inventions. Fleur's creative approach to facts eventually incites the initially unadventurous scribblers 'to writing fictions about themselves'.[109]

Fleur's flair for twisting the truth gives little offence and no harm in the (auto)biographies, whose faithfulness to truth even before Fleur's intervention might be questionable, it is the flights of fancy in her novel that produce the most serious consequences. Fleur's novel, *Warrender Chase*, appears to contain as a minor character a Greek girl who commits suicide, on which her counterpart in Fleur's reality takes her life, too. Fleur insists that she did not base the incidents and characters in her novel on any real events or persons and claims instead that she miraculously foretold what would happen in near future. Considering the susceptibility of the autobiographers to manipulation, as shown by their falling

108 Muriel Spark, *Loitering with Intent* (1981; New York: Avon, 1990) 70.

109 Ibid 78.

preys to Lord Quentin's mysterious experiment and to Fleur's inventive additions to their books, could it be that they felt themselves into the characters of *Warrender Chase* so much that they unconsciously began to imitate the novel's plot in their lives? Or is it rather that the events occurred prior to Fleur's describing them in her novel and that she deliberately deceives the reader or unwittingly the reader and herself alike?

Loitering with Intent deploys the limited point of view of the first person narrator-protagonist, who at times fails to grasp the meaning of the events herself. At the particularly strained moment when Fleur discovers the disappearance of her manuscript, she doubts her own reliability as a narrator and admits her possible fallibility: 'At the time I sat and wondered if I were going mad, if *Warrender Chase* existed or had I imagined the book.'[110] The missing manuscript is soon revealed to have been stolen by Fleur's employer, the embodiment of her novel's protagonist, whom Fleur readily accuses of 'stealing' her 'myth'.[111] Sir Quentin's desire to suppress the publication of Fleur's novel however supports the interpretation that it is the other way round, that it is Fleur who heavily draws on the background of Sir Quentin's circle in her novel, which consequently contains details that Sir Quentin does not wish to publicize.

Each person in Fleur's reality seems to match one character in her novel, and Fleur succumbs to the impression that this disqualifies the members of her employer's group from being real persons and reduces them to the status of fictional characters. Strangely enough, she allows for one exception in the case of Lady Edwina, known in her novel as Prudence, whose flamboyant appearance and unruly behaviour makes her unpopular with everyone but Fleur. The whimsical elderly lady could be appropriated neither by the restrictions imposed on her by her inheritance-seeking son, nor by the role prescribed to her in Fleur's novel. Edwina remains the only character of *Loitering with Intent* who focuses all her energies on resisting manipulation, in which she eventually succeeds. Fleur, the writer who lays claims to authorial power, spends much of the story trapped in between fiction and reality, unable to distinguish the one from the other:

110 Ibid 83.

111 Ibid 95.

> It was almost as if Sir Quentin was unreal and I had merely invented him, Warrender Chase being a man, a real man on whom I had partly based Sir Quentin.[112]

The conclusion of Spark's book gives the last glimpse of Fleur as an established novelist, yet still blamed by a friend for withdrawing from reality into fiction.

The Comforters

Spark's earliest published novel, *The Comforters*, employs metafictional elements on several levels at once in focusing on a protagonist who occupies herself with writing a volume of literary theory and who at the same time confronts the evidence suggesting that she is merely a fictitious character in someone else's novel. Caroline, the author-character, seeks proof to the contrary, which for instance ironically leads her to embrace the pain caused by her broken leg, for this at least confirms her wishful belief her that she is 'not wholly a fictional character'.[113] What Caroline considers especially disconcerting is the challenge to her seemingly inalienable right to independent existence and identity, for her author takes possession of her unspoken thoughts and freely uses them in the story. Still worse, Caroline's author has planned the course of her life in advance, which renders all her efforts useless because their outcome has already been decided.

Notwithstanding the facts, Caroline bravely fights with her author by mischievously diverting from her role in the script, even if she seems to be able to decide on her own only in such relatively inconsequential details as the question whether to take a train or use the car. The author prescribes the train, so Caroline chooses to drive, meets with an accident and ends up in a hospital, much to the dismay of the author who 'doesn't know how to describe a hospital ward'.[114] The uneven relationship of the author and the character is comparable to that of God and His creation, particularly in the case of Caroline, a Catholic convert, whose plight has been described in following terms:

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112 Ibid 124–5.

113 Spark, *The Comforters*, op. cit., 160.

114 Ibid 161.

> The catholic world of free choice and redemption is invaded by the protestant world of God's foreknowledge of all the ends of narratives. [...] The textual, in its typographic fixity, become an image of the calvinist world of predestination, encasing (in type) the future of the characters and thus negating their sense of having choices which will separate them from their past or make for them a new future.[115]

Her author endows Caroline with the awareness that she is being written about and allows her occasional glimpses into her immediate future, but does not share with her the knowledge of the end of her story. Caroline senses that her story is nearing its end but she can do little more than wait patiently for the inevitable and wonder whether her creator will have mercy on her.

On finishing her book on the form of the novel, Caroline thinks of her last and most ingenious trick to defeat her author, which consists in her assuming the role of the novelist herself and getting ready to write down the story of her life. Caroline's projected novel would deal exactly with the same story which has been already recorded in the preceding text, that is Caroline either intends to plagiarize her author by copying the text word by word, or she pretends that what has been written so far are really her own notes for the novel. Spark's novel called *The Comforters* indeed concludes with Caroline's boyfriend coming across her notes and commenting on them in a letter which he destroys. His perception of the events just described seems to differ significantly from Caroline's point of view, for he states that she 'misrepresents' and 'misunderstands' them all.[116] The letter, though it has been torn into pieces, appears in *The Comforters* in full text, and so it is Caroline's author, Muriel Spark, who naturally triumphs at the end.

115 Craig, op. cit., 174.

116 Spark, *The Comforters*, op. cit., 203.

Case #3: Doppelgängers

> Every aspect of his figure was familiar. Fielding tried closing his eyes and breathing deeply for ten seconds but when he opened his eyes again, nothing had changed. 'You're me,' he said weakly.
> 'On the contrary,' the other Fielding said with a superior smile, 'you're me.'[117]

— Kate Atkinson, 'Evil Doppelgängers' —

The most obvious manifestation of duality on the level of character representation are plots involving the appearance of doppelgängers, physically two separate entities who operate under the cover of a single shared identity. The device of doppelgängers offers the choice of a wide range of constellations which may conform to a rational explanation, as in the case of natural twins, or may retain a hallucinatory quality when conveyed in terms of magic realism. The crucial criterion for classifying two characters as doppelgängers will be a repeated reported presence of two individual yet seemingly identical figures, reinforced frequently by the climactic confrontation of the two face to face.

Not the End of the World

The intertwined stories of Kate Atkinson's collection *Not the End of the World* provide numerous instances of duality and multiplicity: the characters have the freedom to move from one story to another, their histories often begin in one story to be further developed in a different one and their troubled identities occasionally result in metamorphoses from a human being into a beast or the other way round. The collection itself is framed by twin stories, sharing the same pair of major characters, the same setting in a peaceful oasis surrounded by apocalyptic rage and the same narrative technique of catalogue listings. The two characters, Charlene and Trudi, are apparently best friends but their close relationship resembles rather that of sisters, especially considering the fact that Trudi gets along poorly with her actual twin sister Heidi:

> Heidi wasn't entirely convinced, despite the undeniable evidence, that she

117 Atkinson, 'Evil Doppelgängers', *Not the End of the World*, op. cit., 217.

> really was Trudi's twin — or, as she preferred to think of it, that Trudi was her twin. What if, she sometimes wondered, Trudi was not actually her twin but her doppelgänger? (And in what way would that be different exactly?)[118]

The story called 'The Cat Lover' further reports that Trudi used to date a journalist named Fielding, who believed that Trudi and her sister were interchangeable and would not tell for sure whether he was meeting Trudi or Heidi in a particular case.

Fielding and his obsession with doppelgängers happens to be the subject of the preceding story, fittingly entitled 'Evil Doppelgängers', which records the strange experience of Fielding with someone who might be his twin separated at birth, his clone, a visitor from a parallel universe or, most likely, his hallucination. Fielding has just succeeded the unenviable position of the newest member in the office to the annoyingly enthusiastic Joshua, but his career is threatened by what gives the impression of constant fatigue and inability to focus attendant on his excessive drinking. Fielding suffers from blackouts spanning over one or two days and infers from bits of rumour that while his conscious mind was inactive, someone has been using his body to make extravagant appearance at parties, to engage in amorous encounters and to impress girls from the office with an extensive knowledge of Kant.

The disadvantage of the dashing double shows when Fielding copes with the consequences of actions which are inscribed to him and of which he is ignorant. Fielding comes to regard his doppelgänger as his equal, though the other Fielding obviously outranks him in competence as much as charms. Fielding the First remains trapped in his tedious routine of failure, bitterly envying Fielding the Second his adventurous exploits: 'Fielding wondered what the other Fielding was doing. Undoubtedly having more fun than this Fielding was.'[119] The other Fielding embodies and enacts the desperate desire to succeed which the original Fielding fosters but fails to fulfil. Fielding's despair and confusion culminate as he comes to consciousness in a dismal condition lying in a dark alley, robbed of his keys and wallet, and back to his flat confronts his doppelgänger apparently enjoying

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118 Atkinson, 'The Cat Lover', *Not the End of the World*, op. cit., 229.

119 Atkinson, 'Evil Doppelgängers', *Not the End of the World*, op. cit., 214.

himself with his female boss. Fielding leaves the two to their business and disconsolately sits down to watch cartoons, hoping for the nightmare to dissolve.

Aiding and Abetting

Muriel Spark's late novel, *Aiding and Abetting*, deals playfully with the stock conventions of the crime story in supplying a murder along with a convicted offender hiding from justice and further complicating the plot by introducing the criminal as two separate persons, a pair of doppelgängers, each bizarrely eager to claim the identity of the culprit, Lord Lucan. In accord with the usual appeal of murder mysteries to logical reasoning, Spark finally provides a plausible rational explanation of the case, but not before she sets several volunteering detectives in pursuit of the evasive Lord Lucan and engages both versions of the aristocratic murderer in a series of chases and narrow escapes. Each of the investigators is furnished with an individual private history, most notably the famous psychiatrist Dr Hildegard Wolf, who turns out to be identical with the infamous fake stigmatic Beate Pappenheim. The novel examines multiple issues but focuses especially on the problems of defining personal identity, of distinguishing between appearance and substance and the (im)possibility of disowning one's own actions.

Lord Lucan erred twice when he killed, underestimating both a proper plan and proper performance: the act of murder reduced him to life-long practice of the 'evasive principle'[120] and the fact of his having slain the wrong person rendered the whole action quite purposeless. The story relies on the premise that aristocrats profess perverted loyalty to persons of the same rank, which extends so far as to apologize and even require aiding and abetting a murderer. Lord Lucan escapes from the site of the crime with assistance of influential friends and spends the remaining twenty-five years of his life sustained by generous financial support provided by his numerous aiders and abettors. The necessity of collecting money in person leads him to hiring a double in order to reduce the risk of being seized. The arrangement proves increasingly difficult to carry on, and the actual and the fake Lucan independently seek out psychiatric advice concerning their severely impaired sense of identity.

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120 Muriel Spark, *Aiding and Abetting* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000) 158.

'After twenty-five years of playing the part of the missing Lord Lucan he surely is the part,'[121] observes Dr Wolf when assessing her patient's state of mind. The hired substitute, Robert Walker, performs his part with such tremendous success that he not only assumes but wholly assimilates Lord Lucan's personality. The authentic seventh Earl of Lucan comes to regard his double as a devil to whom he sold his soul and of whom he would not be rid. Walker manages to convince even himself of his being the original and bluntly refuses to be separated from the other earl. Their long-term mutually satisfying cooperation deteriorates into rivalry and hatred, which results in the inevitably violent splitting of the two. Lucan's double enacts the fears of everyone in possession of a doppelgänger, namely that the imitation aims to replace the original. The true earl and the false earl mentally merge into one being and after some attempts on both parts to eliminate the odd one, the real Lucan ends up slaughtered and eaten up by the children of a class-conscious cannibal, who believes that by consuming a lord his sons will become lords, too. The fake Lucan escapes and resumes the haunted existence of his late model, thus effectively replacing him.

121 Ibid 48.

Case #4: Double-dealers

> Dougal changed his shape and became a professor. He leaned one elbow over the back of his chair and reflected kindly upon Mr Druce.
> […] Dougal leaned forward and became a television interviewer. Mr Druce stopped walking and looked at him in wonder.
> […] Dougal turned sideways in his chair and gazed out of the window at the railway bridge; he was now a man of vision with a deformed shoulder.[122]

— Muriel Spark, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* —

Muriel Spark's novels show preoccupation with manipulative figures and duplicity in character, accompanied at times by physical metamorphoses which enable the double-dealer to practise deceit with greater success. Spark tends to keep her transformations within the limits of realism, though for instance the devilish protagonist of *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* puzzles his acquaintances with promises of showing the horns on his head. The mimicries of Spark's characters may remain relatively harmless, as in the case of a minor character in *The Comforters*, a woman who 'would change her personality like dresses according to occasion'.[123] More often the characters exploit their ability to assume different appearances in order to pursue a particular goal, usually vaguely defined but with multiple hints suggesting its abusive nature. A fine example of such ambiguous motivation shows in the leader of the Autobiographical Association in *Loitering with Intent*, who routinely changes between 'his public, formal High Churchism' and 'his private sectarian style'.[124]

The Ballad of Peckham Rye

His mastery of mimicry ensures the protagonist of *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* employment with a growing manufacturing company, implementing the belief of its director that 'Industry and the Arts must walk hand in hand'.[125] Dougal

122 Spark, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*, op. cit., 16–7.

123 Spark, *The Comforters*, op. cit., 87.

124 Spark, *Loitering with Intent*, op. cit., 56.

125 Spark, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*, op. cit., 15.

Douglas bears a peculiar resemblance to the Devil: besides his unproven claim to possess a pair of horns, there is the apparent deformation of his shoulder and his miraculous capacity for acting out whatever role he chooses. The responsibilities connected with Dougal's newly created post in the company remain unspecified, but for the director's vaguely formulated wish 'to bring vision into the lives of the workers'.[126] Dougal's idea of vision consists in inducing the personnel to mischief, which does not help the employer but encourages the people to reexamine and redefine their status as human beings:

> Dougal is the point of contact between a world of characters so banalised by the standardised requirements of a modern industrial environment that they are nothing more than repetitions of each other. […] Dougal, engaged on his 'human research' in the factories of the district, is the diabolic alter ego of the author engaged in her 'search' for the truly 'human'.[127]

The company director aims at making his staff 'one happy family'[128], implying the reduction of separate individuals into a continuous entity which would effectively wipe out all deviations from norm. Despite his highly unconventional methods, Dougal lends his abilities to serving the people, leading them to see themselves out of the context of their benumbing jobs and reestablishing their humanity. He approaches each person exactly in the shape needed in the particular case, be it that of a confessor, analyst, divorce judge, lady-columnist or spiritualist medium.

The novel employs the recurring motif of failed romantic relationships, marriages and love affairs continuing mechanically out of habit rather than for love. Mrs Mavis managed to entangle herself from the trap of a loveless marriage, she explains that 'it was becoming sorta immoral to live together, not loving each other.'[129] The question remains whether her second marriage does not verge on the edge of 'living a lie'[130], as Mrs Mavis and other characters put it, too. The other characters pretending affection where there is none are Miss Coverdale, who fakes

126 Spark, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*, op. cit., 16.

127 Craig, op. cit., 175.

128 Spark, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*, op. cit., 17.

129 Ibid 38.

130 Ibid.

feelings for Mr Druce, and Mr Druce himself, who goes on living with his estranged wife without the latter having even spoken to him for nearly five years. Mr Druce also illustrates the pitfalls of Dougal's intervention, for the poor man, loved neither by his wife nor his mistress, moves himself to act on his feelings and murders Miss Coverdale, on which he quietly leaves home to his wife. In *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* and elsewhere, Spark puts to ample use her characteristically bitter sense of irony, in this case for instance by motivating the cold-blooded murder by jealousy incited in Mr Druce by Miss Coverdale's meetings with Dougal.

Case #5: Double Narratives

> ‘It’s a pity you didn’t stay awake because she told me a lot about you. You were a funny, embarrassing, not very sexy boy who kept chasing me when I was nineteen. I had the sense to marry someone else.’
> ‘And you!’ cried Lanark, angrily swallowing, ‘were a frigid cock-teasing virgin who kept shoving me off with one hand and dragging me back with the other. I killed someone because I couldn’t get you.’
> ‘We must have been listening to different oracles. I’m sure you imagined all that.’[131]

— Alasdair Gray, *Lanark* —

Lanark

Gray’s *Lanark* stretches the possibilities of presenting a double plot within a single novel in its innovative juxtaposition of a crudely realistic story and a nightmarish fantasy, interwoven by a complex web of connecting elements which often become apparent only on a careful rereading. The novel employs a series of highly original devices, ranging from the relatively simple yet effective arrangement of the four books out of their chronological order to the erudite yet entertaining index of plagiarisms printed on the margins of a metafictional chapter. The two major plot lines focus on two versions of one and the same protagonist but also share an underlying common theme and a number of recurrent motifs. It has been observed that the double structure of the novel is built on the ‘transference of imagination into reality’, presenting the protagonist alternately as ‘an artist trapped by his imagination in an unacceptable reality’ and an ordinary man ‘[living] in the world of the imagination made real’.[132]

The novel begins with Book III and the protagonist in his early twenties with no memories of his former existence. He comes to call himself Lanark for the earliest name that he could recall and that happened to be one of a town

131 Gray, op. cit., 357.

132 Craig, op. cit., 230.

pictured in a poster, though he gropes after ‘a short word starting with *Th* or *Gr*’[133], which both links his identity to that of Duncan Thaw and playfully hints at the name of the author himself. The account of Thaw’s life indeed includes many autobiographical elements, it has been suggested that ‘Thaw bears a similar relation to Alasdair Gray as Stephen Dedalus does to James Joyce’.[134] Lanark deliberately disposes of all his possessions that could provide a clue to his former life, but he keeps the seashells in his pockets which turn out to be the evidence of his/Thaw’s suicide by drowning. Lanark and Thaw are connected also by their occupations, for early in his story Lanark receives the advice to try painting by a grudging critic who dismisses his attempt at writing, whereas early in his own story Thaw entertains himself by writing ‘a blend of realism and fantasy’[135], which again refers to the very novel by Alasdair Gray.

Lanark and Rima, aka Thaw and Marjory, are not the only characters who migrate from one of the fictional worlds portrayed in the novel to the other. The incidental victim of Thaw’s hallucinatory murder makes another brief appearance in Lanark’s Unthank, and Lanark addresses her rather clumsily by the means of a polite social conversation: ‘I killed you, didn’t I?’[136] Minor characters whom Lanark encounters at the Institute reappear in different shapes and at different posts at the conference where Lanark fails to achieve anything by his speech. The Institute Catalyst, whom Lanark abandons in her mirror bedroom in order to attend Rima’s transformation into salamander, emerges possibly even more attractive as the dignified Lady Monboddo. Miss Maheen, the secretary at a job centre in Greater Unthank, retains her looks and efficiency but turns into a Miss Thing, the assistant of Lord Monboddo in Provan.

All of the richly varied settings of *Lanark* share the quality of hell and make the entrapped characters painfully aware of it: ‘This is Hell,’ exclaims disconsolate Lanark only to receive the matter-of-fact affirmation by Rima: ‘Yes. I

133 Gray, op. cit., 20.

134 Brian W. Shaffer, *A Companion to the British and Irish Novel 1945–2000* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007) 527.

135 Gray, op. cit., 155.

136 Ibid 28.

know.'[137] The imaginary Unthank resembles Hell as much as the real Glasgow, even the patient priest, whom Thaw meets during his hospital stay, feels pressed to remark that his studies in the city managed to convince him of the undeniable existence of Hell. Lanark and Thaw spend their whole lives searching for something that would give meaning to their and everybody else's suffering. Lanark craves sunlight and wanders restlessly to reach it, young Thaw devotes his efforts to finding the Key which would provide all the solutions. Thaw ends up defeated by a world that is too much for him to bear and takes his life. Lanark concludes the novel named for him as an old man who learns the exact time of his death to occur the following day but forgets it immediately and prefers to watch the clouds, 'glad to see the light in the sky'.[138]

137 Ibid 430.

138 Ibid 560.

Conclusion

———

It requires great love of it deeply to read
The configuration of a land,
Gradually grow conscious of fine shadings,
Of great meanings in slight symbols
Hear at last the great voice that speaks softly.[139]

— Hugh MacDiarmid —

The concept of duality and existence of contradictory qualities are indeed of universal occurrence, and so is literature dealing with these issues. Scottish writing has been however historically subjected to a series of specific influences which combined to incite a heightened perceptiveness to extreme contrasts manifested in the spirit of the nation. The geographical and cultural separation of Scotland and England is paralleled by the internal division between the rural Highlands and the industrialized Lowlands, each of the parts possessing a distinct cultural heritage and speaking a different language. The accentuated differences between the regions provide for one fundamental set of terms by which to define the identity of the nation and the individual:

> For the majority of English people Britain is England; for many Scots Britain is an English company with too many shares in Scotland or a politically expedient fiction which, at best, protects Scotland from the ineffectuality of its own divided nationalist politicians.[140]

The Scottish people are consequently torn by the inner conflict between meekly accepting the parochial status forced on them or proudly asserting the value of their own individuality. A corresponding state of mind occurs in any society which shows aspects of the tense relationship between a superior power and an inferior partner, this condition is however given a peculiarly Scottish twist in connection with the traditionally strong position of the Calvinist religion in Scotland.

139 MacDiarmid, ‘Scotland’, quoted in Walker, op. cit., 2.

140 Walker, op. cit., 21.

Calvinism fosters feelings of inferiority by preaching the doctrines of the total depravity of man and predetermination of human fate in terms of salvation or damnation regardless of the person's merit. A powerful literary treatment of the theme is presented by James Hogg in his influential novel, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), which illustrates the perversion of faith attendant on the conviction that 'to the just, all things are just and right'[141], multiple murder including. The paradoxes of Calvinism lie at the heart of modern renderings of Hogg's story represented by two distinct novels which are both openly imitative and startlingly original: James Robertson's prevailingly bleakly realistic *The Testament of Gideon Mack* (2006) and Emma Tennant's inventively surreal *The Bad Sister* (1978). Robertson and Tennant examine the pitfalls of false faith in a distinctly contemporary context but their turning to the model provided by Hogg proves the lasting influence that the Calvinist thought exercises on the Scottish mind:

> Scottish writers in the latter half of the twentieth century have had frequent recourse to the oxymoronic Calvinist character-type […] as a device allowing more universal purchase on a post-1945, postmodern world where truth and conviction are such contested concepts.[142]

This is especially the case of Tennant's novel, which challenges even such basic perception as the male and the female being mutually exclusive qualities in presenting a protagonist who moves uneasily between the two poles until settling on their ideal combination in an androgynous identity.

Another influential predecessor in the Scottish literary canon is Robert Louis Stevenson with his famous representation of the divided personality in his novella *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). The story focuses on the clash between the eternal opposites of the good and the evil and at the same time explores the Frankensteinian issue of the moral responsibility that binds the scientist to his invention, in particular where the creation of a living being is concerned. The themes of the good against the evil and the creator versus the creature are interestingly interrelated in Iain Bank's novel *The Wasp Factory*

141 Hogg, op. cit., 14.

142 Shaffer, op. cit., 120–1.

(1984), which further complicates the question of responsibility by making the misled scientist at the same time a father who conducts an unethical experiment on his own natural child. The scientific creator assumes the position of God, who figures after all as the ultimate Creator. The related issues of responsibility and abuse of power find their parallel on the level of fiction writing in the uneven relationship between the author and the character. Metafictional concerns occur in several novels by Muriel Spark, notably in *The Comforters* (1957) and *Loitering with Intent* (1981). Spark's preoccupation with power and manipulation is interconnected with her metafictional interests in the protagonist of the earlier novel, Caroline, who gains awareness of her status as a fictional character and does her best to set herself free from her author.

The overarching duality of the good and the evil is alternately represented by a series of related dichotomies, such as the question of innocence or guilt, which becomes the main subject of Spark's *Aiding and Abetting* (2000). The novel uses the conventions of a detective story but combines them with the peculiarly Scottish preoccupation with doppelgängers. The doppelgänger in Spark's story turns out to be a hired double employed by a murderer on his escape from justice in order to confuse his pursuers and bring them on a wrong trace. Spark's interest in duality and seemingly irreconcilable opposites is manifested in another of her novels, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* (1960), which merges in its protagonist the apparently incompatible qualities of the angel and the devil. During his short stay in the small town of Peckham Rye, the protagonist manages both to assist some of its inhabitants in their pursuit of happiness and humanity and bring disaster and death to some others. The fusion of angelic and devilish aspects is interestingly explored also in Robertson's *The Testament of Gideon Mack*, where a mysterious man saves the life of the protagonist, who identifies his rescuer as the Devil, but this strangely charitable devil-figure mockingly refuses to take Mack's soul and prefers to get his pair of shoes instead.

Scottish writers continue to be fascinated by the notion of doubles, doppelgängers and divided selves and the related thematic implication of leading a double life, deliberately or otherwise. Muriel Spark in particular excels in creating ambiguous characters with unspecified motives which nevertheless demand a

great deal of double dealing and deceiving the other characters and the reader alike. Duality in character may be reinforced by devices such as physical transformation of the character in question, which frequently stretches the possibilities of realistic representation and moves towards a representation in terms of magic realism, surrealism or fantasy. Alasdair Gray's monumental *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* (1981) provides a particularly forceful amalgam of realism and fantasy, using the device of alternating double narratives. Two main plot lines in the novel give the first impression of running separately and independently from each other, there is however a an ingenious system of details underlying both stories, which eventually establishes firm links between them by the virtue of shared characters, themes and motifs. Gray's *Lanark* epitomizes the essence of Scottish literature, which will be best put in the words of another Scotsman: 'It requires great love of it deeply to read' but proves greatly rewarding to '[h]ear at last the great voice that speaks softly'.[143]

143 MacDiarmid, 'Scotland', quoted in Walker, op. cit., 2.

Resumé

Práce nazvaná Motiv duality ve skotské literatuře od roku 1945 (*The Motif of Duality in Postwar Scottish Fiction*) se v úvodu zaobírá otázkou, proč se téma duality a svářících se protikladů objevuje tak silně právě u skotských autorů. Na formování národní literatury mělo vliv množství faktorů, jejichž specifická souhra měla za následek zvýšenou vnímavost Skotů vůči ostře vyhraněným kontrastům. Především se jedná o historicky zakořeněné rozdělení mezi Skotskem a Anglií, které se v rámci Skotska dále opakuje v rozlišení mezi Vysočinou a Nížinou, přičemž jednotlivé oblasti mají nejenom odlišnou kulturu, ale také hovoří různými jazyky. Specificky skotským rysem je dále přetrvávající vliv kalvinismu, jehož tradičně silná pozice ve skotské společnosti přispěla k prohloubení vnímání protichůdnosti. Kalvinistická víra je plná protikladů a paradoxů, což se projevuje zejména v doktrínách hovořících o úplné zkaženosti člověka a jeho předurčení ke spáse či zatracení pocházející od Boha a nezávislé na vlastních skutcích.

Právě paradoxy kalvinismu inspirovaly Jamese Hogga k napsání vlivného románu *Vyznání ospravedlněného hříšníka* (1824), který poukazuje na tragické důsledky náboženského fanatismu. Hlavní postavou je mladý muž přesvědčený o tom, že byl předurčen ke spasení, které už nemůže zvrátit žádný jeho čin, byť je to třeba vražda. Ve chvíli, kdy se tento mladík dozví o svém předurčení ke spáse, zjeví se mu záhadná postava jménem Gil-Martin, které postupně ovládne jeho život a přiměje jej k páchání zločinů údajně omluvených vírou.

Hoggův román podnítil vznik soudobých imitací, mezi nejvýraznějšími pak feministické pojetí Emmy Tennantové v románu *Špatná sestra* (1978) a přepis původního příběhu zasazeného do specificky současné společnosti u Jamese Robertsona v románu *Závěť Gedeona Macka* (2006). V obou jmenovaných románech figuruje postava nazvaná Gil-Martin, nicméně její pojetí se výrazně liší od Hoggovy předlohy. Tennantová tak pojímá původně ďábelskou postavu nejspíše jako chybějící mužský princip, jenž se protagonistka románu snaží nalézt. Robertson přejímá od Hogga stěžejní téma setkání zástupce víry s ďáblem, zde je ovšem hlavní postavou nikoliv náboženský fanatik, nýbrž agnostický kněz. Gil-Martin zůstává identifikován jako ďábel, prezentace jeho postavy je však zcela sekularizována a z ďábla se dokonce stává zachránce protagonistova života,

který za svůj skutek nepožaduje nic výměnou.

Dalším významným zástupcem kánonu skotské literatury je samozřejmě Robert Louis Stevenson, jehož novela *Podivný případ doktora Jekylla a pana Hyda* (1886) se zapsala do širokého povědomí. V tomto díle se Stevenson zaměřuje na věčný spor dobra a zla, který ovšem předkládá v neobvyklém pojetí vědeckého experimentu vyúsťujícího v oddělení těchto základních protikladů. Doktor Jekyll se snaží zbavit negativních aspektů své osobnosti jejich izolací od svých dobrých stránek, což má za následek vznik čirého zla ztělesněného panem Hydem. Novela dále rozehrává tématiku zodpovědnosti vědce za svůj vynález, což připomíná zřejmě neslavnější zpracování této problematiky v románu Mary Shelleyové nazvaném *Frankenstein* (1818).

Témata dobra a zla a problém zodpovědnosti vynálezce či stvořitele se zajímavým způsobem pojí v originální prvotině Iaina Bankse, románu *Vosí Továrna* (1984). Zde je protagonistkou šestnáctiletá dívka, která ovšem byla svým otcem zmanipulována k přesvědčení, že je ve skutečnosti chlapec, a to za pomoci mužských hormonů a otcova smyšleného příběhu o kastraci následkem nehody. Snaha podmanit si přírodu končí stejně katastrofálně jako pokus změnit lidskou přirozenost u Stevensona. Jekyll páchá sebevraždu jako jediný způsob úniku před neovladatelným Hydem; protagonistka Banksova románu se sice nakonec dozví pravdu o svém skutečném pohlaví, ovšem mezitím během zoufalé snahy vybudovat si plnohodnotnou mužskou identitu spáchá několik vražd.

Problematický vztah stvořitele a jeho výtvoru se na rovině metafikce objevuje u několika děl Muriel Sparkové, zejména pak v jejím prvním románu pojmenovaném *Utěšitelé* (1957). Hrdinka románu si uvědomuje, že je smyšlenou postavou v něčí knize a ze všech sil se snaží získat svobodnou vůli a zbavit se závislosti na své autorce. Jiný román Sparkové, *Svévolné lelkování* (1981), se zaměřuje na hrdinku píšící román, jehož postavy a události se záhadně promítají do „skutečných“ osob a jejich osudů v hrdinčině životě. Otázkou zůstává, zda se tato fiktivní spisovatelka snaží vnutit své realitě podobu svého románu, anebo zda vlastně její román pouze zpětně zapisuje to, co se okolo ní už událo.

Na rovině postav se dualita zachycující rozdvojené stavy mysli může projevovat také fyzickou transformací postavy, její metamorfózou. Tak například

Hogg naznačuje přerod svého protagonisty v ďábla nenápadnou poznámkou, že při exhumaci jeho těla se jeho lebce zjistil drobný výrůstek, což si čtenář může vyložit jako zárodek rohů spojovaných právě s ďáblem. Tennantová ve svém románu popisuje mnoho pozoruhodných proměn, z nichž tématicky nejvýznamnější jsou noční přeměny protagonistky z ženy v muže. Tato metamorfóza je příznačná pro hrdinčinu snahu o nalezení mužského prvku, který považuje za chybějící polovinu své osobnosti. Tímto však výčet přeměn zdaleka nekončí, hrdinka se totiž střídavě označuje jako Jane a jako Jeanne, přičemž prostředím první jmenované je autorčina současnost, zatímco druhá dívka se vrací do dřívější doby jako služebná v domě zámožného panstva. Román vrcholí přeměnou Jane v upírskou bytost, které se konečně podaří skoncovat se svou „špatnou sestrou".

Motiv metamorfózy se objevuje rovněž v epickém románu *Lanark: život ve čtyřech knihách* (1981) autora Alasdaira Graye, který pozoruhodným způsobem spojuje realistické líčení města Glasgow a surrealistický popis apokalyptické metropole Nevděk (Unthank). Román rozvíjí dva paralelní zdánlivě nesouvisející příběhy, jejich struktura je ovšem protkána množstvím spojujících prvků, které nemusejí být při prvním čtení zjevné. Autor znesnadňuje rychlé pochopení souvislosti příběhů nekonvenčním řazením svých čtyřech knih, neprezentuje je totiž v chronologickém pořadí, nýbrž začíná Knihou III. Oba příběhy jsou však propojeny jediným protagonistou, ač se vyskytuje pod různými jmény a identitami, a společným tématem, kterým je neláska. Život Duncana Thawa ukazuje tragické následky tohoto stavu na příběhu jednotlivce, zatímco život Lanarka v sobě obsahuje příběh o pádu celé civilizace ze stejného důvodu.

Skotští autoři jsou vytrvale fascinováni představou dvojníků a dvojího života. Zpracování tohoto tématu se přitom mohou velmi lišit. Často se vyskytuje prezentace duality jako rozpor života veřejného a soukromého, což lze považovat za jeden z problémů Stevensonova doktora Jekylla. Jekyll je totiž v zásadě morální muž, který bojuje s občasnými touhami považovanými společností za nemístné. Ostatně i první požitky Jekyllova alter ega, pana Hyda, jsou spíše nepřístojnostmi než nemorálním jednáním či dokonce zločiny. Obdobně Robertsonův Gedeon Mack prožívá rozpor mezi svou veřejnou identitou a svými

osobními názory. Vzhledem ke svému povolání pastora vystupuje jako věřící muž, v soukromí ovšem vyznává agnosticismus.

Literární zpracování dvojího života se různí dle toho, zda si postava tento úděl zvolila sama a dobrovolně, či zda se do této pozice dostala nechtěnou shodou náhod. V případě postav doktora Jekylla a Gedeona Macka se nejedná v první řadě o nekalý úmysl, to se ovšem nedá říct o mnoha postavách vytvořených Muriel Sparkovou. Tato autorka se ráda zaobírá problematikou zneužití moci v rukou postav manipulátorů, jejichž motivy často zůstávají nevyjasněné. V kontextu literatury je takovým manipulátorem autor, který se svými postavami může nakládat dle své vlastní libovůle. Dalším formálně úsporným leč obsahově mnohoznačným románem Sparkové je *Balada z Předměstí* (1960), která sleduje krátkou a bouřlivou přítomnost záhadné postavy v anglickém maloměstě. Tato postava v sobě spojuje ďábelské a andělské kvality, některým obyvatelů městečka pomůže uvědomit si svou vlastní lidskost, jiným zase (ne)přímo přivodí smrt. Neobvykle zpracované téma dvojníků se objevuje v románu nazvaném *Záhadný případ lorda Lucana* (2000) téže autorky, kdy se domnělý dvojník ukáže být najatým pomocníkem vraha na útěku, který se tímto způsobem snaží zmást své pronásledovatele.

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