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ALASDAIR GRAY'S *LANARK* IN THE SCOTTISH CONTEMPORARY SCENE: A MATTER OF POSTMODERN IDENTITY

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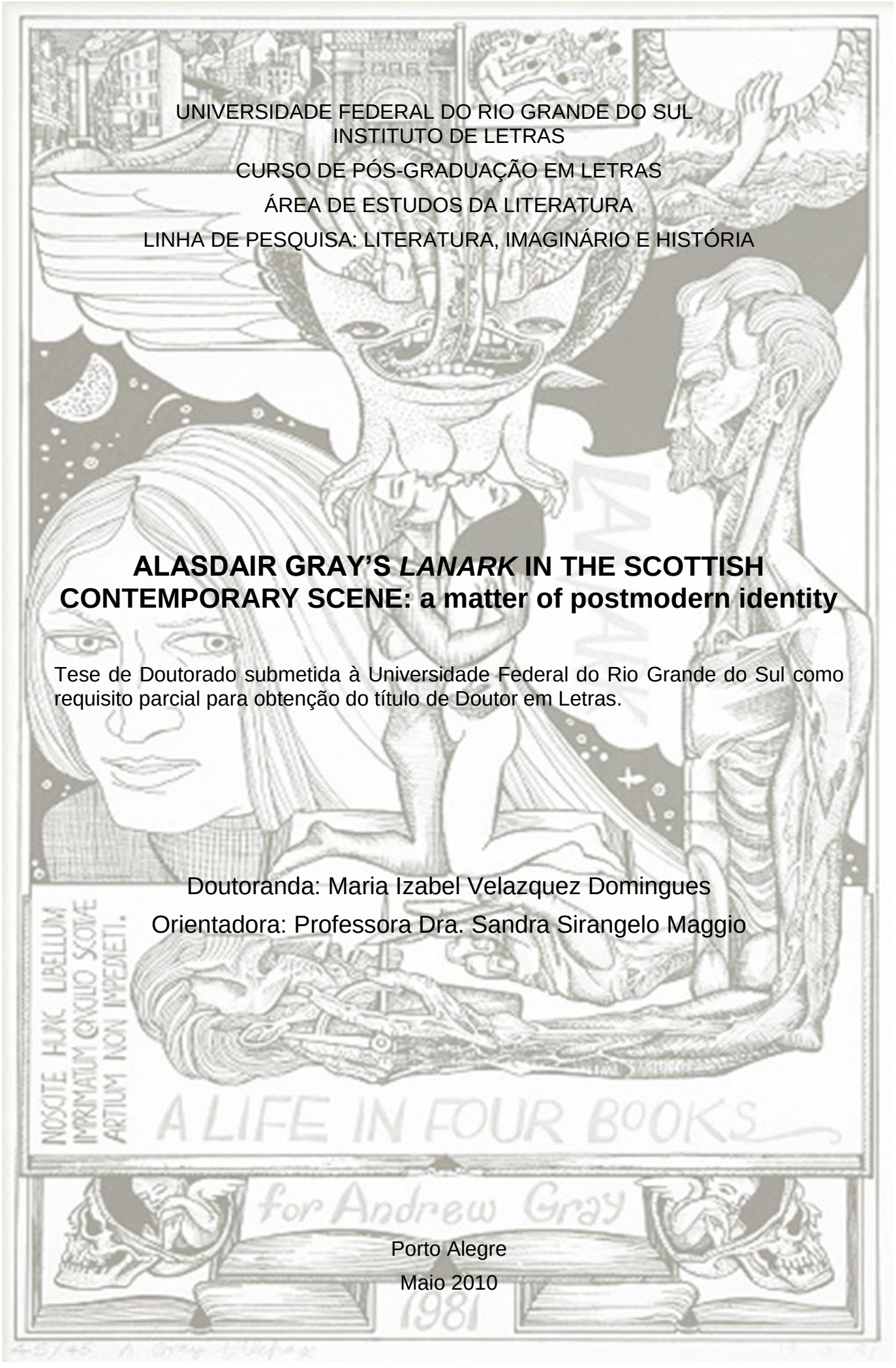

ALASDAIR GRAY'S *LANARK* IN THE SCOTTISH CONTEMPORARY SCENE: a matter of postmodern identity

Tese de Doutorado submetida à Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul como requisito parcial para obtenção do título de Doutor em Letras.

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Fig. 1

Work as if you live in the early days of a better nation

Alasdair Gray, 2002

Fig. 2

Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind

Rudyard Kipling, *Speech*, 1923

Lanark's Launching Poster, 1981

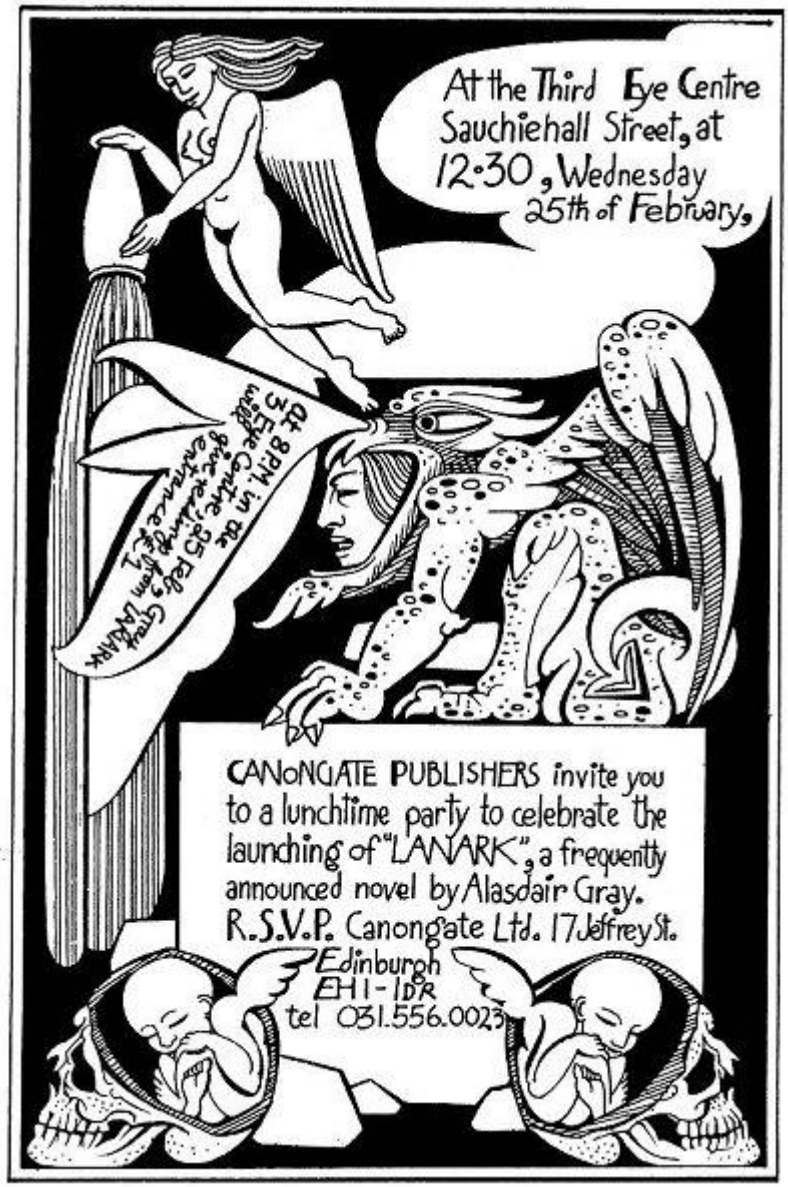

Fig. 3

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In Memoriam Professor Dr. Dietrich Scheunemann (*-------†2006), *University of Edinburgh*, que acreditou no meu trabalho e me incentivou a explorar a Literatura Escocesa.

RESUMO

Esta é uma leitura crítica de *Lanark: a Life in Four Books* do escritor escocês Alasdair Gray (1934), cujos talento e estilo se constituem exemplo da literatura contemporânea da Escócia. Esta investigação tem por objetivo determinar o papel exercido pela produção do autor nas esferas literária, cultural e sociopolítica da Escócia de hoje. Ao transitar entre ficção e meta-ficção, arte e autobiografia, Gray encara os paradoxos envolvidos ao tentar revitalizar traços da identidade nacional. O trabalho de Gray não pode ser considerado sem o reconhecimento de que a sua literatura é, simultaneamente, local e universal. Ela pertence ao cosmos escocês o qual é destacado por lutas culturais assim como é também dominante por ser escrita em Inglês e, com isso, alcançar leitores de todas as partes do mundo dentro das fronteiras transpostas pela Língua Inglesa. Essa é uma das razões pelas quais esta pesquisa busca lançar luz sobre a cena literária contemporânea escocesa, empenhando-se em preencher uma lacuna existente no currículo acadêmico brasileiro de nossos cursos de graduação e pós-graduação no que tange o tratamento e a abordagem das outras Literaturas produzidas em Língua Inglesa. Para tanto, a tese está dividida em três partes. A primeira considera a literatura escocesa em relação à formação, ratificação e reavaliação do significado de senso de identidade nacional, como observado diacronicamente através do período entre 1940 e 1970. A segunda parte focaliza os novos olhares no cenário cultural da Escócia por um grupo de escritores repleto de estilo, história e visão, os *New Scottish Writers*. As estratégias de Gray para lidar com ficção e biografia em *Lanark* assim como sua reflexão sobre a natureza do mundo são de grande importância para este trabalho. Com embasamento teórico no entendimento de Linda Hutcheon sobre meta-ficção historiográfica, intertextualidade, parodia e ironia no pós-modernismo, eu tento enquadrar, no Capitulo Três, as manobra literárias desempenhadas pelo autor ao usar tais recursos textuais no romance. Espero que o resultado desta tese de doutorado possa ser útil como reflexão sobre o presente estado de discussões sobre a literatura Escocesa pós-moderna e, ao mesmo tempo,

como um meio de tornar os leitores acadêmicos brasileiros mais familiarizados com a obra de Alasdair Gray.

Palavras-Chave: Literatura Escocesa, Alasdair Gray, *Lanark*, Pós-Modernismo, Crítica Literária, Estudos Culturais.

ABSTRACT

This is a critical reading of *Lanark*: *a Life in Four Books*, a novel by the Scottish writer Alasdair Gray (b. 1934), whose talent and style provide a fitting example of Scotland's contemporary literature. The aim of this investigation is to determine the role played by Gray's production in the literary, cultural and sociopolitical spheres of present-day Scottish life. In his blending of fiction and metafiction, of art and autobiography, the author faces the paradoxes involved in the attempt to stress the marks of a national identity. Gray's work cannot be considered without recognizing that his literature is both local and universal. It belongs to the Scottish cosmos which is highlighted by cultural struggles as well as it is dominant, once it is carried out in the English Language reaching readers all over the world from within the limits and format determined by the English Language. That is one of the reasons why this research aims to shed light on the current Scottish literary scene, attempting to fill an existing gap in the Brazilian academic curriculum respecting the treatment and approach of Literatures produced in English in our undergraduate and graduate courses. The dissertation is divided into three parts. The first contextualizes Gray in Scotland's literature in its relation to the formation, ratification and revaluation of the concept of a sense of national identity as observed diachronically, throughout the period between 1940s and 1970s. The second section focuses on the new looks at Scotland's cultural scenario by a distinguished group of writers burst with style, history and post-devolution vision, the New Scottish Writers. Gray's strategies to deal with a fictional and biographical context in *Lanark* and his reflection upon world's nature and worth are of great importance for this work. By the reading of Linda Hutcheon's understanding on historiographic metafiction, intertextuality, parody and irony in postmodernism, I attempt to frame in Chapter Three the literary maneuvers Gray makes in using such textual resources in his novel. I hope that the result of this doctoral thesis may be useful both as a reflection upon the present state of the discussion about Scotland's postmodern literature,

and as a means of making the Brazilian academic readers more familiar with the work of Alasdair Gray.

KEYWORDS: Scottish Literature, Alasdair Gray, *Lanark*, Postmodernism, Literary Criticism, Cultural Studies.

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INTRODUCTION

When studying British literature as an undergraduate in Brazilian universities, it is common to have the focus mainly on English literature, with a quick view on a chosen number of Irish (as Swift, Joyce and Beckett) and Scottish (as Scott, Stevenson and Burns) authors. The richness of Scotland's literature seems to be still so distant from our curriculum nowadays – when we live in the age of globalization and are surrounded by modern technology as high-speed access to the Internet, cable and digital television – as it was in the time in which older biased literary handbooks were devised. Scotland has always been a very fertile land for literature[1]. I have always been puzzled by the fact that they are so rarely read in our Brazilian curricula. Is it the unaccounted result of previous lack of exposition due to reasons that are not directly related to literary issues? Regardless of the multiple possible reasons involved, the point of this dissertation is that it is way time that a number of subjects involving this issue may be exposed to a serious process of revaluation.

My concern here involves a strong desire to undertake a research related to Scotland's contemporary literature so that this study may contribute to the discussions and re-examination that are being carried out, involving the interlocution between different literatures created all over the world in our present state of multicultural, globalized affairs. So as to accomplish this aim, I propose to analyze *Lanark: a Life in Four Books,* by Scottish contemporary writer Alasdair Gray.

Lanark was published in 1981 in the format of a thick book formed by four books. Books One and Two are about Duncan Thaw in post-war Glasgow, and most

[1]Comprising a wide and varied range of authors as different as Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott, James Barrie, Robert Louis Stevenson, Conan Doyle, Hugh MacDiarmid, Dame Muriel Spark, Alasdair Gray, Irvine Welsh and even Harry Potter's creator J.K. Rowling.

chapters may be considered autobiographical. Books Three and Four are inserted in a context full of fiction and fantasy to tell the story of Lanark. The novel is not in a sequential order, it is meant to be read as follows: Book Three – Book One – Book Two – Book Four. The first time reader experiences the sensation that something is missing, the Books seem to be disconnected leading to the fact that fragmentation not only exists in form but also in content, and in the main character's self. *Lanark*'s disorder and its daring illustrations evoke simultaneously the sense of fragmentation and the dissolution of identity that is a mark of postmodern fiction. That sensation lessens as the reader approaches to the end of Book One, in the Interlude part, when the Oracle reveals that Lanark and Thaw are the same person. A rereading of the novel in the more conventional order (Books One to Four) provides a different understanding. The reader is able to perceive details and textual tricks that are not clearly observed in the first reading. In my view, when starting the novel by Book One followed by Books Two, Three and Four is easier to realize the importance history has in the novel. Facts related to the Second World War and its consequences in Scotland, especially in Glasgow, are linked to Gray's personal experience. Having Lanark and Duncan as counterpoint to Gray's own voice, I plan to cover key topics to the literary process, through a discussion on how political and historical issues relate to a middle-class Scottish author absorbed by an inner motivation for national identity.

So that I can deal with *Lanark*, I need to deal with some aspects of Scotland's literature regarding the period placed somewhere between modern and post-modern literature represented, in twentieth century literature, by the moments known as *Scottish Literary Renaissance* and the *New Scottish Writers Generation*. Historical, sociological and political issues are important to illustrate the long struggle of the Scots for the maintenance and recapturing of their own voice, their place in the British Parliament and their independence from the English cultural control. Although Scotland could never be regarded as a wholly colonized culture, the unequal Union with England has certainly led to a degree of "inferiorization" – an assumption, amongst Scots, that the culture of their country is less worthwhile that of their larger, dominant partner. (MILLER, 2005, p. 14)

This thesis is formed by three chapters. Chapter one seeks to situate the reader in Scotland's lore. It displays a sort of timeline of Scotland's literature, highlighting some historic events determinant to the construction of Scotland's sense of identity and to the discussion regarding this nation's struggle for independence from England. It is important to state here that this work will always be looking at certain aspects such as history, economy and politics as a way of emphasizing Scotland's long process for the recognition of a national identity, what is the reason why I show a sociopolitical panorama of its situation in the period between 1940 and 1970. I will attempt to bring some important writers' names from a very intense movement in Scottish literature, the Renaissance, in order to emphasize – with some use and help of French philosopher Étienne Balibar's thoughts – the importance of the Scots' independence and sense of national identity. This section also proposes an outline of how important is art for Gray's life and literary construction. The understanding of Walter Benjamin about "aura" in the beginning of last century and how to evaluate and price the work of art in the age of internet.

This chapter ending involves issues on Alasdair Gray's life and general work. I intend to show Gray's versatility in writing novels, poems, stage plays, political pamphlets, etc. This variety composes what I call writing as healing for the idea of exhaustive creative work taking aim at the still open old wounds from cultural dependence. In fact, I think healing here has a lot to do with Gray's motto, "Work as if you live in the early days of a better nation."

In 1979 Margaret Thatcher's ascent to power meant the end of the post-war consensus and predicted a period of neo-liberal economic policies and growing disparities between the richest and the poorest sections of society. The same year also saw the failure of the devolution referendum in Scotland, which inaugurated a period of national identity crisis as well as huge cultural and literary productivity. The latter development was soon to be called the *New Scottish Writing Generation*. The year 1981 saw the publication of Alasdair Gray's *Lanark.* The years that followed were of great importance and changes in Scotland, marked by continuing deindustrialization in Scotland and a growth of unemployment. On the other hand, they were also characterized by a new creativity in culture and the arts and filled with hope, perhaps because of the new Prime Minister in 1997 and leader of New Labor,

Tony Blair. These hopes were motivated by the instigation of the devolution process for Scotland and the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999. It is clear that from these events on a new sociohistorical age starts for Scotland.

Chapter two will deal with the devolution not only as an inevitable resulting event through which Scotland's process for independence had followed to accomplish, but also as a cultural mark for a new Scottish genre (if I may put it this way) in literature. My concern is to demonstrate how new voices of Scottish literature speak their minds for the new moment; how literary manifestations have changed since the Renaissance. By the end of this section I attempt to show Alasdair Gray's authentic voice not only in his work but also as the persistent fighter and crisis-resistant artist throughout the years Scots dreamed of their very own parliament.
My interest in doing that is to demonstrate how important Alasdair Gray was/is to what post-devolution Scottish literature has become.

Chapter three refers to Linda Hutcheon's ideas on postmodernism and the way she sees it as cultural manifestation. By appropriating her views, the discussion will be around the interaction of history and fiction; intertexuality, parody and irony. This Chapter has been designed to offer a more detailed look upon Alasdair Gray's major novel, *Lanark,* which was written through many years, from the author's youth to his maturity, in a mix of reality and fiction. In order to pursuit my analysis I decided to select some chapters from each one of the four books taking their relevance for the whole novel into consideration. I believe such chapters present passages that are really pertinent to Hutcheon's ideas within a postmodern platform. Thus, I expect to provide a general discussion and a framework for considering some of the major issues and challenges related to the analysis of *Lanark*, along with a few, hopefully constructive, observations on Linda Hutcheon's theory. As a historiographic metafiction *Lanark* highlights important moments of Scotland's history after war that allow readers to their own interpretations. According to Linda Hutcheon, there are many truths, many forms of seeing and interpreting a work when it offers the possibility to be read through connections between history and literature.

Back in 1757, the Scottish philosopher David Hume wrote,

> Is it not strange, that, at a time when we have lost our Princes, our Parliaments, our independent Government, even the presence of our chief Nobility, are unhappy in our Accent & Pronunciation, speak a very corrupt Dialect of the Tongue in which we make use of; is it not strange, I say, that, in these circumstances, we shou'd really be the People most distinguish'd for Literature in Europe? (Hume, p 200.)

Hume's assertion should at least leave one curious about the history of Scottish literature. Here I do not refer only to the old masters, but also to what has been produced in the twentieth century with the New Renaissance, led by Hugh MacDiarmid and the great importance given to the Scottish language. Some decades later, the writing and the contemporary production of the New Scottish Writers and evidently the burst of Gray's *Lanark* in a Scotland not yet certain about its cultural and political freedom. Given the wide-ranging debate on the status of Scottish literature in its country of origin, in this study I make no claim to exhaustiveness, and hope to refer to a limited but representative selection of authors which deal with the same matters of cultural independence and national identity.

In the Conclusion I expect to have helped to build a new perspective to the study of Scottish literature in the Literature Departments of Brazilian universities. I hope that – through my research – more studies might propose the examining, remodelling and the rehistoricizing of the nationalism in Scotland. Furthermore, it is my wish to have studied Alasdair Gray's *Lanark: a Life in Four Books* not only for its importance as a literary work, but mainly for its significant contribution in the re-formations of cultural identities in Scotland.

1 Contextualizing Alasdair Gray in Scotland's Literature

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer.

Robert Burns, *My Heart's in the Highlands*

Scotland has always had great warriors who struggled for its independence and recognition of a Scottish cultural identity. In the thirteenth century, William Wallace[2] fought against the English domination being acclaimed as hero by the Scots due to his victory at Stirling Bridge. However, a year later, in Falkirk, Wallace was defeated by King Edward, but the episode did not undervalue whatsoever Wallace's admiration by the Scots. Although Wallace had been the most known Scottish hero worldwide, especially after Hollywood movie *Brave Heart* (1995), there was Robert the Bruce, another important personality in the independence war which was conquered at Bannockburn, in 1314. Nevertheless, according to David McDowall Scottish nationalism was born on the day Wallace died, which means a great deal to the memory of Scots who have kept a strong sense of identity (1997, p.33.).

Ever since, many other Scots, most of the time, ordinary citizens, have been trying to give Scotland what belongs to Scotland, what belongs to them. In terms of literature, one may say that Scottish literature has followed its natural process for a national literature, absorbing and creating styles (MARQUES, 1999). Through centuries, many attempts on re-establishing a Scottish identity have come up, and it is fair to look at two different generations of writers sharing the same desire of giving

[2] Sir William Wallace (1270-1305), who triggered the first Scottish movement of resistance against the English forces, was eventually betrayed by his own allies and hanged in London.

voice for a national identity; *The Scottish Renaissance* (in the 1920s) and *The New Scottish Writing Generation* (in the 1970s) as deserving models of Scotland's writing tradition. However, in order to set the literary scenario of twentieth-century Scotland and Alasdair Gray as a key part of it, this chapter will firstly review some important historical, economic, sociological and political points that were pertinent between the period of 1940 and 1970.

1.1 The Sociopolitical Panorama in the 1940s-1970s

During the war, Scotland expected Hitler's attacks in 1939 just like any other area in the rest of the United Kingdom, but we can say that it was relatively lucky compared to England. However, in September 13 and 14, 1941, Glasgow and Clydebank were victims of a raging night Blitz, which left 35,000 of its 47,000 inhabitants homeless[3].

The Second World War was as sad as history has showed us, but it occasionally provided some opportunities to a country like Scotland, which had its industrial economy improved by the production of ships, shells, fuses, guns and other war materials. By 1945, Scottish economy was consolidated and extended with the strongly development of the heavy industries. The Clyde was rejuvenated after the dark years of depression and unemployment in the early 1930s (DEVINE, 1999, p.547). Another important gain for Scottish economy during war was that the Highlands were used as military training fields as well as airfields and port facilities, what, consequently, resulted in the opening of new roads and hospitals in the region. Besides, agricultural business had also an increasing impact. Farmers were motivated by the government to supply home-produced food as they were given a subsidy of two pounds per acre of crop. Devine says that, "Over the course of the war, wheat and barley acreage doubled. Farmers experienced a new prosperity (…)" (p.548). As unemployment declined in Scotland women played a very important labor role for economy during the war. They could also find a job in engineering work.

[3] According to DEVINE, T.M. *The Scottish nation*: 1700-2000. See References for details.

> One firm, Bertrams Ltd. of Edinburgh, specialized before the war in paper-making machinery. Soon it was supplying gun barrels, bomb cases, howitzer parts, anti-submarine devices and ball-bearing turntables for Bofors anti-aircraft guns. All this munitions production ultimately relied on training women who worked on three shifts around the clock for seven days a week. (DEVINE, p. 548)

In February 1941, Prime Minister Winston Churchill appointed to the office of Secretary of State for Scotland, Tom Johnston, a man with a long and distinguished left-wing background. Johnston was no political theorist but a man of action who was committed to achieving practical results for Scotland. As Devine points out about Johnston, “His Scottish empire was simply one part of a great government apparatus of control and intervention which all parties agreed was essential if the nation was to mobilize effectively in order to defeat Hitler.” (p. 552)

A long-standing supporter of the Home Rule (the right of a country or area to have its own government and laws) movement, Johnston was able to persuade Churchill of the need to counter the nationalist threat north of the border and created a Scottish Council of State and a Council of Industry as institutions to devolve some power away from Whitehall.

Johnston’s administration was a good justification that the state could be an effective instrument for improving the life of all its citizens. He fought fiercely against the concentration of industrial production in the Midlands and the south of England and managed to attract 700 enterprises and 90,000 new jobs north through the establishment of a Scottish Council of Industry. Post-war reconstruction was also high on his agenda, with no fewer than 32 sub-committees set up to tackle a host of problems, ranging from juvenile delinquency to sheep farming. Scotland also became the first part of the United Kingdom to operate tribunals to regulate the level of wartime rents. Johnston created a kind of prototype National Health Service on Clydeside. Perhaps, however, Johnston’s most enduring achievement was his creation of a comprehensive scheme for the provision of hydro-electricity in the Highlands. Scotland’s problems of poverty, low incomes and poor health had always been more serious than the average of the UK as a whole and these historic reforms

were likely to have a great beneficial effect on the welfare of people. Johnston's successors, Joe Westwood and Arthur Woodburn, were shy, and Labor's Scottishness was weakened in 1945.

The nation was financially exhausted. The cost of the Second World War had been twice as great as for the First World War. And by far the most serious social issue in Scotland was housing. The restriction in housebuilding during the war and bomb damage in Clydeside had simply made the problem more acute. Over the next two decades a housing revolution emerged from the country. According to Devine, houses were built at a staggering pace, over 564,000 in the twenty years after 1945, an increase of around two-thirds on those constructed between the wars. (p. 559) In this process, Glasgow was the European pioneer in high multi-storey living but the enthusiasm soon spread to Motherwell, Edinburgh and Dundee. The multi-storeys symbolized modernity and the most appropriate break with the old and rejected world of the slums.

Even though Glasgow still had a housing waiting list of 10,000 families in 1958, for the first time a large number of Scots had a decent home equipped to modern standards. Scotland's modernizing process focused on changing the economy from capital goods to consumer goods, providing, besides the new housing, new roads and new domestic appliances like washing machines, fridges and TVs, which people hoped would be manufactured in Scotland.

In 1970 Edward Heath and the Tories unexpectedly won the election and the first part of the 1970s devolution under Heath's government was put aside. The discovery of North Sea oil in the east coast of Scotland in the 1970s motivated a debate about Scottish independence. The Scottish National Party (SNP) organized a successful campaign entitled "It's Scotland's oil", promoting the way in which the discovery of oil could benefit Scotland's economy. The SNP had relative success at the 1974 General Election, taking mainly Tory seats, but the Labor Party was quick to realize the threat to their Scottish stronghold and openly enjoyed the idea of Home Rule. After a disastrous decade for Labor and the Trade Unions, the party gave way to a referendum on the question of Home Rule on 1st May 1979. The result was

51.6% in favor, with 48.4% against the motion, however, this was not enough for Scotland govern its own affairs.[4]

In 1979 Margaret Thatcher became the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and her era got to be known as “Thatcherism”, what came to mean monetary control. In the first two years of the Thatcher administration Scotland lost a fifth of its workforce. Lowering inflation was the priority, and this would be done through cuts in public expenditure, privatization, liberalization of free markets, reduction in trade-union power and a “concern to inspire a national revival of the virtues of self-help in a people perceived as too long wedded to state support and welfare subsidies.” (DEVINE, p.591).

1.2 On Identity and Nationality

> *For as long as a hundred of us remain alive, we will never on any conditions be subjected to the lordship of the English. For we fight not for glory, nor riches, nor honors, but for freedom alone, which no honest man gives up except with his life.*
>
> From *The Declaration of Arbroath*, 1320.

In 1320 Scots nobility and the whole community of the realm of Scotland wrote a petition to the Pope to recognize Scotland as independent and Robert the Bruce as king. The Declaration of Arbroath, the most admirable manifesto of nationalism written in Medieval Europe. The Pope did not accept Scottish independence, perhaps partially because Robert the Bruce had been excommunicated for killing John Comyn in a church in Dumfries in 1306 (Comyn had formed an alliance with Edward, but perhaps had more of a right to be King than Bruce). Thus the Declaration of Arbroath was prepared as a formal Declaration of Independence. It was drawn up in Arbroath Abbey on the 6th April 1320, most likely by the Abbot, Bernard de Linton, who was also the Chancellor of Scotland. Scots even worried about the possibility of having the Bruce’s mind changed through the years therefore they clearly stated that they could nominate whoever they believed to deserve the Scottish throne. According to

[4] Data information taken from www.bbc.co.uk, access in April 2008.

Christopher Harvie, the Declaration goes like this, “We would strive at once to drive him out as our enemy and a subverter of his own right and ours, and we would make some other man who was able to defend us our king.” (2004, p.12)

The Declaration of Arbroath makes us reflect on how nationalist feelings and perspectives have been over the centuries of great importance to Scotland people. As time passed by, monarchy and politicians changed, whereas the spirit of freedom and justice in the heart of Scots had been inherited from generation to generation. Among many issues related to a genuine expression of nationalism and identity of a country, I understand that language is indisputably essential to Scotland.

For centuries, the Scots have fought to prevent the eventual decay and loss of their original Gaelic language.[5] Although English is currently the more commonly spoken language in Scotland, the Scots are very proud of their background and still use Gaelic as means of communication in many areas in the countryside as a way of differentiating themselves from the English. In the 1970s a group of writers and artists took actions proposing a change, a re-naissance, which aimed to create new generations of Gaelic-speakers. That is meant as a political statement, resuming the re-direction of a national sense of identity.

The French philosopher Étienne Balibar elaborates upon culture and identity saying that, “Identity is never a peaceful acquisition: it is claimed as a guarantee against a threat of annihilation that can be figured by ‘another identity’ (a foreign identity) or by an ‘erasing of identities’ (a depersonalization)” (BALIBAR, 1995, p.184). Concerning the Scots, I believe his thoughts seem to be very appropriate, once the country is much similar to England being under the same monarchy, and involved with common rules over the years. It is usual for many people when talking about Scotland and England to think of both countries as one – in terms of traditions, language and politics – since they belong to the United Kingdom and are seated on

[5] With the growth of urban centers and the emergence of Scots as the language of the royal court in the 15th and 16th centuries, Gaelic began to lose its dominance. This was accelerated by the adoption in turn of English as the official language of the country following the 1707 Act of Union which confirmed what had been the *de facto* position in the more populous Lowlands for several generations. Gaelic also suffered severely in the 18th and 19th centuries as a result of the Government attack on all aspects of Highland culture following the defeat of the Jacobites in 1746, and from the effects of the Clearances, which destroyed many Gaelic-speaking communities throughout the Highlands. (Information source: www.visitscotland.com , access in August 2007).

the Island of Great Britain. Most of those people are not aware of the existence of distinct parliaments.

"The longing of the people of Scotland for their own Parliament rings clear and true every time opinion is sounded. We believe that the momentum for change is now too great to deny; and that a Scottish Parliament will soon be meeting for the first time in nearly three centuries." That is the preface of one of the reports that contained proposals for the implementation of a devolution scheme, rather than arguments for and against devolution, produced by the Scottish Constitutional Convention (SCC), composed of representatives from several of the political parties in Scotland, local authorities, the churches and many voluntary and other public bodies and organizations.[6]

The Scottish Parliament remained an important element in Scottish national identity what influenced the 1979 Scotland referendum to establish a devolved Scottish Parliament – unfortunately the attempt failed. Although a majority of voters voted for the Parliament, the referendum failed to reach the 40% of the total electorate threshold necessary to have it approved. In September 1997 a referendum of the Scottish electorate secured a large majority in favor of the establishment of a new devolved Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. An election was held in May 1999, and power was transferred from Westminster on July 1 of the same year. Since the 1960s the Devolution process had been proved a fight against "depersonalization" from the part of Scotland's people who wished to break up with England's remaining centralization of power. Scotland's government conquered its independence from Westminster, and – as mentioned – on the first of July, in 1999 is declared the official opening of the Scottish Parliament, however, the expecting moment of finally having a brand new building for it just happens in 2004 with the construction of Scotland's most important decision-making headquarters in Holyrood, Edinburgh.

Fig. 6

[6] Information available at www.scottish.parliament.uk. Access on 10 April 2007.

It is convenient to remember here that Devolution happens when a national government gives power to a local or weaker one. Therefore, it is fair to state that Scotland's national identity is formed – besides many aspects of its culture, people and tradition – on the basis of political independence from the English Parliament, and of the continued concern for the perpetuity of its original language (either spoken in some regions or through literature) along with the English language.

According to Balibar, a language is the institution of institutions, it is what determines an individual as belonging to *this* culture, that is, he is "chosen" by it more than he chooses it, but also what serves to appropriate it; whence comes the possibility of designating the relation of each individual to 'his' language as the very essence of the relation by which he appropriates culture (BALIBAR, p. 184). Following this line of thought, in which Scottish people search the recognition of a politically and culturally independent national identity, I connect Balibar's view with Roderick Watson's[7] argument, "National identity is a cultural and political construction" (2007, Preface) in order to reflect on the impact of postcolonial ideas which bring a new look at identity issues in the 1980s and 1990s.

Alasdair Gray's work demonstrates great commitment to keeping the flame of Scottish language and identity; that is, he treats Scotland's cultural heritage as he offers readers a variety of intense sense of nationality. In *Lanark* we find through the two main characters, Lanark and Duncan Thaw, a textual co-existence which deliberates an impression of how the author naturally captures the essence of being inside and outside Scotland. As a local Scottish writer, he focuses on tradition and history whilst as a world's writer he wants to show the differences between Scotland and England to readers that are still mistaken about them. Language is absolutely essential within cultural boundaries, for Balibar, to have mastery over the language means to have mastery over the culture. In *Lanark*, Gray invites the reader to reflect on such matter by developing parts of Books One and Two with a different writing to sound as a local way of speaking among Thaw's family, friends and community. In chapter twelve, Book One, Duncan meets some older boys and helps them to carry some books and comics from the backyard trash,

[7] Professor of English at the University of Stirling and Director of the Stirling Centre for Scottish Studies.

> He was slightly appalled when the big boy turned and said, 'What d'ye want, ye wee bugger?' Thaw said, 'I'm coming with you.' (…) The boy with the hat said, 'Thump him Boab!' Boab said, 'Why d'ye want tae come with us?'
> 'Because.' 'Because of what?' 'Nothing. Just because.' 'Ye'll have tae carry things if ye come with us. Will ye collect the books?' 'Aye.' 'All right then.'[8] (p. 125)

Duncan lives in post-war Glasgow with his family as an ordinary modern working-class Scotland`s clan. The Scottish writer and critic Carl MacDougall, in the book *Writing Scotland* which is based in an eight-part television series, made by Hopscotch Films for BBC Scotland, says that, 'Alasdair Gray created a book which encapsulates the entire tradition of fantasy, otherworldliness, and duality that permeates Scottish literature.' (2004, p.98) Furthermore, Gray contributes to making Scottish old way of speaking another interesting mark of his work leading to a revaluation of national identity.

1.3 The Scottish Literary Renaissance

Fig. 7

The interwar years were very representative for Scotland political scene mirroring a period of material disaster and social tragedies. Hope comes to light again in 1928 with the creation of the National Party of Scotland, later known as the Scottish National Party, which took over three decades to establish itself. For the

[8] *Aye* is a word meaning yes, used especially in Scotland. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2003.

Renaissance group, cultural and political identity were inseparable. (Watson, 2007, p.10)

Despite all its poverty, destruction and hardship, the inter-war period in Scotland is as well known as the New Scottish Cultural Renaissance moment. As stated by Roderick Watson (2007), Scotland's literature can be classified under three important periods or 'waves' in the long narrative Scottish writing. The Fifteenth Century and the Enlightenment as the first and second consecutively. The third is considered the Modern Scottish Literary Renaissance. Much of the character of Modern Scotland was created by Victorians whose Scots identity was to say the least part of a complex weave, in which national identity and ambitious were tangled up with English and Imperial relationships. For the purposes of this thesis, both terminologies, the New Scottish Cultural Renaissance and the Modern Scottish Literary Renaissance, are to be considered as the Scottish Literary Renaissance.[9]

The greatest name of the SLR is Hugh MacDiarmid, a pen name for Christopher Murray Grieve (1892-1978). He was a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain and helped to found the National Party of Scotland. MacDiarmid is recognized for marking modernism in Scotland's literature. As being a nationalist he satirized his own countrymen giving the Renaissance movement the necessary critical dimension. It is relevant to know a little more about MacDiarmid because his work comes to influence Alasdair Gray's own writing a few years later.

Language has concerned writers continuously and during this period MacDiarmid abandoned his English language poetry and began to write in *Lallans*[10],

[9] Hereinafter SLR.

[10] Scots (or Lallans, meaning 'Lowlands'), properly Lowland Scots, is a Germanic language used in Lowland Scotland, as well as parts of Northern Ireland and border areas of the Republic of Ireland, where it is known in official circles as Ulster Scots or Ullans but by speakers simply as "Scotch" or "Scots." Lowland Scots also has loan words resulting from contact with Scottish Gaelic, a Celtic language distinct from Lowland Scots still spoken by some in the Highlands and islands to the west. Loan words from Scottish Gaelic are mainly for geographical and cultural features, such as *clan* and *loch* ('lake'). Like any living language, Lowland Scots has changed to some extent over the years, though it has arguably remained closer to its Anglo-Saxon roots than English. Many Lowland Scots words have become part of English: *flit*, 'to move home', *greed*, *eerie*, *cuddle*, *clan*, *stob*, 'a post'. Information available at http://www.indopedia.org, access in January 2008.

what caused such effect on the literary landscape of the time. Although sometimes accused of neglecting the Gaelic side of Scotland's linguistic identity, MacDiarmid's influence, however, went much further than this. By putting writers together he managed to create the sense of a literary movement in Scotland of writers with shared aims. Neil M Gunn, Lewis Grassic Gibbon, Edwin Muir, Sorley MacLean and many others felt the benefit of his influence. MacDougall writes the following observation in his book *Writing Scotland*,

> MacDiarmid was a publicist and politician as well as one of our greatest poets. He opened the twentieth-century language debate in Scotland, launching what he called the Scottish Renaissance Movement. Scotland was a weapon in his struggle to write good poetry. He used standing stones to symbolize the purity of the ancient Scottish race and made them a basis for his vision of national identity. Like many other writers, he was fascinated by the continuity of human experiences the stone evoked. (2004, p. 12)

It is adequate to remember that stones have always been symbolically meaningful for Scotland's people even since 1296 when Edward I took away to England the 'Stone of Destiny', a symbol of Scottish power. Only in 1992, did the Secretary of State, Michael Forsyth take back the stone and placed it in Edinburgh Castle.

Reconnecting historical antecedents with modern ideas about freedom, nationalism and identity created a high-level consciousness on the Renaissance poets. They searched for Scotland's recognition worldwide as an existing country independently rich in traditions, language and literature of England. This nationalist feeling brings out Balibar's idea on nationalism. The philosopher states that,

> Every national ideology produces its own symbols, fictions, and myths in its own way and has a 'unique' mode of investing in the 'sites of memory' that help it become an 'imagined community' capable of developing its own model for the regulation of social conflicts. This does not in the least alter the fact that what is at stake is always the construction of a 'national identity' that will win out over all others and arrive at a point where national belonging intersects with and integrates all other forms of belonging. (2004, p. 23)

Intellectually the Renaissance was archaic. Its ambitions were democratic, internationalist, scientific, and socialist, but at a time when urbanization and mass culture – housing, industrial change, cinema, and radio – was determining a new politics, it was actually less urban than Hume, Smith, Ferguson, and the literati had been; its ambitions utopian and remote from modern Scotland. MacDiarmid wanted to recapture Gaelic Scotland as 'scientific': to return to a minutely observed, unromanticized nature derived from the praise-poetry of the bards.

An important doubt permeated MacDiarmid, he wondered how much of his nationalist voice could be heard by ordinary people, as T.M. Devine puts it, "The 'Scottish Renaissance' was undeniably distinguished but much of it had little direct impact on the popular consciousness in the short term. MacDiarmid had a vision of a nation born again through adoption and use of the old Scots tongue." (2000, p. 320). He also fought hard to restore a genuinely national culture, according to Devine. But MacDiarmid himself questioned the influence of his poetry in his 'Second Hymn to Lenin',

> Are my poems spoken in the factories and fields,
> In the streets o'town?
> Gin they're no then I'm failin' to dae
> What I ocht to ha' dune. (DEVINE, 2000, p.320)

1.4 Gray in context: the writing process of *Lanark* and his painting

Alasdair Gray started to write what would become *Lanark* today at the age of eighteen. He does not beat around the bush when saying his novel was influenced by Franz Kafka, since he had read *Amerika*, *The Trial* and *The Castle*, because he thought the cities in Kafka's seemed very like Glasgow in the fifties, "an old industrial city with a smoke-laden grey sky that often seemed to rest like a lid on the north and south ranges of hills and shut out the stars at night." (GRAY, p. 570) Gray continued

writing the book for two decades, throughout the sixties and seventies, but he never was hopeless, he knew he would have it published someday,

> There was a time when things got a bit depressing and, like many people I suppose, I contemplated suicide. Thinking: who shall I leave my papers to!? And no doubt THE WORLD WILL SEE WHAT IT HAS MISSED IN ME - quack-quack-quack! But I never got round to it. Too busy. (GRAY,*The Guardian*, 2007)

According to what Douglas Gifford suggests, *Lanark* dramatically changed literary creative consciousness, by virtue of the way in which it thrust the idea of the entirety of Scotland again to the fore. (PETRIE, p. 47) The use of the powers of the imagination to shed new light on the contemporary human condition is augmented and reinforced by an innovative approach to narrative construction in *Lanark.*

It is fair to think that during *Lanark'*s writing process, Gray's imagination has functioned as a rearview mirror; he looked back events of his own life, his beginning as a writer, projecting in his fictional character the process he himself had to go through to express his feelings and exercise his creativity. As said by Mark Axelrod (1995, p.104), "Gray abuses literary conventions and genres, questioning literary conventions and mixing realism with fantasy in combinations that strike the reader as perfidious." The notion of this combination of fantasy and reality especially in relation to satire is the focus of much of Gray's work in which the mix of these worlds is found in novels such as *Lanark*. In the documentary for his seventieth birthday, *A Selective Tour of Alasdair Gray*, for BBC Scotland (2004), Gray said that the first chapter of *Lanark* he wrote had became chapter twelve although it was originally planned as chapter one. He wanted it to be an encyclopedia of a book that would show everything that he knew about life or heard about it. Gray states that,

> At the beginning I was afraid I wouldn't know enough. I mean I hadn't had sex. I hadn't, I hadn't had sexual experience – full sexual experience that is to say, before I was about 24 I think, long after I'd left Art School. In fact the first person I had sexual intercourse with was my wife and..eh..she taught me a lot. (See ANNEX A for transcripts)

Questions such Gray's experience expressed through realism and fiction are going to be more appropriately discussed in the light of Linda Hutcheon's ideas in Chapter Three.

Gray's greedily form of writing, that is, his desire to put on paper everything he knows, has traces of MacDiarmid's craze for knowing all when he followed Rainer Maria Rilke's idea that 'the poet must know everything', by writing a poem that contained all knowledge he could have. As a consequence, some of MacDiarmid's later work is a kind of poetry reusing text from a range of sources. This led to accusations of plagiarism, to which the poet's response was 'The greater the plagiarism the greater the work of art.'[11]

References to sexual experiences and the use of metaphors and allegories are also a very valuable aspect of Gray's writing style, "Metaphor is one of thought's most essential tools. It illuminates what would otherwise be totally obscure. But the illumination is sometimes so bright that it dazzles instead of revealing." (GRAY, p.30)

Alasdair Gray lived as any boy in a working-class family, in Glasgow, in the forties and fifties. The Second World War served as a mark in his childhood, what later ends to be a mark in his writing as well. Since very young, Gray has loved to read fiction, poetry and history books. As a schoolboy he was motivated by his parents to study mathematics and language in order to make him able for a professional job via University. Gray says that,

> I consciously hated then (and still hate) the idea that anyone should suffer boredom and pain now in order to enjoy a better life later, but the ruling educational system was based on this, which may explain why I alternated between eczema and asthma attacks until my mid-twenties. I was urged to concentrate on maths, Latin and chemical formulas, which I could no learn because they were taught as mere memory exercises. (2002, p. 35)

While a teenager, Alasdair enjoyed spending hours reading in libraries demonstrating since then his love for books and the world of literature. In 1952 his

[11] Information available at www.bbc.co/scottishliterature, access on 12 May 2008.

mother died. He enters Glasgow Art School in the same year. Five years later, he graduates in design and mural painting receiving a scholarship. After that, he paints many murals in churches all over Glasgow and teaches art in Lanarkshire schools. In the next years, Gray participates in several political engagements like public demonstrations against the coming of USA nuclear submarines to the Holy Loch (a narrow area of the Atlantic Ocean reaching into the land on the west coast of Scotland, northwest of Glasgow).

In the early sixties, he becomes scene painter of Glasgow Pavilion and Glasgow's Citizens Theatres. During this decade, Gray painted murals and participated in various radio programs and BBC documentaries about his painting. Between 1972 and 1974, Gray attended Philip Hobsbaum's writers' group where he becomes friendly with Tom Leonard, James Kelman, Chris Boyce and others. When asked about his childhood and how he found out he was an artist, Gray says that he used to draw like all infants, he also answers that when he was eight or nine he knew he would write a story to be printed in a book some day. (*Lanark*, pp. 564 and 565, Tailpiece)

Having said that, it is important to notice how Gray's creativity functions. Yet he was able to feel his talent as a writer, he started as a painter, an art designer. Even being a famished reader, he professionally develops his writing afterwards. Philip Hobsbaum observes that, "The power of Alasdair Gray lies in the nature of the details recorded, and not in any extravagance of writing." (2002, p.8) His writing presents the same portion of details as his illustrations do (see ANNEX B), and it is clear that Gray's desire of giving his reader as many elements as he can through the narrative as well as through the drawings artistically illustrated in his books by himself. As one of the most important texts of Scottish contemporary period[12] *Lanark* is illustrated in accordance with each of its four books. (See ANNEX C)

I see Alasdair Gray a multifaceted artist, not only for his aptitude for writing fiction, poetry, plays and political pamphlets nor for his skills as a painter, but also for

[12] Based on Watson, Scotland's contemporary scene, between the late sixties and early eighties, has two key texts; Gray's *Lanark* (1981) and *The Second Life* (1968) a collection by Edwin Morgan.

his capacity of recreating his style at the age of seventy-five. Surely he plays an important role in the domains of contemporary literature and fine arts. Gray launched the book, *Old Men in Love*, in October 2007. According to Will Self, who writes the book review on the front flap of the publication, “Alasdair Gray remains, first and foremost, entirely *sui generis.*” In 2008, Gray presented a comedy called *Fleck*, which was published by Two Ravens Press (October 31, 2008). The play is based on Goethe’s Faust. Besides, *A Gray Play Book* – a collection of Gray’s plays from his first work, written at age eleven, to the 2008 one-act play *Voices in the Dark* – has just been published by Luath Press, independent book publishers based in Scotland.

To what concerns literature, Gray has different kinds of works – as mentioned above – his imagination produces from poems to novels and from plays to serious political statements. Another work, part of his bibliography, is *The Book of Prefaces* (2000), which took him sixteen years to be written. In the book he deals with the history of literature in Britain and North America. Through beautiful pages with black and red printing, Gray talks about many important names in the literary world, including: Marlowe, Shakespeare, Hobbes, Milton, Dryden, Swift, Pope, Burns, Blake, Keats, Byron, Poe, Tennyson, Brontë, Eliot, Twain, Conrad, Kipling among others.

> I consider this anthology a memorial to the kind of education British governments now think useless, especially for British working class children. But it has been my education, so I am bound to believe it one of the best of the world. I no longer think social improvement inevitable anywhere, but still believe (as my dad and grandads did) that good co-operative working brings us closer to liberty, equality, fraternity: the only state in which we are happy and sane. (GRAY, 2000, p. 631)

The excerpt above exemplifies Gray’s spirit of mind towards the importance of education as he criticizes Britain’s educational system, and, in addition, defending co-operative work. This is just a sample for the type of literature the writer conceives as much as the sort of interests his art searches and the problems he often reacts to, explicitly or read between the lines of his writing.

Amongst Gray's novels, maybe the most known and read are *Lanark* and *1982, Janine* (1984). In BBC Scotland, for the program *Writing Scotland*, in the part about Gray and his work, he says that,

> I had no plan to make a second novel after Lanark I'd spent twenty-five years making it. I just meant to write a book of short stories, then a book of poems, then a book of essays then a book of plays. Each perfect of its kind. But when I was writing my book of short stories my second book one of the stories began to swell up and swell up and turned into a novel, I think my best novel 1982 Janine. (GRAY, DVD, 2004)

His second novel has as protagonist Jock MacLeish, a traveling salesman who enjoys drinking whiskey and having dirty thoughts. The novel approaches subjects as pornography, loneliness and the real existence. In the *Book of Critical Appreciations* (edited by Phil Moores – see References), Kevin Williamson[13] tells how Gray's work first impressed him in the 1980s and comments on *1982, Janine*, "Jock McLeish is about as far from the macho Scottish male stereotype as you can get. (…) The women in McLeish's elaborate sexual fantasies (…)." He adds that, "McLeish is never quite able to gain total control over these women's actions." (2002, p. 175) The importance given to woman is a trace in Alasdair Gray's writing. According to Williamson, through psychological and sexual struggles is revealed one of the most endearing trademarks of Gray's writing. In *1982, Janine*, the author tries to understand what this female characters are thinking, what these women want and what makes these women different from their male protagonists. (p. 175) It is expressed beneath Gray's text that he really cares about those who most of the times need attention, who are marginalized in many ways, in this case, women who are misunderstood in a male society.

Apart from literature, Alasdair Gray's art was very much developed in painting and drawing too. "Each publication by Gray is as much a work of art as it is a work of literature" (Elspeth King, *Alasdair Gray: critical appreciations and a bibliography*). As a young man, he painted murals that can still be seen in the city of Glasgow. His

[13] Scottish writer, critic and publisher. In 1992 he founded Rebel Inc, going on to edit both Rebel Inc magazine and Rebel Inc Book. He is the author of poetry, fiction and non-fiction in various magazines and newspapers. Kevin lives and works in Edinburgh.

work as a book illustrator is, in my view, evidently influenced by Aubrey Beardsley, Blake and the *Pop Art*. Frequently used techniques for producing his art are: gouache and ink, ink and watercolor, oil and acrylic, ballpoint and pencil. Gray also makes use of canvas, newsprint (cheaper paper used for printing newspapers), craft paper and wood.

All his books have his own illustrations; they are always on the covers, some can take an entire page format or only small details, or sometimes can be found in decorative arabesques with some of *art nouveau* or tribal-styled traces. In *Lanark*[14] the illustrations inside the book are in black and white (See ANNEX D). They are a mix of apocalyptic references, including Hobbes' *Leviathan*, biblical allusions, Dante's hell, sea animals, Roman and Greek mythology, female figures, skulls and more. In the tale collection *Ten Tales Tall and True*, the illustrations are more 'childish' showing animals and their tales. *The Book of Prefaces*[15] brings black and red pictures of small animals, stylish hearts and flowers, the American flag, and the portraits of contributors and of Gray himself – his self-portrait. In the book *Alasdair Gray: Critical Appreciations and a Bibliography* which puts together many authors' criticism about his works, Gray illustrates with some of his symbols: a squirrel holding a big fountain pen, a cat standing on an open book, a naked girl, a rooster and an angel inside a skull. Besides these figures there are also a portrait of Lanark (the character) and some copies of his paintings inserted, like *The Fall of the Star Wormwood*, oil on canvas from 1960, which was painted for an exhibition called *Artists Against the Bomb*, but was never finished. In 1961 it was exhibited in Glasgow and Edinburgh. *The Fall…* is a chaotic scene with images of people watching the destruction of a city (See ANNEX E).

Gray also paints great self-portraits, he is able to give the viewer the same view-point as the artist, as an artist painting his own portrait as a science dissecting himself. For Elspeth King[16] not all artists can rise to the challenge of a successful self-portrait, which demands a rigorous analysis going beyond mere likeness. In

[14] All illustrations presented in the 2002 edition of Canongate Classics.
[15] Referred to all illustrations presented in the 2002 edition of Bloomsbury Publishing.
[16] She was curator of the People's Palace in Glasgow, Director of Dunfermline Heritage Trust, created Abbot House (a main heritage and cultural center in Fife) and, since 1994, she has been Director of the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum.

order to make his living as an artist Gray painted some important Glasgow's people's portraits and, as another source of employment, he started, in the sixties, to paint theaters' scenic canvases – backdrops.

In the late seventies, Alasdair Gray accepted a job in the People's Palace, in Glasgow. He worked hard to get the subject and composition of his paintings and drawings. He intended to finish the work for the eightieth birthday exhibition of the Glaswegian venue. The theme of the exhibition was to reflect the contemporary Glasgow. The People's Palace gained a collection of thirty-two works by Alasdair Gray, which reflected the social, political and cultural scene of Glasgow in the mid-seventies. Gray's exhibition was entitled *The Continuous Glasgow Show* and was himself who designed the poster and invitation taking portraits from several of his new paintings. According to King, *The Continuous Glasgow Show* was a turning point for the People's Palace, and helped secure the survival of the building to the present day. Gray's paintings, as she puts, "brought a new audience that identified with the ethos of the museum, and a new constituency that did not want to see it closed." (KING, 2002, p. 113).

The belief that art could affect people's lives, enhancing them if not changing them for the better, inspired Gray to paint murals in public buildings, which had been used as vehicles to express national and local identity, shared values and human aspiration. Likewise his illustrations and canvases, Gray's murals are very interesting in the artist's peculiar style. He has painted murals in some public places where all kind of people could admire and learn with his art.[17]

The true work of art is not within time and space limits, it is not temporal but it is universal because it records something that is part of the essence of the human condition and, for this reason, it deals with the conscience and feelings of any human being. In the beginning of last century the concept of *L'Art pour l'Art* or *Art for Art's Sake* referred to art with no concern to moralities or political, philosophical and social intentions. Art was only art. Caygill argues, based on Walter Benjamin's thoughts, that,

[17] See ANNEX F for a list of public collections where Alasdair Gray's work can be found.

> The last decadent attempt to restore the 'venerable' aura within the ghetto of aestheticism occurred as a reaction against the rampant commodification of art under 19th century capitalism. But the emergence of 'Art for Art's Sake' coincides with photography and the crisis of painting. (2000, p. 136)

Alasdair Gray has developed storyboards for an intended movie of *Lanark.* In his website we can find what may be scenes for chapters 5 and 6 of the screenplay.[18] Following Benjamin's reflection on the subject, as mentioned above, it is natural to think that if the movie of *Lanark* really comes out it will certainly become more known all around. If well produced and distributed, Gray's movie would reach an audience that neither his paintings nor books have managed to. An example of a Scottish author and book that was acknowledged as a success after becoming a film was Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting*.

According to Benjamin's reflection on the loss of *Aura* in the beginning of the last century; art is no longer in the museums, art can be produced in a large scale of mechanical reproduction (photography, posters, etc), what results in the crisis of painting. In comparison, today we are living a different situation. The twentieth-first century faces the crisis of having art *only* at galleries and museums. It is very common to access art by visiting virtual galleries in only one click these days. There has been a time, before the explosion of computer advances as the internet era, when art was safe in museums and galleries. Nowadays it is impressive how art can be located at websites or blogs. Walter Benjamin was suspicious about the modern reproduction of art in the beginning of the twentieth century technology, I wonder what he would think of the present age, with the new millennium's technological advances in the terrain of art that can be found, copied and even commercialized on the web

[18] In 1983 Alasdair Gray was contacted by the film producer, Ian Brown, and the director Sandy Johnston, who commissioned him to write a film script of his novel, Lanark. Working with Sandy, he produced three quarters of a script with storyboard – drawings showing scenes and camera angles. The film, planned to run for nearly 3 hours with an intermission, pleased and interested many film technicians, but no financiers. Information available at Gray's official website, www.alasdairgray.co.uk, access on July 7, 2007. See ANNEX G for a copy of the storyboard.

Alasdair Gray, some decades after Benjamin, asks the following question: “What use is Art?” And he answers it for himself,

> No use at all. It won’t help you earn money or get a job, or make friends and influenced people, but if you enjoy it, you have an extra pleasure in life, a pleasure as strong as religion and almost as strong as money making or drink. And unlike drink there’s no hangover after. (KING, 2002, p. 101)

On the contrary of what we may think of a European and rich country, Scotland was not as appropriate as England for painters because of its lack of patronage. King says that, “Most artists have found it impossible to live by their paintings alone. (…) Painting pictures has never been considered a ‘real’ or full time job by the majority of Scottish public.” (2002, p. 102)

According to art specialists, a piece of art is evaluated through a process that involves many aspects, there should not be any formula or pre-set pattern to judge the price of art. Because each work of art is unique, there are many items to be taken into consideration in order to appreciate or depreciate it in value. Factors such as: who the author is (authorship), the signature (authenticity – if the work is signed by the author it can be more expensive), the technique used (oil on canvas or wood is one of the most valuable techniques), the size of the work and other characteristics like the theme, the history involved, the artist’s phase and the origins of the work.

A long time ago, art was only enjoyed by a selective group of people and the auctions were attended by important dealers and wealthy buyers. To possess a work of art was and still is a good investment, but it has become more accessible since the *Pop Art* phenomenon; the artistic movement that was supported by the consumer society. The name of this movement was first applied by the English critic Lawrence Alloway, in 1954, seeking to designate the popular culture especially that originated from the United States. Influenced by Marcel Duchamp Dadaism, the *Pop Art* started to take form in the end of the fifties when some artists, after studying the symbols and products in the world of advertising in the US, began to make use of them in their work. Its iconography was based on television, photography, comics, cinema and publicity. Having as its major goal the ironical criticism towards the consumer goods,

the movement played with aesthetical signs, the mass media, and supersized-illustrations of day-by-day objects, transforming the reality in hyper-reality. Andy Warhol, one of the most important names of the *Pop Art*, made the Campbell Soup a symbolical piece of Art. In short, the *Pop Art* sponsored the transformation of ordinary things into fine Art narrowing the distance between Art and mass society.[19]

Since *Pop Art*, concepts as Benjamin's *aura* have been questioned and put in check due to all changes society has been through the decades that we feel puzzled and ask: how to evaluate art in today's world? What is considered art or not? Is historical context still a valuable aspect for the work of art? Perhaps it is not really easy and simple to answers these questions, however Benjamin states that, "The history of every art form shows critical epochs in which a certain art form aspires to effects which could be fully obtained only with a changed technical standard, that is to say, in a new art form." (1969, p. 237) Moreover, it is good to notice that the increasing intervention of technology in the production and reception of works of art tends to dissolve them and, the *Pop Art* movement in the 50s-60s, results in the decay of the aura. Benjamin predicted and feared the contamination and eventual transformation of art by technology. (CAYGILL, p. 137)

Among Benjamin's variety of reflection and essays, I believe that *Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century* – an essay which brings his analysis on the "Panoramas", the huge painted landscape sceneries that, most of times, picture the countryside into the city, what would be a utopian image for the philosopher – complements the matter of art discussed so far in parallel with Gray's work. Aware that in Walter Benjamin's piece of writing, he states that the panoramas of Paris, in the beginning of last century, had the function of declaring the revolution in the relation of Art to technology owing that both were – at the same time – an expression of a new feeling about life (BENJAMIN, 1969, p. 150), I assume that Alasdair Gray's murals had a similar function as that of the panoramas. His murals express (one of them can be seen in ANNEX H) nature, wild life, birds and trees. Besides, the creation of public art works in public buildings means that the art is in public ownership and usually, if it is

[19] Based on information available at www.historiadaarte.com.br, access in January 2008.

a mural painting, has no commodity value in the art market and is there to be enjoyed by all. Artists of panoramas (in the beginning of twentieth-century Paris) and Gray with his murals (Glasgow in the seventies) executed not only art, but a certain relief to people's eyes in the middle of technological and chaotic times. However, it is said that there were several attempts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to create a movement for public art (murals) in Scotland and all of them were short lived or abortive. (KING, p. 107)

1.5 Writing as healing: short stories, poems, political manifestos and the web

In order to start the last part of this chapter, I would like to emphasize Alasdair Gray as an extremely versatile artist. Nonetheless, his writings and paintings are still not well known worldwide.

> The art of Alasdair Gray is as original and creative in its conception and execution as his novels, short stories, plays and poems. Sadly this is a view not widely shared, otherwise this piece would be being written by a professional art historian, our galleries and public buildings would be rich with Gray's works, and his international reputation as a muralist in his native land would be as secure as that of Diego Rivera in Mexico and John Singer Sargeant in the USA. (MOORES, 2002, p. 93)

As far as we know Gray is not rich, he does not have a luxurious standard of living, he has not earned millions with his writings and paintings. He is an artist who in his mid-seventies seems to be happy in that condition. As a writer, he has already written all kinds of texts (fiction, poem, pamphlets, etc.) filling in the lines with the spirit and mind of a Scottish. Being a Scottish means to be proud of Scotland, to believe and fight for a real life-long independence, to forget but not underestimate past conflicts and, above all, to pass on Scottish cultural heritage. As a proud Scottish writer, Gray's writing process had helped him over the years to heal all resentments that his fight for a better nation might have once caused. "Work as if you

live in the early days of a better nation", is what Gray has believed and said in many of his works.

The plot of his short stories can be as a bit confusing and awkward for readers not used to Gray's satirical style as it is the plot of his novels. In *Unlikely Stories, Mostly*, a collection of short stories filled with humor and fantasy that keep one's eyes on them from the beginning to the end. In *The Spread of Ian Nicol* (1956)[20], Alasdair tells the curious story of a man who is sick, whose head starts to split in two. As the doctor sees the man's problem, he says, "But it looks like a face, ha, ha! How do you feel these days?"(p.4) The author does not provide the reader with many details allowing him to imagine what is to come, there is no information about the origins of Ian Nicol's illness. The short story advances as the character goes to a hospital where he becomes another person. The narrator explains the process,

> Gradually the lobes of his brain separated and a bone shutter formed between them. The face on the back of his head grew eyelashes and a jaw. What seemed at first a cancer of the heart became another heart. Convulsively the spine doubled itself. (p. 5)

It may be difficult not compare this metamorphosis to Kafka's, but in Gray's narrative, the character becomes another person, exactly like himself – not an insect. In this story the reader is constantly provoked by the apparently 'nonsense' as in the passage when both men – one the mirror image of the other – start to fight for an identity: who is who? Gray's work features conversations between his characters that bring out questions about background, identity and the value of one's 'self.' The story ends with the identical men leaving the hospital and taking action to have their identities legal. The only difference the men found through exams is that one of them had no navel, so one of them changes his name for Macbeth. Nevertheless, Gray's irony is described by the last sentence of the short story, "Sometimes he (Macbeth) and Ian Nicol write to each other. The latest news is that each has a bald patch on the back of his head." (p.7)

[20] See ANNEX J for a copy of the text.

I would like to open parentheses here in what concerns the references to Shakespeare, which are not rare to be found in Gray's work. In Ian Nicol's story, the name Macbeth is chosen and the part in which three doctors are required to examine and diagnose the men may be interpreted like the three witches in Shakespeare's Macbeth; in both, the power of foreseeing is very well put. *Lanark* itself has one of the characters named Duncan referring perhaps to the King Duncan of Scotland in Macbeth. In *Lanark*, chapter twenty-eight of Book two, the name Macbeth appears again as Thaw's acquaintance, "With a slam and clattering McAlpin and Drummond came in followed by Macbeth. Thaw gazed at them astonished and relieved." (Gray, p. 328)

The report of bizarre diseases which transform men in strange creatures happens to be a persistent theme which, at first, seems foolish and too surreal but, at same time, challenging and as it unfolds, it feels like the imaginative process becomes sharper and liberating. Douglas Gifford, in the *Postscript* of *Unlike Stories*, argues that when reading a work by Gray, the reader should be aware that,

> Behind all the superficial trickery and literary camouflage lies a deeply serious, if paradoxical, agenda: the fundamental questioning of his unstable position in an unstable world, along with very Scottish yearning, doomed to almost complete disappointment, for spiritual value and authority. (GRAY, 1997, p. 282)

Still in the course of short narratives, *Prometheus* which was published in 1983 in *Unlikely Stories, Mostly* and included in *The Oxford Book of Scottish Short Stories*, edited by Douglas Dunn, in 1995, is worthy to be cited. The story is about an old writer, M. Pollard, who lives alone in Paris. Among the books he has written is 'The Sacred Sociology' which content is not well explained to the reader, but it is clear the understanding that it deals with theological and philosophical issues about the creation of the world. The book was published in 1934 (the same year of Gray's birth). It is known that there is *The Sacred Sociology* (1946) by Durkheim and Bataille, but Gray does not mention anything about it in the story. Gray's text is full of allusions to many important names (Edgar Allan Poe, Anatole France, Claudel, Saint-

Exupéry, Beauvoir, Sartre, Chomsky, Shakespeare, etc). Andre Gide is mentioned in the following excerpt,

> I sent Gide the *Sacred Sociology* with a letter indicating that his protestant education had made him capable of appreciating it. He returned the copy with a seven-word comment: 'Literature cannot be founded on Larousse Encyclopedias.' (…) I am the opposite of Gide. I now address the public in order to be read by one woman I can reach in no other way. Love drives me to this. Gide was driven by vanity. (GRAY, 1983, p. 359).

Prometheus is a pleasant reading due to its allusions, references and passion. The text offers M. Pollard's (narrator and main character) point of view. He seems to know all about all and, at the same time, suffers for feeling old and over. The old and grumpy man meets Lucie, an interesting thirty-something woman who, unexpectedly, turns to be the love of his life. Intellectualized talks put them close to each other. According to Pollard, in one of his discourses, men have been deceived by words such God, destiny, nature, time, civilization and history, words that hide human's condition. He puts it in the following way,

> We are God, fate, nature, necessity, world, time, civilization and history. Common men achieved these limbs, this brain, the emotions and the skills and the languages which share them. Man is the maker of every blessing we enjoy, including sunlight, for the sun would be a meaner thing without our eyes to reflect it. The fact that man is infinitely valuable – that man is essentially God – underlies every sacred code. And when I say *man is God* I refer least of to God the landlord, God the director, God the ruler with the power to kill everyone for the good of the rest.(…) My gratitude is to God the migrant labourer, the collectivized peasant, the slave of Rio Tinto Zinc and the American Fruit Company. (GRAY, p. 364).

In one of his conversations with Lucie, Pollard says he needs help finishing his last and major work: 'Prometheus Unbound', the myth of Prometheus, which highlights the struggle between man and the Supreme power. Therefore, the bound man condemned to suffer as fighting for his ideas, seems to fascinate Gray, whose character plays the role of the romantic hero, able to sacrifice his own life in the

name of humanity. Pollard comments on Aeschylus's tragic poem with his friend, Lucie,

> (…) the tragic poem *Prometheus Bound* which was written by Aeschylus and it's the world's second oldest play. It shows Prometheus, creative foresight, being crucified and buried by the cunning lords of his world after they have seized power. But Prometheus prophesies that one day he will be released, and tyranny cast down, and men will see their future clear. (Pp 367-368).

In *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), Nietzsche says that Goethe, trough his poem *Prometheus* (1773), knew how to express what Aeschylus had offered to us by means of allegories. In Gray's short story, the use of fictional tricks also makes a Prometheus who transmits a certain satirical echo in breaking up with formalities that were considered sacrilege in the past. Even though belonging to different moments, the Scottish and German Prometheus share the same idea that man is not advised to believe in gods, but to believe in himself. Approaching his creative universe, hints of sociopolitical and psychological arguments invite the reader to question about the pretensions of a Scottish writer who makes up a French character suffering from brokenhearted frustrations as well as sexual and professional disillusionments that, although being talented, he cannot accomplish his goals. M. Pollard groans as he realizes that young people are taking his place, his existence. In this text, Alasdair Gray makes use of allegories and myths from the Ancient Greece in order to protest against the lack of freedom in Scotland because of the English influence in that nation. This way, Gray would be waiting for what was about to happen only many years after the publication of his story – the new Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. Probably the author's national feelings have inspired the Prometheus theme, the 'foresight' Scots have longed to materialize.

Besides being a creative novelist and short-story writer, I argue that as a poet Alasdair Gray is also inventive and intriguing, his approach to biblical themes and apocalyptical-based passages remind us of William Blake's own poems. Along with

Ian McCulloch[21] in the book *The Artist in His World* (1998), Gray illustrates with poems McCulloch's prints (see ANNEX J), what is innovative is that, this time, Gray goes through the inverse process, that is, he is not the visual illustrator of a book, he writes his content for another artist's pictures instead.

In the following poem, the creation of the world is questioned in a way that looks like Gray plays God having 'Adam' and 'Eve' as his puppets.

> Adam and Eve
> Perhaps because I planted it too far north
> the park today is showing signs of dearth.
> It is not good for man to be alone
> but did I give the keeper's wife so sharp a tongue?
> Why do they now sit brooding back to back?
> What do they find so charming in the snake?
> It will drive the other beasts wild, but naming them
> (the keeper knows) is a way of taming them.
> So why use jagged tools to manage my zoo?
> Or break bits off my trees? GET OUT! BOTH OF YOU![22]
>
> (GRAY, 1998, p. 14)

Irony and sense of humor are present in his writing, as usual. In the poem he conveys the serious massage of solitude, love, gender biases and nature in a lighter contemporary reading. In the lines, "It will drive the other beasts wild, but naming them" and "(the keeper knows) is a way of taming them", the association with Blake's art is, by all means, evident, once there is a painting by the English poet named *Adam Naming the Beasts* (1810).[23] However, that is not the only motive for comparing Gray's poems to Blake's ones. In the poem below, by William Blake, we feel reflections of beauty and subtlety in the bucolic idyll counterpointing with nature's bitter taste of fate disillusionment, as following,

> The Argument (from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*)
> Rintrah roars & shakes his fires in the burdend air;
> Hungry clouds swag on the deep

[21] Scottish artist who has exhibited his paintings and prints widely and has works in public and private collections. He was the winner of the Stirling Smith Biennial in 1985 and of the competition to paint murals for Glasgow's new Royal Concert Hall in 1990.
[22] Author's capital letters and exclamation marks.
[23] See ANNEX K for William Blake's picture.

Once meek, and in a perilous path,
The just man kept his course along
The vale of death.
Roses are planted where thorns grow.
And on the barren heath
Sing the honey bees.

Then the perilous path was planted:
And a river, and a spring
On every cliff and tomb;
And on the bleached bones
Red clay brought forth.

Till the villain left the paths of ease,
To walk in perilous paths, and drive
The just man into barren climes.

Now the sneaking serpent walks
In mild humility.
And the just man rages in the wilds
Where lions roam.

Rintrah roars & shakes his fires in the burdend air;
Hungry clouds swag on the deep.
(BLAKE, p. 59)

Both poems share, in different shades, a religious referential as well as the symbol of the snake, which is able to mean treason and sin. Other Gray's poem, called *Biblical Themes (shuffled like dreams)*, shows us his lyricism and religiosity. Names of saints and Jesus appear, just like the figure of the serpent again. This poem also reminds one of Blake's,

Astride a toy donkey Jesus trundles,
jaunty snake-cap on head.
A jungle cave. Lot's randy daughters
fumble drunk dad in bed.

The prodigal returns to see
– or become – what
seems a small stiff black baby
in a glass case or cot.

Saint Francis, elephant masked, addresses two
dangerously huge white pigeons without seeing them,
beside lines suggesting King Herod an bamboo shoot
without necessarily being them.

> Sebastian, much punctured, between one branchless trunk
> and two people who branch like trees,
> is tied to them all by very thick snakes in
> an air like black and white crumbling cheese.
>
> Burning bush. In a frame of eyes Moses flees
> like a small boy with a mad dog at his tail.
> Crucifixion. Jesus skips off having detached
> at least one very penetrating nail.
>
> (GRAY, 1995, p. 36)

Amongst the diversity of Gray's stylish poems, we can observe in *Six Variations on a Still Life* (refer to ANNEX L for the entire poem) a different type of verse that would be compared to the Brazilian concrete-like structure of poetry in which we can read from upwards to downwards and vice versa, from the left to the right or vice versa. Here follows a part of Gray's poem that presents a play with colors,

1	2	3	4	5	6
black on white wood	black on white wood	blue ground white line	black ground white line	tawny orange ground white	dark green ground white

(1998, p. 30)

In 1956 the concrete poetry was officially launched in the *National Exhibit of Concrete Art*[24] that took place at the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo. The Campos brothers, two of the main poets involved in the creation of concrete experiences, stated that, "the concrete poetry is the first international movement with the direct and original participation of Brazilian poets."[25] (NICOLA, 2003, p. 401) Whether Alasdair Gray had in any moment of his career as a writer a closer contact or influence with this Brazilian proposal of "poem-object" (*poema-objeto)* – which consists of a blend of multiple resources such as: the acoustic, the visual, semantics, typographical space and the geometrical distribution of the words – it is not proved,

[24] Free translation from the Portuguese *Exposição Nacional de Arte Concreta*
[25] Translation Mine

but the style of this poem is an interesting aspect to be noticed with the poem *Pós-tudo* by Augusto de Campos,

QUIS
MUDAR TUDO
MUDEI TUDO
AGORAPÓSTUDO
EXTUDO
MUDO
(2003, p 402)

Both poets, through the concrete way of expressing their thoughts, showed to be tired of the traditional verse exploring a new form of placing words and using a new structure of syntax as demanding the author an active participation through a multiple-choice reading.

It is possible to find in Gray's work an enormous sense of politics, a concern with Scotland's situation in relation to England and the world not only in his first works of fiction or poetry, but also in special publications on the theme. In *Why Scots Should Rule Scotland 1997*, he deposits a great deal of politico-economic reflections throughout a couple of essays. This pamphlet – as it is called – was first written in 1992 and completely re-written in 1997. Here, Gray intends to call Scotland's voters attention to how Scots are ruled. He argues that, "By being in Scotland you deserve a government as distinct from England as Portugal from Spain, Austria from Germany, Switzerland from the four nations surrounding her." (1997, p. 1) He keeps on explaining that his argument is not based on differences of race, religion or language but geology. Gray thinks landscape is what defines the most lasting nations. The essays contain dialogs between Gray and his publisher what helps to give the pamphlet a comprehensive study of Scotland's formation as a nation and the author's objectives. Besides this pamphlet, Gray publishes in 2005 with Adam Tomkins[26], *How We Should Rule Ourselves*, an impressive account of republican wishes. Gray and Tomkins first met in 2004 when protesting along many other people against the official opening by Queen Elizabeth of a new Scottish Parliament building. For them, this action would serve as a reminder that – for Scots and their elected

[26] Professor of Public Law at the University of Glasgow and author of *Public Law* and *Our Republican Constitution*.

representatives in parliament – Scotland continued to be governed by distant offices of the British Crown.

In the preface of this second pamphlet, the authors say that,

> Most people living on these islands believe that the Crown and its powers are effectively controlled by elected parliaments and that as a result Britain may be called a democracy. This pamphlet aims to undo these illusions. We believe the best kind of government is open, genuine parliamentary democracy. Here we set out the principles upon which our political beliefs are founded, say something of the history of these islands to explain how we arrived at our present state, and set out an agenda for republican constitutional reform. (2004, pp. 1- 2)

Although both writers consider themselves “men of the left”, neither of them belongs to, or represents, any political party and this publication is not an argument for socialism. According to them, it argues for a republic. Moreover, it argues for political freedom, democracy and responsible government. Both pamphlets are examples of Gray’s awareness with his nation’s identity subject, but the idea of Republic is clearly stated in the second in which he recapitulates the history of Republicanism since ancient Greece. In order to better expose his ideas, he divides the first chapter of the pamphlet in four principles: a) Popular Sovereignty instead of Monarchy; b) Political Freedom – the right not to be dominated; c) Social Equality – freedom of choice; and, d) Governments Accountable to the Public. Gray’s ideal government sounds quite utopian; however, it is interesting, genuine and represents many British citizens’ will for the abolition of the Crown.

Today’s world is totally absorbed by technology, speed of information and interaction offered by the use of a computer and, to be more specific, the Internet. It is easy to communicate with people all over the world through e-mails or chat rooms; purchasing all kinds of goods and contracting any sort of services are time-saving actions with only one or two clicks. Needless to mention all conveniences the web is able to quickly provide for its millions of users.

As a contemporary writer and artist, Alasdair Gray has also adapted to the virtual world keeping an updated official website (www.alasdairgray.co.uk), which

makes information about his work, bibliography, interviews, paintings and more, accessible to his readers and fans. *A Continuing Magazine of Material*, like the website is entitled, is arranged by Gray and Joe Murray with additional input from Helen Lloyd, and displays chapters or topics divided under *Magazines* issues, following a chronological order according to the insertion of material by the site's organizers. Gray's website also offers *links* to other web addresses indicated by himself. In addition to his homepage, Alasdair has had since March 2006 a weblog or a *Blog* (alasdairgray.blogspot.com) as well. In his work about textual genres within the digital technology context, Luiz Antônio Marcuschi[27] (2005) prefers not to treat the website (homepage) as genre, because he thinks this is only a specific ambience to locating a series of information which operates as technical support and is characterized as an electronic service. A Blog, on the other hand, is an emerging genre in the virtual medium that is meant to become even more popular due to its personal appeal. Marcuschi says that, "the essential difference between a *blog* and a *site* is the fact that the first can be easily updated in the form of a dated and circumstantial diary." (2005, p. 61, author's italics, translation mine)

Brazilian linguist, Fabiana Komesu, proposes this definition for a blog,

> A blog is conceived as a space where the writer is allowed to express whatever he wishes through his writing activity as well as choosing images and sounds that compose most texts publicized on the internet. (KOMESU, 2005, p. 113. Translation Mine)

The main difference we can notice between a Blog and a traditional diary or journal is that in the virtual medium, the writer needs the readers' attention, that is, the text must be read by the public. The traditional activity of keeping a diary implies, on the contrary, some privacy. Another particularity is that, a blog is usually accessed and changed many times a day and the readers can – most of times – interact with the Blog's author posting comments or feedbacks. No wonder that in the last few years many new skilled writers have started their literary careers by creating a blog.

[27] Professor of Linguistics at the Federal University of Pernambuco. He has been working as a researcher for Cnpq since 1976.

Alasdair Gray's Blog presents only his writings that may be letters, theater plays, short stories, essays or a reminder, like the next,

> 2007-09-07T13:22:26.422+01:00 Saturday 29th September Wigtown Book Festival, Scotland 1 – 2pm Talk, reading, Q&A event Monday 1st October London Press Interviews & Launch Riflemaker Gallery, Beak Street, London, 7pm Tuesday 2nd October London Press Interviews & Hans Obrist interview Riflemaker Gallery, Beak Street, London, 7pm Thursday 11th October Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh, 7pm, 'In conversation with Alasdair Gray. (alasdairgray.blogspot.com, access in January 2008)

Komesu deals with an important aspect concerning the Blog's writers, which is how to gain notoriety for one's own Blog in such a vast cyber space. How to call Other's attention? How to give your own Blog visibility making it accessed by other users? (Author's capital letter, p. 117, translation mine) One interesting factor about keeping a Blog is that one is able to interact; the interface between the user and the machine, but, particularly, the possibility of contact between the user and other users by using tools that make communication fast and without geographical limits. For Komesu, the interactivity notion has to be connected with time and space matters.

Both blog and website are important spaces for Gray. Besides showing material about his work, he also takes advantage of the virtual space to sell his writing and his art, thus shortening the distance between him and his consumers. Visitors to the site can buy limited or signed books from Gray's wife bookshop with a click. The site informs where Gray's art can be purchased, "Alasdair Gray is represented by *Sorcha Dallas Contemporary Arts*. Please contact the Sorcha Dallas Gallery at http://www.sorchadallas.com/info for these prints and other artwork."

Linda Hutcheon says that parody may change the value of the work of art, "Not only can parody destroy the Benjaminian 'aura' of an original work through reproduction but it can actually undermine that work's monetary value." (2000, pp. xiv and xv) Four pieces of his art are sold through the site too. *From an Eastern Empire* (Silkscreen Print 26cm x 40cm), numbered, dated and signed by the artist, costing £445 or $890; *Domestic Conversation* (Silkscreen Print 26cm x 40cm), numbered,

dated and signed by the artist, costing £445 or $890; *The Star* (Lithograph 20cm x 29cm), numbered, dated and signed by the artist, costing £399 or $798; and, *The White Dog* (Lithograph 20cm x 29cm), numbered, dated and signed by the artist, costing £399 or $798.[28] I could not say if Gray's work's prices are fair or according to the art market, so I make use of King's judgment, "Alasdair Gray, unlikely younger generations of Glasgow artists, has never exploited or monstered disadvantaged people, either in pursuit of his art or for profit." (KING, 2002, p. 98)

In fact, Alasdair Gray has taken advantage of Internet's facilities as having kept a Blog and a website for advertising his works, written or painted, as well as publicizing information about his interviews and new books releasing. As Gray has always worked co-operatively with other writers and artists to great effect, and it is known that an Alasdair Gray cover will always sell a book, it can be concluded he knows how to do his best 'marketing' and how to keep his eye on his own business.

[28] Information available at www.alasdairgray.co.uk, access in February 2008.

2 The New Scottish Writers Generation (NSWG)

Scotland is home to some of the most exciting new writing in the world and since the 1970s this tradition has bloomed more and more. In the middle of a delicate political climate in which the Scotsmen were – as usual – struggling for an independent nation, the *New Scottish Writing Generation* was conceived. It all started in 1971 with Philip Hobsbaum's (1932-2005), poet, critic and professor at Glasgow University, writing group, formed by young writers who shared the same idea of raising back the long-lost Scottish identity. (MARQUES, 1999) In the first half of the twentieth century, writers from the Scottish Literary Renaissance proposed the use of the *Lallans* language to better express their feelings and beliefs for a Scottish identity. On the other hand, the New Scottish Writers preferred a simpler way to stating their voice for an independent cultural nation by using the working-class language that can be presented in a mixture of English and Scottish Gaelic, which results in Scottish Vernacular. Post-Colonial theorist Bill Ashcroft (1989) makes use of the word english – as the language of post-colonial countries – to distinguish from the standard British English inherited from the empire. Hence it can be argued that Scottish writers from this generation have used english to differentiate their way of national writing from the literature made in England.

Likewise the writers from the Renaissance, the New Scottish Writers (NSW) also believed that cultural and political identity had to come together. The rise of vernacular Scots in these years might be compared to the similar determination to find Scottish voice and the vernacular revival that followed the loss of the Scottish Parliament in 1707. To this New Generation of writers, many names are important. James Kelman (b. 1946), for instance, contributes with a prize-winning book, the Booker Prize of 1994, called *How Late it was, How Late* (1991) which is about the

poverty in the suburbs of Glasgow in ordinary everyday language and local slangs going against classic literary English. Malcolm Bradbury claims that, “Kelman has brought an experimental, stream-of-consciousness vernacular to working-class Scots life (*The Busconductor Hines*, 1983, and above all *A Disaffection*, 1989.)” (BRADBURY, 1994, p.415) MacDougall says that when *How Late it was, How Late* won the Booker Prize, a judge asked for the rules to be changed so that nothing like it could appear again. Five years later, in an interview for The Sunday Times (May 4, 2009), James Kelman said that winning the literary honor in 1994 had harmed his career by making his work difficult to sell. When Kelman received the Booker, one judge, Rabbi Julia Neuberger, threatened to resign in protest, claiming the decision was “a disgrace” and the book was “crap, quite frankly”. The book is written in Glaswegian Scots and one critic counted 4,000 uses of the F-word.[29]

Writers like Janice Galloway (b. 1955) and Irvine Welsh (b. 1958) clearly shared Kelman’s sympathies; they were initially excited by his style and have used his influences to find voices of their own. When interviewed by *The Dark Horse* (an international literary magazine committed to British and American poetry, and published in Scotland), Philip Hobsbaum said,

> I was very lucky in my evening class in Glasgow, because James Kelman and Liz Lochhead were in the first ruck of people coming. I mean, really, you know, these are two major talents, and Jeff Torrington came in the year after. I do think of all the groups I’ve run that the Glasgow group was the best. For one thing, we had never made much headway in prose fiction, but in the Glasgow group: Alasdair Gray and Jim Kelman! I regard these as two of the most prodigious talents in fiction. I’m amazed: they’re both friendly with each other, they both live in Glasgow, and they’re so different. (Issue 14, summer 2002)

Most authors of this generation grew up in the 1950s, at the height of post-war austerity with a sense of urban decay, linguistic, cultural and class dispossession. The novels of disillusionment and decline that characterize the 1960s and 1970s are

[29] Information available at www.timesonline.co.uk. Access in August 2009.

partly a response to that situation, partly the last rattle of Scottish cultural inferiorism and partly the metaphor for a much darker philosophical view of the human condition in general. (WATSON, p. 160) In the beginning, things were very difficult for the new writers. Publishers in Edinburgh and London seemed to have no interest in their different style of writing and describing Scotland's common life new scene. Therefore, what the big publishing houses still looked for was the standard form of writing and telling stories in English. However, the manuscripts from the NSWG were being published in magazines and small presses around the Kingdom. In the late seventies, James Kelman, Alasdair Gray, Janice Galloway, Tom Leonard, Liz Lochhead and others distributed booklets of their work. Yet, some Scots did not believe a book was worth reading unless it had been praised in London, and it often had to be published there as well. Writers of this new generation had as a major concern to change the way Scottish readers would approach to their own literature. Furthermore, writers hoped to have some readers' opinions changed about books published and reviewed in Scotland itself. Once in an interview, Kelman said to the Glasgow Herald, "I wanted to help ordinary people to become aware that books and writers are not sacred and unapproachable."[30] It is common to indentify in James Kelman's fiction a great concern on depicting the working-class type, who suffers from the fragmentation and indifference of capitalist society. For Duncan Petrie (2004, p. 42), this kind of fiction ironically seems to confirm Margaret Thatcher's claim that "there is no such thing as society."

Alasdair Gray and James Kelman started to redefine the imaginative scope and engagement of the Scottish novel in ways that were as audacious as they were inspirational. They were united in their commitment to the lives of ordinary individuals. In addition, their work shares involvement with the creative re-imagination of urban Scotland, showing the city of Glasgow as a modern metropolis rather than continuing to reproduce the city's stereotype of urban deprivation and violence. Kelman's realistic and objective view of working-class society contrasts with Alasdair Gray's allegorically imaginative style of describing the struggle of Scotland's working class. Kelman chose to focus as honestly as possible on the mundane details of the lives of isolated people struggling to get by in an increasingly fragmented and

[30] http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk, information accessed in October 2004.

indifferent society. What really distinguished the vitality of Kelman's writing, though, was his innovative approach to language. According to Petrie (2004), this was a radical erasure of the rigid between the use of standard English for the narrative voice and of vernacular for rendering working-class dialogue, liberating his prose from the bad, externally-imposed hierarchies of sophistication, meaning and cultural power.

Like Gray, Kelman proved to be a prolific writer. Having initially been defended by small Scottish publishers, both Gray and Kelman were subsequently signed up by majors companies based in London, recognition of their importance as writers which also served to give their work greater visibility and status within literary circles.

To better understand the role played by Alasdair Gray and his generation in Scotland's contemporary literary scene; this chapter is followed by a brief historical account on what devolution meant to Scots, and the literature that has been made in Scotland since then.

2.1 Devolution

As seen in Chapter I, an important symbol of Scotland, the Stone of Destiny also known as Stone of Scone and by the Celtic name *Lia Fail*, which means "the speaking stone", was stolen from under the Coronation Chair at Westminster Abbey by a group of young people, on Christmas Day 1950, where it had rested uncomfortably since 1297. To understand the importance of the feat, one has to recall the political atmosphere of the time. Britain in the beginning of the 1950s was like one nation, and the dream of devolution had very little chance to become true. In fact, Scotland had voted for a socialist government since 1945 but to generally little effect because of the demographics of Britain. Support for the Scottish National Party stood at 0.7 per cent; Labor had withdrawn the commitment to Home Rule from its manifesto; and the Conservatives were at the high point of their electoral history

north of the boarder.[31] The stone event showed that it was already time for the Government at Westminster to pay more attention to the needs of the Scottish people. Most Scots wanted more for themselves and saw devolution as the only way to get.

Looking back on History, we notice that during the eighteenth century Scotland was still a separate kingdom, but it shared a king with England. King James II of England was also King James VII of Scotland. The English wanted Scotland and England to be united. Because Scotland had economical problems and needed to expand the limits on trade with England, the Scots accepted the union. Through The Union Act, Scotland and England no longer had separate parliaments, and a new parliament of Great Britain met for the first time in Westminster, London. Scotland, however, kept its own separate legal and judicial system, and its own separate Church.

For almost three centuries Scots governed by the English have longed to be self governing. In March 1979, in the middle of a great enthusiasm for devolution through a proposal for a Scottish Assembly, a referendum was held but did not succeed. In the eighties and early nineties, neither Mrs. Margaret Thatcher nor Mr. John Major, her successor to the British Parliament, showed any further consideration for devolving power to Scotland. In December 1992, twenty-five thousand Scots marched through the streets of Edinburgh to demand more democracy. In order to respond to the need of people, the Government promptly announced to reflect on Scottish interests. There were surveys examining the complex question of Scottish identity, which indicated that Scots felt themselves to be less British and more Scottish. Fitzroy Maclean (2000, p.224) points out, “The findings suggested that, as memories of war and empire receded, so the ties that had bound generations of Scots to the notion of Britishness were loosening.”

The General Election of 1997 resulted in an enormous defeat of the Tories in Scotland. The Labor, on the contrary, celebrated with the victory. The Tories were left without a single seat at Westminster and controlled not a single Scottish council. In

[31] Available at: www.telegraph.co.uk. Accessed in January 2009.

addition, Labor's promise to hold a referendum on the devolution issue was delivered in September 1997. According to Maclean two questions were placed to set out the terms of the Home Rule: 1) whether voters wanted a Scottish Parliament and 2) whether they wanted it to have tax-raising powers. Differently from the referendum of 1979, when Scotland seemed divided, this time there was a majority of supporters for a Scottish Parliament. The Scotland Bill declared that,

> There shall be a Scottish Parliament. It went on to define the areas where Westminster would continue to exercise control – foreign policy, defence, the major aspects of the economy, social security, ethical matters such as abortion, and broadcasting. All the rest would be devolved to Scotland. (MACLEAN, 2000, p. 227)

Unlike the 292 year-old predecessor, the new Scottish Parliament had women as almost half of its members, there was a coalition of parties, between Labor and the Liberal Democrats, there was a Presiding Officer, a collection of ministerial posts and a First Minister rather than a Prime Minister. The three First Ministers of Scotland were all representatives of the Labor Party: Donald Dewar (May 7, 1999 - October 11, 2000), Henry McLeish (October 27, 2000 - November 8, 2001) and Jack McConnell (November 22, 2001 - May 16, 2007). The current Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond (May 16, 2008) is from the Scottish National Party. Maclean states that "In the morning of May 12, 1999, Dr. Winifred Ewing, the veteran Scottish Nationalist and the 'mother of the house' announced, "The Scottish Parliament, adjourned on the 25th day of March, 1707, is hereby reconvened." (MACLEAN, p.228)

Devolution was very important to the self-esteem of Scottish people, not only as a nation, but also as individual citizens. Scotland now has its own Parliament where many of the decisions are made for the people of Scotland by Scots. Scottish sense of identity inspired other nations to fight towards independence. Wales also has a devolved level of Government, called the Welsh Assembly. And in 2007, power sharing returned to Northern Ireland where there is also devolved Government.

2.2 Post-Devolution Literature

The economic situation in Scotland was not favorable in the Thatcher era. Class values were being questioned, while working communities came under attack. Banks urged people to borrow rather than save. Edwin Morgan and Iain Crichton, with Liz Lochhead, Tom Leonard and Alasdair Gray reflected – according to MacDougall – Robert Burns's ideal and the changes in society, which were more than a shift in landscape or one section imposing its will upon another through economic necessity (2004, p. 62). Scotland in the 1980s witnessed the disintegration of the same working communities that had been forged in the Industrial Revolution. And with the destruction of the communities, the values that sustained them were also weakened. For Ali Smith (b. 1962), novelist and short story writer, the decade of eighties was really special because of the changes of government and the sense of being marginalized, there is a very strong aesthetic seminal reaction, "so what you get is a yelling of all the difference voices at once. Suddenly everybody is yelling to be heard" (MACDOUGALL, p. 62).

Étienne Balibar, in his discourse on class struggle, claims that they have disappeared in the capitalist world for two reasons: the first is due to those who lay claim to it seem to have less and less purchase on the complexity of the social; and the second, because in the case of the majority of people and in the most significant political arenas, classes themselves have lost their *visible identity*. Balibar continues, "Their identity, then, has come more and more to seem like a myth. It is a myth, one might say, that has been fabricated by theory, and projected on to real history by the ideology of organizations (…) and more or less completely 'internalized' by heterogeneous social groups (…)" (1991, p.156). Balibar's arguments, in my opinion, seem to be suitable for the situation in Scotland in the eighties when the traditional class values and certainties of working communities were made redundant. So, James Kelman and later Irvine Welsh identified a new underclass of people who had become marginalized to the point of *invisibility*. MacDougall explains,

> This new theme explored an individual isolation where politics is the protagonist and, by definition, cannot provide the answer. People are no longer defined by their job and community. The sense of belonging and expectation has gone; the hope that politics provided has been replaced by alienation and for many the very idea of political involvement is irrelevant (p. 63).

Approaching themes which deal with the marginalized in society, usually groups of young people that do not belong to the community, Irvine Welsh becomes a well-known author in the 1990s. His first novel, *Trainspotting* (1993), has become an international best-selling film, showing the universe of drug addicts. Welsh's popularity in the US was considered phenomenal, especially because his work is so full of deep Midlothian accents that even a Scot could find it hard at times. Like most Scottish writers, Welsh began elsewhere, "I started writing in standard English and it didn't make sense to me. Just wasn't hearing the voices in that way" (MACDOUGALL, 2004).

All writers from this literary generation have written about society's decline and social outcasts in Glasgow and Edinburgh. They have also had the tradition of meeting in a pub drinking beers and whiskies. In 1995, The *New York Times* sent a reporter to write about Scotland's new writers in a pub in Leith. The piece appeared with the headline 'the Beats of Edinburgh.'[32] A reference made to the 1950s an 60s America's generation of writers that was recognized by its subversive writing and bohemian life style.

According to MacDougall, there are those who believe contemporary Scottish writing presents a one-dimensional view of society, the fact remains that the range of Scotland's ideas has never been so varied or so strong. Sexuality and repression are challenged as frequently as issues of language, class and political status are confronted. Scotland's long tradition of poets who questioned categorization is being well maintained and though the mixed limits that have defined Scottish writing are still around, there has never been such a variety of voices heading off in different

[32] http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk, information accessed in October 2004.

directions, using more than one language and forcing recognition on an international stage. It is important to reflect on the forms writers of this generation deal with linguistic experimentation and literary innovation as markers of a new democracy and, moreover, by means of political subversion and resistance.

Life on the margins and dispossession were to be the main themes of several talented but younger writers who might be said to have followed Kelman's example, but without his or Gray's directly political focus or their affection for the values of an older working class. In particular, Gordon Legge (b.1961) and Duncan McLean (b. 1964) have produced a body of work showing the problems of some small towns and central Scotland. Their main focus is energy and expressive force of urban popular speech as a measure of their protagonists' own anarchic vitality. As a result, their writing shows the life of Scottish youth.

Regarding linguistic importance in post-devolution literature, we shall not forget about a relevant part in the entire Scottish literary field, the Gaelic literature. Based on the 2001 Census, there are 58,700 Gaelic speakers in Scotland, the language, which has been spoken for over 1,500 years, is at serious risk of extinction.[33] Moreover, the late twentieth and early twentieth-first centuries have been fertile terrain for Gaelic literature despite the fact that the size of the Gaelic-speaking community nationwide is small. According to Macleod (2007), authors Norman Malcolm MacDonald, Alasdair Campbell and Iain Crichton Smith (1928-1998) made the difference with their "Gaelicness". The writing may be in English, what is a literary strategy to attract English-language readers. They also usually blend the use of English with some passages of Gaelic, or give characters Gaelic lines. However, writers tend to prefer writing their work entirely in Gaelic so that the tradition is maintained among their community. Another interesting fact is the number of people who have recently decided to learn Gaelic. Roderick Watson states that,

> Equally notable, however, is the number of non-native speakers who have learned the language and chosen to write poetry in it, either as a way of finding some finer personal or social expression, or as an act of resistance to cultural globalisation and the growing hegemony of English (2007, p. 332).

[33] Scottish Census, 2001. See Michelle Macleod.

Some names have emerged in recent years to carry forward Gaelic's literary evolution, prominent among them being Aonghas MacNeacail, Maoilios Caimbeul, Màire NiGumaraid, Meg Bateman and Anne Frater. The sustained strength of this field was firmly underlined by Polygon's publication in 1999 of *An Tuil* ('The Flood'), an anthology of 20th-century Gaelic verse extending to 825 pages.

Not only the use of Gaelic was important to Scotland's new writing in the end of last century, but also the use of vernacular Scots. Through a mix of popular and literary, writers of this generation seem to have been succeeding in their approach to readers. The latter decade of the twentieth century witnessed a dramatic transformation in the public profile and critical esteem afforded to Scottish literature.

The NSWG starts with Hobsbaum's group in the seventies. In the eighties, new names come up and old names like Alasdair Gray release great fiction. The high regard to contemporary Scottish writing is born out with its diverse literary, political and cultural tendencies as for the number of awards its authors have received. James Kelman was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1990 and won it in 1994. Alasdair Gray's *Poor Things* won the 1992 Guardian Fiction Prize and the Whitbread Award, and the Whitbread First Book Award went to Jeff Torrington for *Swing Hammer Swing*. Granta's list of best young British novelists' in 1993 included A. L. Kennedy and Iain Banks. It was a time when the British book world became aware of Scottish writing as a distinctive entity.

After devolution, the writing tradition in Scotland is renewed by authors whose work keeps continuously growing not only locally but also universally (Matt McGuire, 2009). For Watson (2007), difference and nationality has given way to a more complex engagement with a conception of identity that owes as much to psychology, gender and sexuality, or to a post-structuralist recognition that is language that makes Scottish, rather than vice-versa. Part of that construction is the recognition that Scots become who they are by way of culture, which is to say through the stories they tell about themselves, whether these stories are predicated on conceptions of place, or the remembering (real or imagined) of what they take to be their personal or their collective histories.

It is fundamental to observe that more than a political devolution, what happens in Scotland, in the late of twentieth century, is a cultural devolution. Stronger than they have ever been, Scots are so proud of their identity and a book as *Lanark* is recognized for making the difference in revealing a fresh look at old Scotland. *Lanark* has had an enormous influence on the succeeding generation of writers. Iain Banks (b. 1958) not only admires everything Gray has written, but thinks he is, arguably, the best Scottish writer of the twentieth century.

> *"Lanark* absolutely stunned me," he says. "I read *Lanark* and just thought, *Wow*! This is what you can do. It really opened my eyes as to what was possible in fiction. I was just amazed by it. My own novel, *The Bridge*, I don't think would have been anything like it turned out if it hadn't been for *Lanark*." (BANKS, 2009, p. 37)

Andrew Crumey concludes that, "Banks's book is not derivate of Gray. His imaginative credentials were already well established, as author of *The Wasp Factory* and *Walk on Glass*, as well as a variety of science fiction as Iain M. Banks" (2009, p.37). Banks's character lives in an awful world and is caught in a system of institutionalized class and economic structures, which matches Banks's political views with Gray.

The NSWG Scottish fiction has had a far large impact and, through the writing of popular authors such as Ian Rankin, Alexander McCall Smith and Louise Welsh, has reached a vast audience. The new energy in prose that followed the achievements of Gray and Kelman has led to an extremely diverse novelistic culture. The period between 1979 (when the first devolution bill was rejected) and 1997 (when it was won) was particularly fertile for Scots writers.

The impact of devolution suggests a new value and function of literary practice. Yet more books, and better books, by Scottish writers were published after the referendum, and most obviously, they did not concern themselves with only Scottish affairs, but with a wider cultural agenda. What is more, a growing number of Scottish novelists – including Iain Banks, James Kelman, A.L. Kennedy, Ian Rankin, Ali Smith, Irvine Welsh and Alasdair Gray – are known to many readers around the

world both in English and in translation. *Lanark*, for one, was translated into Portuguese and published by Record in 2001. The confidence of today's Scottish literature has been achieved thanks to the struggles of generations of writers. The confirmation of national identity became stronger not just by political resentment but also by positive developments in intellectual life – by books.

In twenty-first-century Scotland, a society blessed and disappointed with its taste of renewed democratic Parliament, "a land whose writers may be more ready than its politicians to explore the consequences of globalization" (CRAWFORD, 2009), there is an inheritance of spectacularly rich literary history; there is a literary present which is an impressive part of international contemporary culture (p. 727).

2.3 Alasdair Gray: the writing authority of a national treasure

Fig. 8

Spending half a lifetime turning your soul into printer's ink is a queer way to live.

Alasdair Gray, *Lanark, 1981*

Appointed by some of his readers and critics "a national treasure", Alasdair Gray has been doing a lot, not only to Scotland's literature, but also to world literature; what's more, he is currently seen as a cosmopolitan writer rather than a local one. According to Matt McGuire (2009), Gray has become – excluding Muriel Spark, who had been publishing since the 1950s – the most written about Scottish writer of recent years. By fulfilling his writing with real and fantasy, Gray naturally introduces historical and political concerns into his work. This blending, however, may be difficult to some readers around the world as Gray's novels usually mention

several matters of Scotland: its history, geography, politics and linguistic features. For Stephen Bernstein (1999), most American readers have little knowledge of such matters. Once the quality and power of Gray's writing are recognized worldwide, some readers tend to find hard to understand local issues that are frequently characterized through his work. Bernstein notes,

> Though in the United States there is still confusion about the distinction between England and Great Britain, let alone Scotland's location, this need not to be a bar to understanding Gray's work. The Anglo-Scottish situation is not unfathomable, and a complex grasp of it is not necessary to comprehend these novels. As Gray has said to an interviewer, "You would not be interviewing me if my book was only accessible to Scots. And all imaginative workers make art out of the people and places they know best. No good writer is afraid to use local place names – the bible is full of them. No good writer is afraid to use local politics – Dante peoples Hell, Purgatory and Heaven with local politicians. I don't think Scotland a better country, Glasgow a better city than any other, but all I know of Hell and Heaven was learned here, so this is the ground I use, though sometimes I disguise the fact…" (1999, p. 30)

Although aware of his beliefs and determined to pursuing national roots, Gray's work has not become provincial. On the contrary, his writing reflects his talent to imagine the particular requisites for confronting historical forces like the political challenges of the new millennium throughout universal dichotomies as love and hatred; war and peace; socialism and capitalism; wealth and poverty; health and disease; reality and imagination. Among all Gray's work was *Lanark* (1981) that has received a great amount of criticism both in Scotland and internationally. This novel has also been compared to James Joyce's work. Given the strength and beauty represented by Duncan Thaw's childhood and adolescence in the realistic chapters of the novel, the book was called by some "a portrait of the artist as a young Glaswegian". Furthermore, the artistic ambition and epic scope of Gray's novel encouraged many critics to suggest *Lanark* did for Glasgow what Joyce's *Ulysses* did for Dublin back in 1922. McGuire argues that,

> Steeped in despair and alienation, Thaw's narrative climaxes with the main protagonist committing suicide by drowning himself. He awakes at the beginning of book three in the fantasy world of Unthank, a nightmarish projection of some future Glasgow. (2009, p.33)

A considerable point in Gray's work is the dual identity of his characters, whose nature diversifies in the course of the narrative. In *Lanark*, Duncan Thaw and Lanark are initially two characters but as we read further, we discover that they turn to be only one. In the short story *The Spread of Ian Nicol*, previously cited, the main character is divided by two. Nevertheless, the doubling of protagonists is nothing new in Scottish literature. Bernstein observes that, "one only has to look at the works of earlier writers such as James Hogg or R.L. Stevenson to find abundant evidence of it." (2007, p. 168) As Bernstein notes, Gray's practice of doubling differs from that of his precursors. Hogg's Gil-Martin in *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) and Stevenson's Mr. Hyde in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) are used to externalize the most negative potentialities of Robert Wringhim and Dr. Jekyll. In contrast, Gray's doubles allow the reader to perceive patterns of growth and increasing psychological holism (2007, p. 168). Peter Kravitz completes, "For these characters sanity is not given, but won. Then they are whole, not split people" (1997, p. xix).

The issue of duality is reflected not merely in the narrative of *Lanark*, but also in its structure of four Books. The novel tells the stories of Duncan Thaw and Lanark as follows: Books 1 and 2 (Thaw) and Books Three and Four (Lanark). This is most clearly evident in the telling of two apparently disparate tales: one the recognizably realist story of Duncan Thaw growing up in the Glasgow of the mid twentieth century, and the other a fantastical story of a man called Lanark cast into a monstrous underworld. As Duncan Thaw loses his memory he becomes Lanark and spends the rest of the novel seeking redemption in a surreal and often frightening environment.

As I have mentioned before, *Lanark* is a novel not presented in a sequential order. The novel starts with Book Three, followed by Books One, Two and Four. Thaw's parts represent important moments in Gray's life, as the relationship with his parents and sister, art skills, first sexual (in)experiences and being part of a Glasgow

community, which he used to find dull as a schoolboy (both Thaw and Gray). The title of this novel deserves some attention too. According to McGuire, New Lanark is a real village located about 48 km from Glasgow near the source of the river Clyde. In the early nineteenth century it was a place of an extreme social experiment conducted by Robert Owen (1771-1858), an industrialist.

> Owen envisioned am alternative society to the one he saw burgeoning in the industrial heartlands of Britain. In the cotton mill at New Lanark he outlawed a number of practices including the use of child labor and the administration of corporal punishment for the workers. In the shadow of the mill he set up a very different kind of villa for his employees. The workers in the mill enjoyed decent housing, schools for their children, evening classes, free healthcare and affordable food. This idyllic social experiment is offered as a symbolic counterpart to Gray's nightmarish of unfettered capitalism in Unthank, where civilization is described as the pie that bakes and eats itself. (MCGUIRE, 2009, p. 33)

Autobiographies are seen as providing proof of the validity and importance of a certain conception of authorship. The novel *Lanark: a Life in Four Books* brings Gray's autobiographical data along with science-fiction and fantasy. On the genre of autobiography, Philippe Lejeune says that, "there must be identity between the author, the narrator and the protagonist" (2001, p. 2). *Lanark* has two stories, one with Lanark as protagonist, and the other, having as protagonist Duncan Thaw, who has many things in common with Gray's own history of life, thus the novel authorizes an identity between author-narrator; author-protagonist; and, protagonist-protagonist, due to the fact that slowly the reader comes to realize that Lanark and Thaw are truly the same one. The two narratives are entwined together without explanation, and so the chronological order of the stories.

Concerning autobiography as a genre, it is said that what is at stake is who speaks or rather who is authorized to speak. In Gray's project, the reader may feel through his characters the author's own voice in a political satire, as Petrie suggests, "The fantastical realms of Unthank and the Institute also provide Gray with a means of locating his protagonist within an imaginative metaphor for the destructive effects of global capitalism in the post-war period" (2004, p. 48). Lanark's narrative functions as both a reincarnation of Thaw, and therefore a continuation of his life, but also as a

series of repetitions or echoes that facilitate a richer understanding of the predicaments of both. As observed by Petrie (2004), Thaw and Lanark are essential loners. Both suffer from physical afflictions that are manifestations of deeper psycho-sexual problem – in Thaw's case chronic asthma and eczema (exactly like Gray), in Lanark's dilema, the condition of 'dragonhide'. Gray remembers that, "Healthy children exercise their imaginations by playing games together. I was not healthy. My imagination was mainly exercised in solitary fantasies fed by films and pictures and books" (p. 567). Thaw's frustration leads to insanity and suicide after he has possibly murdered a young woman while in a deluded state, and Lanark's search for sunlight results in only the briefest glimpse of his heart's desire.[34]

Lanark is also distinguished by a textual playfulness, most notably in the Epilogue in which Lanark the protagonist meets Nastler – a version of Gray the author, his creator – has an argument with him about his ultimate fate (PETRIE, 2004, p. 40). In the Epilogue of *Lanark* there is also an "Index of Plagiarisms" where Gray refers to all authors or works he has appropriated ideas through various *Lanark*'s chapters. I consider his creative tactic of including a list of names of where some of his influences and inspirations came from as an evidence of his authorship because even though "stealing" (as Nastler puts it in the Epilogue, p. 485) other writer's ideas he takes responsibility for it by showing how. Here I present one example of the Index,

> DISNEY, WALT
>
> In Book 3, the transforming of Lanark's arm and the turning of people into dragons is a Difplag[35] of the transformed hero's nose and turning of bad boys into donkeys from the film *Pinocchio*. So is the process of purification by swallowing in the last paragraphs of Chap. 6 (*See also* GOD and JUNG). (Author's italics, capital letters and parentheses. GRAY, p. 487.)

In the Epilogue of Book Four, Thaw meets his creator, who explains the whole novel to him. In this part the protagonist, Lanark, meets the character of the author,

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[34] See PETRIE.

[35] Diffused Plagiarism

whose name, Nastler, brings to our mind Alasdair himself. This impressive authorial figure, “not so very different from the Wizard of Oz behind the scenes” (WATSON, 2007), goes on to describe the genesis of the novel, his hopes for its critical reception, its literary predecessors and archetypes and his need for Arts Council grants. The name Nastler was in fact Alasdair Gray’s baby name for himself. What Nastler explains to Thaw is very simple and entirely serious, and by this time in the book is clear enough to the reader as well, “The Thaw narrative shows a man dying because he is bad at loving. It is enclosed by your narrative which shows civilization collapsing for the same reason” (GRAY, p.484).

On Authorship, the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer writes in *The Art of Literature* that, “There are two kinds of authors those who write for the subject’s sake, and those who write for writing’s sake” (p. 1). The first kind writes because they have something to tell, thoughts and experiences to share. The others are only worried about money, so they write for it. Schopenhauer continues, “Writing for money and reservation of copyright are, at bottom, the ruin of literature.” Alasdair Gray never was a rich man; he has always made a living from hard work as a teacher or a painter. In the BBC Scotland documentary about Gray, Liz Lochhead says that, “I’m sure Alasdair Gray has…eh…struggled financially all his life, as well as struggled to do the work and it would be a great advantage if artist didn’t have to struggle both financially and to do their work (…)” (See ANNEX B for Transcripts).

It was only after having *Lanark* published that Alasdair started to be recognized, but as already said he had to keep on working, writing, illustrating and doing his own *marketing* for better conditions of living. Therefore it is very clear that Gray’s works are made out of love. It may sound romantic, but as we read his stories, we feel his passion for telling them, he is the author who writes for the subject’s matter. Of course, these are not Schopenhauer’s days and one must try to earn some money, too. What is true all about it is that Gray has never cheated his reader; the philosopher contends that, “The writer who writes under the pretext that he has something to say or when he writes for the sake of covering paper, he is cheating the reader” (p.1). Alasdair has the profile of a sincere author, who writes his texts and is ironically modest in respect to his talent and writing reception. When asked how he would describe his novel *Lanark*, Alasdair Gray answered, “I say it is a Scottish petite

bourgeoisie model of the universe."[36] *Lanark*'s readers are, in my opinion, guests to a creative and authentic feast of words, parody, autobiographical and fictional plot.

The so-important search for a national identity is well expressed in *Lanark*, Alasdair concerns about giving Scotland a national voice, what reassures worldwide his condition of being a Scottish author. In *Lanark* the dual protagonists, Duncan Thaw and Lanark, attempt to determine what ideas and actions can help the city and nation and how to articulate them and make these ideas real.

Gray's authority over his *oeuvre* is verified not only through its content but also by its appearance, it is just a matter of paying attention to his works, that is, his books are always under his supervision and he is himself in charge for their illustrations and design. Gray has enjoyed controlling the entire process since the first publication of *Lanark*, "because Lanark was taken on by Canongate, not at that time a very rich firm. When I offered to do the jacket and provide illustrations they were quite pleased, because they wouldn't have to pay for these."[37] (GRAY, 2007)

When interviewed for BBC TV program on Alasdair Gray, poet Edwin Morgan said about *Lanark*,

> It gave people the idea that here was a possibility of Scottish literature opening into various ways where it hadn't opened out before, it didn't have to be Scottish in inverted commas didn't have to be realistic as novels had been, it could be very imaginative indeed yet be somehow in its own way very, very Scottish. (See ANNEX B for Transcript)

Some critics say that authors have authority over their own texts and that their writings can be read as forms of direct access to themselves. Having said that, my interest lies in Gray's flexibility to let readers access himself either through the revelation of real facts or through his imaginative game. As a still-alive contemporary author, Gray manages to be in touch with his audience through his website and Blog

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[36] For BBC documentary. See ANNEX B for transcripts.

[37] *The Guardian*, October 20, 2007, Alasdair Gray interviewed by James Campbell. Information available at http://books.guardian.co.uk. Access in January 2008.

as well as making himself available for interviews and documentaries. Undoubtedly, Alasdair Gray had known what he was doing during *Lanark*'s writing process. His ability of telling such an intriguing story in which his art is meticulously crafted proves the authority of his text.

3 *Lanark*: A Matter of Postmodern Identity

Lanark can be seen as an encyclopedic novel because of its perplexity in offering a variety of references. For professor Cairns Graig from the University of Aberdeen (1999), each of the novel's four books is an archetypal journey from birth to death, from death to rebirth, with Thaw-Lanark an eternal quest. Carl MacDougall sees the fear of human contact as the central theme of *Lanark*. According to him, Alasdair Gray introduces a fantastical version of this condition in the novel. "Deprived of love and sunlight, the citizens of Unthank develop a hideous skin condition called Dragonhide. Those afflicted can't be touched even if they want to be. Only love can heal them" (MACDOUGALL, 2004, p. 97).

As for myself, *Lanark* is such an intriguing self-reflexive fiction full of information to the reader that may be taken as postmodern not only for its fragmented form (the division and out of sequence chapters), but also for its fragmented content, which is presented in two different stories, through real facts and through fiction. Besides, in my point of view, *Lanark* is considered a metafiction for some reasons like: the novel presents its author as a character; the novel shows a writer creating a story; and, it is a novel where the narrator intentionally exposes himself as the author of the story. In postmodern terms, Gray's novel presents in Lanark's part reality as an artificial construction supported by Duncan Thaw's narrative. Furthermore, *Lanark* may be read not only as metafiction but also as historiographic metafiction, given that one of the two narratives in the book is based on Gray's own life and related to Scottish history. The other tells how a young man survives the loss of memory, a skin disease and the days in an uncommon institution called The Institute.

Themes like suicide, self-obsession and the fears of capitalism are crafted through Gray's irony to tell us that maybe we would rather have some more fun in life. In other words, Gray's novel is a game between fictional and real within the exploration of intertextuality and the discourses that belong either to fiction or history. According Linda Hutcheon we label works 'historiographic metafictions' (1988) because of their conscious self-reflexivity and concern with history.

Scottish critic Stuart Kelly[38] says that, "*Lanark* is more akin to a postmodern novel than to a modernist novel. *Lanark* was thirty years in the writing, and has absorbed many traditions that post-date Modernism." *Lanark* has been considered postmodern by many critics, but few are the serious analyses – under a post-modern perspective – that had been done since it was published in 1981. Luis de Juan's entire volume named 'Postmodern Strategies in Alasdair Gray's *Lanark*: a Life in Four Books' (2003) is a comprehensive critical postmodern account on the subject. Juan's analysis on Gray's book lies in the fact that ontological concerns are raised in terms of theoretical support. Juan chose to analyze *Lanark* through the views defended by Edmund J. Smyth. My reading therefore seeks to situate *Lanark* as a postmodern novel within Linda Hutcheon's thoughts.

Canadian professor-theorist Linda Hutcheon states in *The Poetics of Postmodernism*… (1988) that, "What we tend to call postmodernism in literature today is usually characterized by intense self-reflexivity and overtly parodic intertextuality" (1988, p. 146). In fiction, it is metafiction that comes along with postmodern. Postmodernism shall be seen as fiction that is at once metafictional and historical in its echoes of the texts and contexts of the past. Metafiction tends, above all, to play with the possibilities between meaning and form showing an intense awareness of the artistic production and the role played by the reader who – invited to enter both the literary space and the space evoked by the novel – participates in its production. Some critics argue that postmodern art explores the impossibility of presenting only one meaning or way of interpretation. However, it is true that it

[38] Information available at www.scottishbooktrust.com. Access on 10 October 2009.

happens through the narrator's/author's control inscribed in the text which seems to order, by the manipulation of such text, one single perspective.

Hutcheon observes that metafiction as a literary phenomenon is neither new nor aesthetically better than others. Hutcheon points out,

> In overtly or covertly baring its fictional and linguistic systems, narcissistic narrative transforms the authorial process of shaping, of making, into part of the pleasure and challenge of reading as a co-operative, interpretative experience" (1988, p. 154).

For Linda Hutcheon, postmodern fiction is interrogative and instructive rather than a reactionary cultural production. Tim Woods (1999) stresses that by acknowledging its ideological limitations, Hutcheon has described postmodern fiction as being Janus-faced[39] with regard to the dominant culture. Describing it as "historiographic metafiction", Hutcheon defines postmodern fiction as a mode which self-consciously problematizes the making of a fiction and history (WOODS, p. 56).

Linda Hutcheon affirms that postmodern fiction is connected with representations of history: the real issue for her is how and for whom those representations work. In her thoughts, postmodern fiction reveals the past as always ideologically and discursively constructed. It is a fiction which is directed both inward and outward, concerned both with its status as fiction, narrative or language, and also grounded in some verifiable historical reality. Postmodernism tends to use and abuse, install but also subvert conventions, through the use of either irony or parody. Hutcheon recognizes a political ambivalence in her description of the way "Postmodern texts paradoxically point to the opaque nature of their representational strategies and at the same time to their complicity with the notion of the transparency of representation" (HUTCHEON, 1988, p.18).

[39] The god of Gates, entrances and of new beginnings. Janus is usually shown in pictures with two faces, one of which looks back at the past while the other looks towards the future. Roman mythology. (GUERBER, 1994, pp.176-178).

3.1 The Interaction of History and Fiction

Fig. 9

The relationship between history and story is confronted in Hutcheon's thought. She is concerned about the matter of reference and the position of subject when confused by power and ideology within discourse. By creating the expression "historiographic metafiction", she "simplifies" postmodern fiction to a type of paradoxical literature which is self-conscious. Linda Hutcheon differentiates the terms "metafiction" and "historiographic metafiction." She argues that,

> Historiographic metafiction, in deliberate contrast to what I call late modernist radical metafiction (American surfiction), attempts to demarginalize the literary through confrontation with the historical, and it does so both thematically and formally" (1988, p. 289).

Historiographic metafiction comes out in the 1980s being similar to historical novel. Historiographic metafiction is the review of historical facts. In a very important moment for literature, a strong interest in history is revealed. Referring to the eighties, Malcolm Bradbury (1994) says that, "Many novelists began looking back to history. Retrospective fiction now becomes highly popular; indeed the return to the past began to assume near-epidemic proportions during the decade" (p. 404). History is

marked in literature throughout postmodernism attempting to restore almost forgotten themes.

Lately, there has been an updating familiarity of the historicity of history itself, of the importance of specific historical, sociological and cultural systems for its construction and practice – a development that is often linked to postmodernism. In fact, history (and what it concerns) is seen as one of the central sites of the discussion on postmodernism. Ideas and theories regarding the aspect of history and its relation to literature and culture have significantly influenced world contemporary literature, novels such Gabriel Garcia Marques' *One Hundred Year of Solitude*, Umberto Eco's *The name of the Rose*, John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and José Saramago's *Memorial do Convento,* among others. Concerning Scottish literature, we may say that history was also becoming more important with the NSWG from the late 1970s and after with, for example, James Kelman's *How late it was, How late*, which portrays the struggle of a blind man in the context of a working-class political history.

Hutcheon observes that fiction and history share the same act of remodeling time experiences throughout plot settings. Thus, they are complementary activities, and the difference brought by historiographic metafiction is the fact that the dialectical relationship between both fields was replaced by paradox. Moreover, rewriting the past either through fiction or historiography is a way of reviving it and avoiding it to be conclusive. By means of narrative, history is inserted in the fictional terrain. Hutcheon says that historiographic metafiction suggests that truth and falsity might not be the correct terms to discuss fiction. For her, there are truths and never The Truth. In order to illustrate Hutcheon's concept of historiographic metafiction, I will look at certain parts from Books One and Two that surround Duncan Thaw's life with sociopolitical, religious and autobiographical references significant to the historical moment in Scotland.

3.1.1 Book One – The War Begins, Normal, Underworlds, Nature, Mrs. Thaw Disappears

In *Lanark*, Book One comes after Book Three. It is in this Book that Gray presents the part of his novel that is real. Through character Duncan Thaw, Alasdair Gray re-tells his own history in Glasgow during the forties and fifties. The passage below portrays the place he lived in as a boy.

> Thaw lived in the middle storey of a corporation tenement that was red sandstone in front and brick behind. The tenement backs enclosed a grassy area divided into greens by spiked railings, and each green had a midden. Gangs of midden-rakers from Blackhill crossed the canal to steal from the middens. He was told that Blackhill people were Catholics with beasts in their hair. (GRAY, p.122)

The extract also gives the reader a hint on the matter of religion which is a recurrent issue in Gray's work and it certainly expresses how people usually feel about religious beliefs in Scotland. Scotland has always had religion as an important subject throughout its history, and it was common for people from different religious background to have furious arguments and criminal attitudes pro their beliefs. As a matter of fact, in 2001 the Scottish Parliament introduced a Bill to ban sectarianism and religious hatred. MacDougall (2004) says that the Bill suggests no single factor has influenced Scotland's psyche more than Scotsmen's relationship with God.

In Book One (Chapters eighteen and nineteen), 'Nature' and 'Mrs. Thaw Disappears', the name of John Knox is mentioned more than once. In the ladder, Mr. Thaw praises the view Mrs. Thaw has from her room at the Royal Infirmary, where she is receiving treatment for a liver disease, "You've quite a view from here." The narrator follows such comment,

> Below them stood the old-eaten Gothic Cathedral in a field of flat black gravestones. Beyond rose the hill of the Necropolis, its sides cut into by the porches of elaborate mausoleums, the summit prickly with monuments and obelisks. The topmost monument was a pillar

> carrying a large stone figure of John Knox, hatted, bearded, gowned and upholding in his right hand an open granite book (…) (GRAY, p. 191).

In the former, Thaw is drawing in the garden behind the Kinlochrua Hotel, where he spends summer vacation with his sister, when the minister comes to know about Duncan's health and talks about his drawing, reading, religion and faith. Duncan Thaw inquires the minister about believing (or not) in God and the words of Jesus Christ. After having talked a lot, the minister says,

> (…) I see I am boring you, Duncan, and I'm sorry for it, though I've said nothing that almost every Scotsman did not take for granted from the time of John Knox till two or three generations back, when folk started believing the world could be improved (GRAY, p. 184).

Being a Scottish Protestant religious leader, John Knox was against Scotland's Catholic queen, Mary Queen of Scots. He started the Presbyterian religion in and he also established the Church of Scotland in the sixteenth century. Concerned in (re)tell important events in the history of his nation, Gray approaches the theme of religion throughout the novel, but it is in this Book that realism appeals and he reinforces his views on such matter.

By giving answers to the questions in the Tailpiece: How *Lanark* grew (2002, p.566), Gray mentions that his father told him that when he was a boy he kept asking, "Will the next god be the *real* one Daddy?" Reflecting on his religiosity, Gray concludes, "I am glad he did not teach me to believe in that, for I would have had to unlearn it" (p. 566). In the novel, Thaw expresses religious thoughts and feelings. One of the most interesting is when this boy is having an asthmatic attack. The narrator tells us,

> At the height of the panic, while glaring at the irrelevant moon, his one thought had been a certainty that Hell was worse than this. He had not been religiously educated and though he had a tentative faith in God (saying at the end of prayers "If you exist" instead of "Amen") he had none in Hell. Now he saw that Hell was the one truth and pain the one fact which nullified all others (GRAY, p. 160).

According to Linda Hutcheon, “Historiographic metafictions are novels that are intensely self-reflective but that also both re-introduce historical context into metafiction and problematize the entire question of historical knowledge" (HUTCHEON, 1988, p. 285-286). Therefore, it can be said that historiographic metafictions reduce the gap between historical and fictional works by recombining the two genres (HUTCHEON, p. 286). Gray, through the Thaws, works on the damages war caused to Glasgow, pointing out historical events, such as the air attacks which destroyed parts of the city.

> From the living-room window next morning he saw a hole in the pavement across the street. The blast had shaken soot down the chimney onto the living-room floor, and Mrs. Thaw cleaned it up, stopping sometimes to talk with neighbours who called to discuss the raid. They agreed it might have been worse, but Thaw was very uneasy (GRAY, p. 129).

In ‘Normal’[40] Gray tells about the return of the Thaw family home after the war and how odd Duncan Thaw feels to see their flat “cold and disordered” (p. 146) Alasdair said for BBC TV program that he had lived his first twenty-five years in a flat in 11Findhorn Street, Riddrie, Glasgow. During the war they had to move but would come back later, where he stayed until the age of 25.[41] In the beginning of the chapter, Thaw asked his mother,

> ‘How long will it be before we get back to normal?’ ‘What do you mean, normal?’ ‘You know, settled down.’ ‘I suppose in a week or two.’ He went to the living room where his father was looking through letters and said, ‘How long will it be before we get back to normal?’ ‘Maybe in two or three months if we’re lucky.’ (p. 146)

Poor post-war conditions have impressed Duncan, who wonders about getting back to ‘normal’ as the city was messy with thousands of houses destroyed and homeless people. Gray evokes the historical situation of Glasgow after the war. The city, which was known as the second in the Empire in terms of industrialization and trade, was shaken with the decline in its industrial base. Right after Second World

[40] *Lanark*, Book One, Chapter Fifteen.
[41] See ANNEX B for transcripts.

War, Glasgow was found with a problematic housing crisis. There was an acute shortage of accommodation, existing mostly old and filthy tenements. Throughout *Book One* Gray shows elements belonging to Glasgow's society within Scotland's history.

Regarding Scotland's education system, Gray demonstrates through Thaw how a schoolboy would feel in the forties, actually not very different from many pupils nowadays. Thaw feels strange when his father asks him about what he plans to be. So, he answers in a way to please his father telling him he would be a doctor. Mr. Thaw enthusiastically says, "A doctor! Yes, that's a good thing to be. A doctor gives his life to helping others. A doctor is always, and will always be, respected and needed by community, no matter what social changes take place (…)" (p. 148). In order to be a doctor, Mr. Thaw advises his son to study and focus on Arithmetic, the subject Duncan has difficulties. "Thaw went to his bedroom, shut the door, lay on the bed and started crying. The future his father indicated seemed absolutely repulsive" (GRAY, p. 148).

Scotland has long experienced an international reputation as historically one of the best-educated societies in the world. The foundation for this reputation was laid in the seventieth century and was the result of Calvinist emphasis on reading the Bible. Putting men and women in touch with the word of God was seen by the Scottish authorities and clergy as of foremost importance. Under considerable international prestige, authorities took actions to give all students secondary education; something which was enacted in 1936. However, to maintain the meritocratic system which had developed in the 19th century, the secondary schools were divided into three-year junior secondary schools, leading to no qualifications, and the five year senior secondary schools, leading to the leaving certificate and university entrance.[42]

While Thaw was trying to solve a math problem, a hysterical rage gripped him. "Dropping the book, he clutched at his head and rubbed and scratched and towzled it until his mother shouted 'Stop!'" He continued, "But this is absurd! This is ludicrous!

[42] Information available at http://www.scran.ac.uk. Access on 13 September 2009.

This is unb-unb-unb-unb-unb-unb – he choked – unbearable! I don't understand it, I can't learn it, what good will it do me?"(p. 168). His mom answers by explaining, "It'll get you through your exams! That's all the good it needs to do! You can forget it when you've got your Higher Leaving Certificate!" (p. 168).

Book One goes on telling about Duncan Thaw's early teens living in Glasgow; his first love (classmate Kate Caldwell), his first sexual manifestations (masturbation and ejaculation), his friend (Robert Coulter), school days, writing and other pertinent issues to a boy's life. It is this very Book that best portrays Gray's own childhood as he says in the end of the novel, in the *Tailpiece: how Lanark grew*, "If you have read *Lanark* you will notice how much Book 1 – the first half of the Thaw section – draws upon my childhood" (p. 565).

3.1.2 Book Two – The Tree, Chaos, Genesis, Work, The Way Out, Surrender

Apart from telling about important events of the history of Scotland in Books One and Two, Gray also brings out remarkable facts of his own history. Thaw is a low self-esteemed survivor. He tries very hard to stick at his art and do what he knows to do but he faces many pitfalls on the way (asthma, problems with girls, lack of money, rejection, misinterpretation of his work, teachers, faith…). Historical metafictions have as their mark the attempt to reread history, searching the past for examples as way of believing in the future. On the matter of subjectivity and history, Hutcheon worries about the "de-centering of the concept of the subject." According to her, theorists of all political propensities have recently pointed out the trendiness of the "subject" in both criticism and literature (1988, p. 158). She points out that, "In postmodern works of art the humanist notion of the unitary and autonomous subject is both installed (…) and then subverted" (p. 160).

In *Book Two* Gray highlights details of his personal history through Thaw's hospitalization due to a very serious asthmatic crisis. As Gray, Thaw also suffers from eczema, "Diseases, mostly. Skin diseases and cancers and insects that live in people's bodies. Some of than are real but I've been inventing new ones. I can't stop"

(GRAY, p. 232). Inner details as these health problems are exposed in the novel to a degree which makes the reader feel pity for, what to a certain extent proves that Gray subverts his own experiences through Thaw's living. In 'The Way Out', Thaw finally decides to have sexual intercourse with a prostitute. After he is naked, they have the following conversation,

> "What's that?" "Nothing." "You call that nothing?" "It's eczema, it isn't infectious, look–" "No you don't! Stop! Stop it!" She got up and started to dress, saying, "I cannae afford to take chances." Thaw watched her, his mouth hanging stupidly open. He couldn't quite believe what was happening. She buttoned up her dress. "Get up!" She said roughly (GRAY, p. 344).

Such skin condition is going to be enlarged in Books Three and Four with Lanark's Dragonhide.

Art is a subject that considerably takes relevant portion in Book Two. Thaw succeeds in getting grants to attend day classes in art school. In chapter twenty-seven, 'Genesis', Thaw accepts to voluntarily work for Cowlairs Parish Church painting the whole of history – from genesis to present days – inside the premises. His initial project gradually changes to a more challenging endeavor: the painting of the universe gives place to the depiction of the creation process, and later it even includes the universe before creation had started, "I've decided to begin with the universe before creation starts, when the spirit of God moves on the face of the deep. I'll paint it on the back wall round the three windows" (GRAY, p. 310).

Thaw's inability to reach an exact perspective himself is a constant feature to be found both in life and in his paintings. In his paintings this lack leads to the creation of a figure that does embody this capacity: interestingly, this figure is God, a fact that may be seen in many directions. In the beginning of the painting process in the church, he stresses the identification between the figure of God and that of an author, which immediately produces a strong level of uncertainty. Next, God's position within the painting, where He appears together with his own creation, is a clear anticipation of Nastler's (the novel's author that will be revealed in the Epilogue, Book Four) appearance within the novel whose (fictional) author he is, thus starting

to blur the frontier between fiction and reality. By anticipation the role to be played by Nastler, the reader realizes other authorial characters such as the novel's implied author and Alasdair Gray himself. As has been previously mentioned in this work, Gray's career firstly started as an artist painting murals in churches and other places in Glasgow. According to Elspeth King (2002, p. 114), Gray has always maintained an unfashionable belief in the power of art to both change and reflect lives. "Alasdair Gray is an addict to perfection, and will spend hours, days, weeks, and months on a work, regardless of the cost to himself, to ensure the effects he desires is obtained" (KING, 2002, p. 117). The incapacity to reach perspective in his own life demonstrates Thaw a very insecure young fellow. He seems to be always trying to escape real situations and inventing new ones – not facing reality that is around him. He invents an alternative world in which he may develop a more important role, as if he could change people's feelings reactions towards his personality, actions and his art.

Back to his painting in the church, in the part that a respectful reporter from the Evening News interviews Duncan about his artistic piece, among several questions, she asks, "But why is Adam a Negro?" "He's actually more red than black, (…) and the name 'Adam' derives from a Hebrew word meaning 'red earth'" (GRAY, p. 325). If we take a look at Alasdair Gray's mural *Eden and After* (1966), next page, we will see a 'reddish' Adam. I believe Gray's work exposes the fiction of selfhood, that is, he brings up his inner instincts and identity, both through his painting and writing. In *Lanark*, a good example of this effect of subjectivity is built into Thaw's mural for the church, very akin to the effect caused by Gray's painting in which details and precision guarantee his authenticity. The theme of the withdrawal of paradise is very distinctive in Gray's work. Philip Hobsbaum once said that there was something of torment in Gray's effort to establish happiness, that the loss of Eden would become more emotional than Eden itself. (1995, p. 154) In addition, the poem *Adam and Eve* (cited in Chapter One of this thesis), Thaw's painting and Gray's mural are what we call variations on the same theme, however, this thematic insistence indicates the interest to create a narrative – words and images – that, in my opinion, collaborates to human's quest for the achievement of truth.

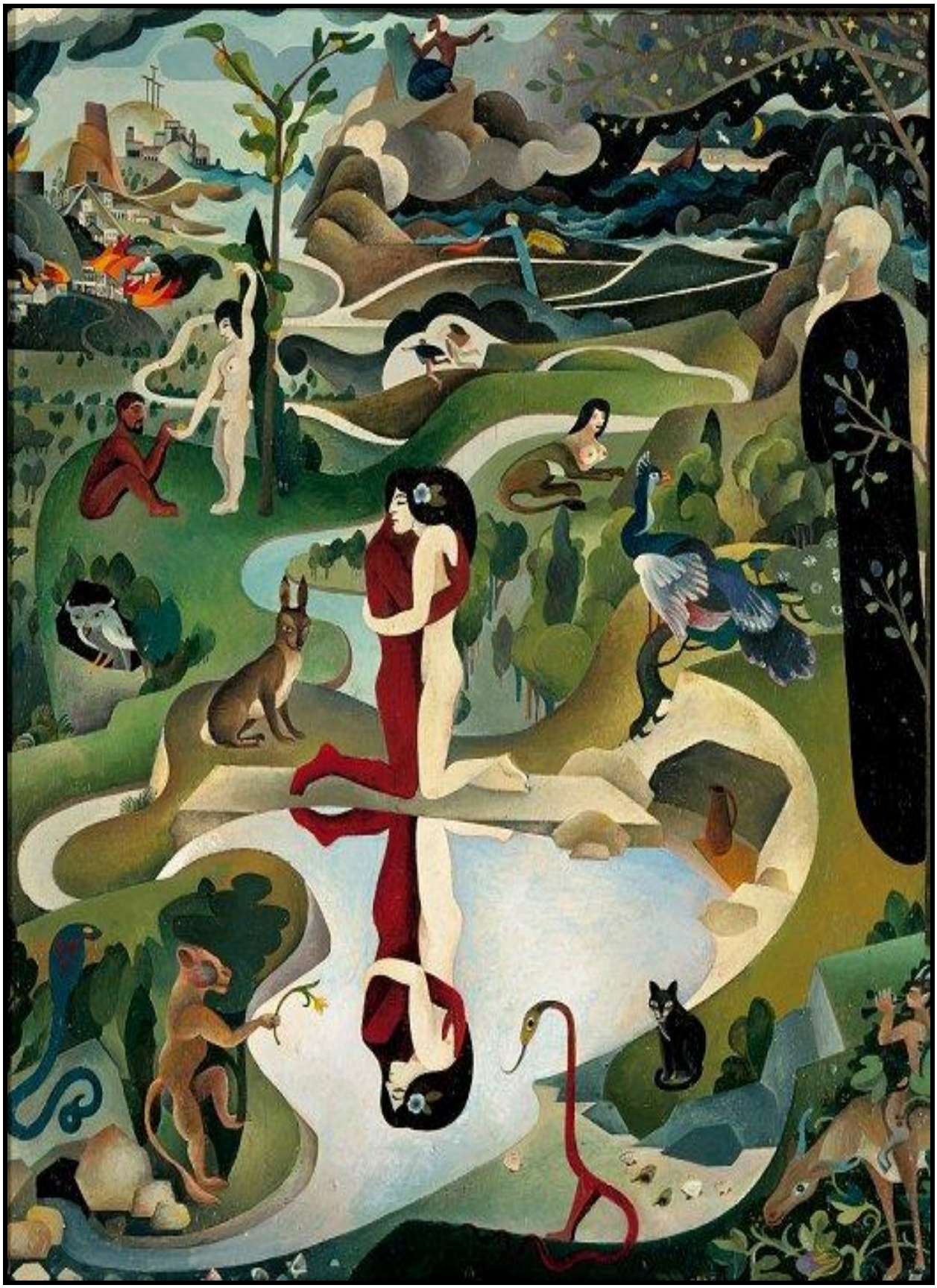

Fig. 10

Eden and After (1966)

In ‘Surrender,’ the last chapter from *Book Two*, the Oracle tells Lanark how Thaw’s history ended up. Lanark tries to find out if Thaw has really killed someone (Marjory), but the Oracle says, “I’m only able to tell the story as he (Lanark) saw it” (p. 350). He differentiates between “telling” and “seeing.” For De Juan (2003), the Oracle is here referring to one of the basic distinctions underlined by narratologists, that is, the necessity of differing between the narration of the words we are reading, and the specific angle of vision from which this narration takes place. The Oracle reports Thaw’s last sigh, “And when at last, like fingernails losing clutch on too narrow a ledge, he, tumbling, yells out last dregs of breath and has to breath, there flows in upon him, not pain, but annihilating sweetness” (GRAY, p. 354).

Gray employs in *Lanark* a new positive engagement with history in Scottish literature. As a historiographic metafiction the novel reviews important moments of Scotland’s history after war permeated with images that allow readers to their own interpretations. Indeed, there are many truths, many forms of seeing and interpreting it. Making connections with history and literature, I believe to be, a quite interesting way of dialoguing the facts from the historical discourse with the fiction in the literary one.

3.2 On Parody, Intertextuality and Irony

Lanark has a strong interest in addressing sociopolitical questions. This same interest in ideological issues is underlined by Linda Hutcheon as one of the basic elements of postmodernism. Hutcheon reports that it is true that on the surface postmodernism is often characterized by a self-referential attitude and that its main interest might seem to be in the processes of its own production and reception, she points out that inherent in any postmodern practice is the relation of aesthetics to a world of significance external to itself, to a discursive world of past and present – in other words, to the political and historical (1988, p.22). It is exactly this dialog between past and present that characterized the functioning of parody that Hutcheon considers to be one of the basic strategies in postmodernism.

When labeling a literary work as postmodern, one of the most important characteristics to be observed is an awareness of its own status as literature, a concern with its conventions of language and style. This feature is often described as metafiction and frequently involves a certain degree of parody and irony. Thus, “metafiction is a central plank of any discussion of postmodern literature.” (WOODS, 1999, p. 56)

Hutcheon chooses to define parody “as a form of repetition with ironic critical distance, marking difference rather than similarity.” (2000, p.xii) Defending that the past is still important and meaningful, Hutcheon argues that "through a double process of installing and ironizing, parody signals how present representations come from past ones and what ideological consequences derive from both continuity and difference" (HUTCHEON, 2002, p.83)

Gray's self-consciousness about critical matters is a frequent issue in his writing. As an imaginative author he foresees critical investment in his work creating the ‘Index of Plagiarisms’, which is humorously inserted in the ‘Epilogue’ in a parodic context meant to be ironic with explanations in the footnotes. Grays says that it is “to provide some comic distraction” and “to save research scholars years of toil.” (GRAY, p. 483)

> BLOCK PLAGIARISM, where someone else’s work is printed as a distinct typographical unit, IMBEDDED PLAGIARISM, where stolen words are concealed within the body of the narrative, and DIFUSE PLAGIARISM, where scenery, characters, actions or novel ideas have been stolen without the original words describing them. (GRAY, p. 485)

Linda Hutcheon makes use of the ‘Index of Plagiarisms’ to demonstrate how parody and plagiarism are connected. “In his novel *Lanark* (1981), Alasdair Gray spoofs the entire debate by providing the reader with a parodic “Index of Plagiarisms” for the novel.” (HUTCHEON, 2000, p. 39) She reminds that the reader is informed that there are three kinds of literary theft in the book. Hutcheon states, however, that there is a difference between parody and plagiarism according to the intention. One

imitates with critical irony whereas the other imitates with intent to deceive. (2000, p. 40) According to her, Gray reinforces his mockery by adding, “To save space these will be referred to hereafter as Blockplag, Implag, and Difplag.” (2000, p. 39) This parodic strategy at criticism also appears in *Lanark*'s book cover and in the illustrations marking each of the four Books, which are complexly related to the text.

3.2.1 Book Three – Rima, Mouths, The Institute, Diet and Oracle, Prologue

Lanark and Unthank are dystopian versions of Thaw and Glasgow and their lives are reflections of each other. After his death episode, that may be seen as suicidal, Thaw is given a second chance living as Lanark. The new life may be seen as a “‘Dantesque circle’ of hell where he will try to redeem himself and learn how to love.” (WATSON, 2000, p.220) The fantastical diseases in the Third Book of *Lanark* are, as Gray remarks in an interview with Mark Axelrod, “metaphors for bad mental states, like the tortures in Dante’s *Inferno*” (MILLER, 2005, p. 55) In Books Three and Four, Lanark spends time in the Institute having the opportunity to know a complicated system of administrative norms and paperwork. Lanark suffers with his memory loss, goes to a city where he initially cannot identify the name. Likewise Thaw, Lanark, in stressful moments, uses the strategy of staring at a determined point (in the ceiling or wall) to diminish pain or anxiety. Differently than Thaw, he acts more smartly with girls. He is invited to parties, likes to dance and has sex. He believes to have found love with Rima and their son Alexander.

In the beginning of Book Three, Lanark meets Rima at the Elite Café in Unthank. She is quite a simple girl to whom he becomes very fond of. As I already mentioned in the first Chapter of this study, Alasdair Gray’s website exhibits the storyboards of chapters five (‘Rima’) and six (‘Mouths’) from his novel (See ANNEX G). The storyboards were intended to depict an important part of the book for a future film project. Gray himself chose to represent the conversation between Lanark and Rima in her bedroom as the first drawings to be illustrated. Although it is not open declared in the novel, Rima is suspected to be Marjory, the girl Thaw kills in Book

Two. As Lanark cannot remember anything from his past, he tries to find out more about Rima's life,

> "Did you come to this town long ago?" "What does 'long' mean?"
> "Were you very small when you came?" She shrugged.
> "Do you remember a time when days were long and bright?"
> Tears slid from under her closed lids. He touched her shoulders.
> "Let me undress you?" She allowed this. As he unfastened her
> brassière his hands met a familiar roughness.
> "You've got Dragonhide! Your shoulderblades are covered!"
> "Does that excite you?"
> "I have it too!"
> She cried out harshly, "Do you think that makes a bond between us?"
> (GRAY, p. 36)

Lanark feels sorry for demonstrating to be surprised at the same time he did believe that the disease could unite them. He thought he had finally met someone able to understand his skin problem as well as his anxiety to be loved, but Rima does not show to feel the same, on the contrary, after having sex with him, she coldly asks him to leave.

Rima disappears for some days and Lanark worries something strange could have happened to her. Seeking for her in the city, she meets Gay, a friend of them, who joins Lanark to look for Rima. Gay has a disease as well. Lanark cannot believe his eyes when she shows him her hand.

> He had expect dragon claws like his own, but all he could see was a perfectly shaped white little hand, the fingers tightly clenched, until she unclenched them to show the palm. He took a moment to recognize what lay on it. A mouth lay on it, grinning sarcastically. It opened and said in a tiny voice, 'You're trying to understand things, and that interests me'.
> It was Sludden's voice. Lanark whispered, 'Oh, this is hell!' (GRAY, p.45)

"In this hell, I imagined human beings gradually turning into monsters, or devils if you like," says Alasdair Gray. (MACDOUGALL, 2004, p. 98) Here we can have an idea of the great parody of Dante's *Inferno* which Lanark is plunged. Gray's version of hell is blended with important aspects in Scottish literature, such as: fantasy, otherworldliness and duality. In the Introduction for the 2007 edition of *Lanark*, writer

William Boyd has said that, “Just as Joyce fitted an ordinary day in Dublin into the armature of the *Odyssey*, so Gray reconfigures the life of Duncan Thaw into a polyphonic *Divina Commedia of Scotland* ” Gray’s *inferno* shows the transformation of those who are cold and afraid to show their feelings by developing a disease which makes them ‘spiky and dragonish’. The irony is that these people will literally explode. Gray states, “They get hot inside because they’re not sharing their warmth with people outside. And eventually they explode.” (MACDOUGALL, p.98)

The part in which Lanark’s arm is fully covered with Dragonhide develops the moment when he decides to dive into an open mouth. Overwhelmed with fear and excitement he travels straight to the Institute what is a very symbolic scene. Gray suggests that the character is being swallowed by the system and parodies Beckett’s work “*Not I*” in which a mouth is present the whole time while the text approaches the themes of loneliness, mechanical existence and traumatic experience. When Lanark is inside the mouth, the image also recurs to the magically fall of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice* through the rabbit’s hole into a fantasy land. As Lanark falls down a deep hole he travels in time – that has a different concept here –, the narrator describes Lanark’s sensations as the following,

> Thought and memory, stench, heat and direction dissolved and he knew nothing but pressure and duration. Cities seemed piled on him with a weight which doubled every second; nothing but movement could lessen this pressure; all time, space and mind would end unless he moved but it had been aeons since he could have stirred toe or eyelid. And then he felt like an infinite worm in infinite darkness, straining and straining and failing to disgorge a lump which was choking him to death. (GRAY, p. 48-49)

Lanark wakes up in a hospital where he is sent for treatment. The Institute may represent the society isolated because of the darkness and spread of strange kinds of illnesses as well as implies the disorder of political structures in Scotland during the war. As one of the doctors says, “Our institute has been isolated since the outbreak of the second world war.” Lanark asks for something to read and the doctor replies, “There is only one way of coming here and you’ve seen yourself how

impossible it is to bring luggage." (p. 51) Ironically the opposite of Alice's Wonderland, what Lanark encounters at the end of his fall through the mouth is a fantastical 'hell'.

The parody of Dante's Hell is very evident in *Lanark* and also very significant for the Institute part. The Institute may be seen as the purgatory where Lanark goes to redeem for the sins from his past life, when Thaw supposedly committed suicide after having killed someone. The skin disease, darkness and lack of love are included in the price he has to pay in order to be forgiven. One important particular about this reading is the intertextual connections with William Blake's paintings for the *Divine Comedy*. As I said in Chapter One, Gray's works of writing and painting are definitely influenced by Blake's poetry (what can be seen in the beginning of chapter nineteen in Book One) and artistic techniques. In *Lanark* such intertexuality must be seen through the images for each Book and the metaphor of Hell itself. Parody is a form of imitation, but imitation characterized by ironic inversion, not always at the expense of the parodied text (HUTCEON, 2000, p. 6).

Fig.11

The Pit of Disease: the Falsifiers (1824-7), from Blake's *Illustrations to Dante's 'Divine Comedy'.*

The idea of ‘democratic’ history, emphasizing the role of ordinary people in history, as well as the importance of moral and ethical considerations is contemplated in the work of many postmodern authors. This is seen by the growing interest in social, cultural and historical events. Hints at the political role of memory/history are treated as a parodic element referring to Milan Kundera’s novel *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1979), when Lanark gets involved in moral and ethical issues in the Institute. He refuses to accept the ‘explosion’ of people because they cannot be cured, consequently being transformed in energy and food. Kundera’s novel treats politics as a constant, selective forgetfulness. The character Mirek in the book says ‘the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.’ Yet in a humorously performance, in *Lanark*, our hero finds the whole Institute schema repulsive attempting to fight against power in order to save people from death and cannibalism. This highlights again how strongly Gray’s writing is influenced by his political and ethical views for the pursuit of Scottish freedom and identity.

According to Linda Hutcheon, parody does not only have an impact but also it links the modern to the postmodern, “James Joyce to Salman Rushdie” (p. xv) I, therefore, link James Joyce to Alasdair Gray, since *Lanark* brings some reference of Joyce’s style and views, what made Gray’s novel become known as “A portrait of the artist as a young Glaswegian.” Actually, both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* also reveal Joyce’s influence on Gray’s novel. The pages layout and footnotes in *Lanark*’s Epilogue clearly show the intertextuality with the ones presented in Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*.

Memory plays a very important role in Gray’s novel; it determines Lanark’s lack of personal history. Throughout Book Three he tries to remember his past, he desperately searches for his identity. Gray states that, “Memory is an editing process which inevitably exaggerates some episodes, suppresses others and arranges events in neater orders, but nobody assumes that of their own memory. I don’t” (GRAY, p. 568) Lanark is able to only remember from the moment of his arrival in Unthank on. Lanark says, “I’ll have to work soon and I’ve forgotten what I’m able to

do. I should have asked Noakes (priest/doctor in the Institute) if there was a way of learning about life before Unthank." (p. 103)

Hutcheon argues that, "Just as nineteenth-century assumptions about narrative, *history* writing have been challenged, so novels themselves are now questioning the assumptions of the past about *novel* writing." (1988, p. 174) The professor suggests that the act of 'inscribing' is not neutral and a way of looking at the writing of history is in terms of how memory defines and gives meaning to subject. According to Linda Hutcheon, one thing that postmodernism has kept is the subject – the ego, and she considers important to do what Derrida mentions (1988, p.159), "The subject is absolutely indispensable. I don't destroy the subject; I situate it". In order to re-tell history, it is necessary to situate the subject through memory.

The movement towards the representation of subjectivity (rather than objectivity) explains the 'solid centers of consciousness' in canonical modernist works. *Lanark* then goes beyond modernism because Thaw's imaginative replacement world enter a kind of postmodern ontological hesitancy, for "readers are (…) often at pains to differentiate his world of dreams and fantasies from reality" (De Juan, 2003, p. 209). This foreshadows, De Juan argues, a more general postmodern depiction of incompatible, multiple worlds in Books Three and Four. (Miller, 2005, p.87) There are moments in the novel where Thaw/ Lanark seem to perceive his own identity as subject as whole and coherent.

Time is a distinct concept in Unthank and in the Institute. Initially, the novel calls attention to the opposition between the time in the mind and the time of the clock, between subjective time and chronological time. Thus, when Lanark arrives at the Institute we read that he feels aged ten years, "A short while ago I seemed ten years younger" (p.51), whereas later he will feel that time is advancing extremely slowly, "It seems many days since he had been there, though the clock showed it was not three hours." (p.76) According to De Juan (2003, p. 103), Lanark feels that the speed of time is not constant and that it has nothing to do with the clock time, and the reader starts to understand that this is simply an acknowledgement of the subjective appreciation of the temporal dimension.

The *Oracle* in the novel tells Lanark about his life before the Institute, the events he was not able to remember due to his lack of memory. Lanark is Duncan Thaw. Surprised by hearing information he could not believe in, Lanark interrupts the Oracle and asks, “But how do you know this? Who are you anyway?” The Oracle answers, “A voice to help you see yourself.” (GRAY, p.105) Gray’s experiments and humor reinforce his authority over the work once he worries about the novel’s consistency in accordance with his own life through the Oracle’s predictions about Thaw’s life. The Oracle’s account breaks in by offering a new side of reality: as if mirroring the structure of a cubist painting, according to De Juan (2003, p. 93), the readers realize that there is a hidden space in which a different existence is taking place.

In the Prologue section, the Oracle seems to live in a different world and in a different time. Gavin Miller (2005) says that Gray employs in *Lanark* a fantastic technique having as its narrator the Oracle. The Oracle’s narration can sounds strange: he wonders if he is in hospital and is perhaps just dreaming the whole thing up. “Sometimes I think my body is in the world where I abandoned it, lying in bed in some hospital, kept going by infusions into my veins. If so, I have hope of coming alive one day or dying utterly.” (GRAY, p. 117) The irony lies in the fact that even the Oracle, a construct to orientate Lanark, fails to remember his own history.

3.2.2 Book Four: Chapterhouse, Greater Unthank, Provan, Epilogue

One of the main intertexts to *Lanark* is Hobbes's *Leviathan* from 1651, which proposes that man is the ultimate and thoroughly material measure of all life. Christian theology and morality are dismissed; war is our natural condition and laws are made to control man's greedy nature, to protect us from ourselves.[43] Hobbes defended the idea of absolute power for the ruler or groups of rulers. The best ruler is an absolute ruler presiding over his commonwealth (the great beast of the state), which is envisaged as a surplus of manpower, to be directed according to the needs of the state to sustain and protect itself. Power unit was very important for Hobbes and, as a consequence, government could not be shared between, for example, the king and parliament. Historians have said that Hobbes's ideas reinforced Cromwell and James II's convictions to rule in an absolute way. Gray offers his readers his own version of Hobbes's work as the front page to Book Four, with a picture of the state as Leviathan. The same picture is placed on the cover for the Brazilian edition (Record, 2001) of *Lanark*.

In *Lanark*, however, the state has submitted to corporate capitalism and its true objective is no longer territory and conquest through manpower, but total control of wealth, energy and time. Nastler sees Hobbes's metaphor as a "monstrous one." "His state is the sort of creature Frankenstein made: mechanical yet lively; lacking ideas, yet directed by cunning brains; morally and physically clumsy, but full of strength got from people forced to supply its belly, the market (…)." (GRAY, pp. 489-490) In accordance to Watson (2007), this new Leviathan is 'the Creature', 'a conspiracy which owns and manipulates everything for profit" (p. 221), that working like a global extension of the Institute, in which international conglomerates like "Volsat, Quantum-Cortexin or Algolagnics" take the materialist saying that 'time is money.' This all are pieces in Gray's textual game when ironizing the global capitalist society.

[43] See WATSON.

Although Gray's novel deals with the coldness of capitalism, Lanark maintains humanitarian awareness. In an attempt to provide his family (Rima and Alexander) with better conditions of living, he starts working at a sort of social security system in Unthank, and worries about not lying to the public that sees him for help. In Book Four, Lanark also gets into politics, being entitled the 'Lord Provost[44] of the Greater Unthank' by the regional committee. On a political mission, he is appointed to represent the city in an important council meeting. After having traveled by a half bird-half machine-aircraft, through the 'intercalendrical zone', he arrives in Provan, the city in which the 'General Assembly of Council States' takes place. At the conference place, Lanark does not find his name in the event program and asks for someone to talk to about it. He is taken to see the king Nastler in his room, the Epilogue.

> "Please sit down."
> "Are you the king of this place?"
> "The king of Provan, yes. And Unthank too. And that suite of rooms you call the institute and the council."
> "Then perhaps you could help me, I am here–"
> "Yes, I know roughly what you want and I would like to help, I would even offer you a drink, but there's too much intoxication in this book."
> "Book?"
> "This world, I meant to say. You see I'm the king, not the government. (…)" (GRAY, p. 480)

Scottish politics is a matter that really interests Gray, as states Edwin Morgan, "Gray's books are Glasgow-based, but they have much to say about the government of these islands (British Isles), about capitalist society, about imperialism and small nations, about politics in general." (WATSON, p. 159) Besides his strong desire for a free Scotland, he also believes in the end of the British crown. In the pamphlet *How We Should Rule Ourselves* (2005), Alasdair makes clear how he sympathizes with the end of monarchy and to what extent he is a committed republican. There are many reasons why the British monarchy should be abolished. According to the pamphlet, among various reasons, the strongest one is the fact that "Being subjects of the Crown rather than citizens of a republic reduces us (the British people) to the state of slaves." (p. 53)

[44] The leader of the council in some Scottish towns and cities.

Gray's irony towards the validity of monarchy is clearly in the extract above. Gray/Nastler has power over the future of his character/subject Lanark, but he is not the government, that is, he is allowed to do what he wants and the government is blamed for what he does not want. Here, Gray seems to agree on power of an absolute ruler, but not meaning the king.

Hutcheon (1994) says that besides the "relationship between the said and the unsaid", she believes that "there is something else that characterizes irony even more particularly." For her, irony is very different from the other figures of speech. The word she finds to highlight this distinction is "edge." "Unlike metaphor or metonymy, irony has an edge; unlike incongruity or juxtaposition, irony can put people on edge; unlike paradox, irony is decidedly edgy." (1994, p. 37) For me, *Lanark* fully puts forth – through its witty intertextual relations, social-political criticism, historical accounts, duality and illustrations – edgy irony. Sometimes this irony is as directed as a bullet in the target, occasionally it is subtly between the lines. Nevertheless, according to Hutcheon, irony is in the eye of the beholder.

The novel's title *Lanark* (whose origins I wrote about in Chapter Two) ironically evokes ideas of social utopianism and the quest for ameliorative alternatives to the exploitations of industrial capitalism. As Phil Moores affirms,

> Gray's influence upon British writing in general, and Scottish writing in particular, is significant. In an age of small-scale novels of manners, he is writing huge state-of-the-nation addresses that deal with love, politics, war, death, childhood, religion and disease, sometimes all at once. (MCGUIRE, 2009, p. 33)

Writer and critic Kevin Williamson in his essay on Gray, *Under the Influence,* remarks the humor in Gray's novel as 'entertaining' stating that,

> The timing of the publication of Lanark could not have been better. Scottish writing needed a *Lanark*. Somebody, somewhere, *had* to articulate some of the concerns, fears and aspirations of ordinary folk in Scotland. But do it in such an entertaining, interesting and unique way that it made people sit up and think. At that time, for me, Alasdair Gray filled that vacuum. (MOORES, 2004, p. 171)

Gray's novel provoked a serious debate about the state of Scotland, bringing a debate on postmodernism. McGUIRE (2009, p. 38) points out that postmodern analysis has been highly popular in the critical interpretation of Gray's work although it is worth noting the author's own skepticism regarding such ostensibly trendy discourses. Gray reports that, "I have been perplexed by the adjective *post-modern*, especially when applied to my own writing, but now decided that it is an academic substitute for *contemporary* or *fashionable*. Its prefix honestly announces it as a specimen of intellectual afterbirth." (p.38)

In the Epilogue, Nastler/Gray tries to explain the principles of construction of the fiction in which Lanark appears, as well as the appropriateness of the strange positioning of this part of the book, in a paragraph of a highly postmodernist nature.

> Though not essential to the plot it provides some comic distraction at a moment when the narrative sorely needs it. And it lets me offer some fine sentiments which I could hardly trust to a mere character. And it contains critical notes which will save research scholars years of toil. In fact my epilogue is so essential that I am working on it with nearly a quarter of the book still unwritten. I am working on it here, just now, in this conversation. But you have had to reach this room by passing through several chapters I haven't clearly imagined yet, so you know details of the story which I don't. (GRAY, p. 483)

Mario Martínez (University of Leon, 1995) says that the interest of this quotation lies not only in the revelation of the autonomy of the character, foreshadowed by the numerous references (to Wyndham-Lewis, Flann O'Brien, and William Golding) but also in the impression that the reader has been allowed to recreate and come to know parts of the novel which Nastler/Gray, as "author," has not yet written. Moreover, through the Epilogue, Gray involves the reader in the construction of the narrative. Nastler says to Lanark that,

> Your survivor as a character and mine as an author depend on us seducing a living soul into our printed world and trapping it here long enough for us to steal the imaginative energy which gives us life. To cast a spell over this stranger I am doing abominable things. I am prostituting my most sacred memories into the commonest possible

> words and sentences. When I need more striking sentences or ideas I steal them from other writers, usually twisting them to blend with my own. (GRAY, p. 485)

Lanark brings a narrative that elaborates forms of complicity between Gray, the text and the reader. Gray plays with genre conventions in the Epilogue. He experiments the difficulties of the authorial position by problematizing the whole process of authoritative storytelling. The story displays a plurality of possibilities, skepticism towards generic types and categories, ironic inversions, a taste for parody and a historiographic metafictional insistence. If we check upon the sources of information beyond the narrative, there are, for instance, the titles in the top of each page in the Epilogue, which invites the reader to choose the best method of reading it.

Indisputably, the Epilogue offers a great deal of information about the work as a textual "world". Besides commenting on the process of creating it as an artistic form, Nastler and Lanark discuss the best ending for the novel and debate on the autonomy and freedom of the characters. In an attempt to justify Lanark's failure throughout the narration, Nastler quotes a series of literary precedents in which the hero does not achieve success, such as the Odyssey, the Aeneid, Don Quixote, the Bible, and Paradise Lost. Although Lanark wants a happy ending, Nastler denies him it from the position of power deriving from his writing authority and kingship, "If I give you an ending like that I will be like then thousand other cheap illusionists! I would be as bad as the late H.G. Wells! I would be worse than Goethe. Nobody who knows a thing about life or politics will believe me for a minute." (GRAY, p. 492)

The “Index of Plagiarisms” is placed with several references to writers and works *Lanark* was somehow influenced by. The Institute, for example, was created out of the following references,

> Gray explains, for example, that the Institute is “a combination of any large hospital and any large university with London Underground and the BBC Television Centre, but the overall scheme is stolen from 21st century London in *The Sleeper Awakes* and from the Selenite sublunar kingdom in *The First Men on the Moon*. In the light of this fact, the “conjuror’s” remark about H.G. Wells in the Epilogue seem a

> squid-like discharge of vile ink for the purpose of obscuring the critical vision. See footnote 5. (GRAY, p. 498)

On footnotes, Hutcheon sees they functioning as paratextuality, then, would be primarily a discursive one. The reader's linear reading is disrupted by the presence of a lower text on the same page. In historiographic metafiction the footnote conventions are both inscribed and parodically inverted. They function as self-reflexive signals to assure the reader as to the historical credibility of the particular witness or authority cited. The roots of this kind of paradoxical practice predate postmodernism, of course. Linda Hutcheon recalls,

> "The metafictional self-reflexivity induced by the postmodern footnote's paradox of represented yet resisted authority is made evident in novels such as Alasdair Gray's parodic *Lanark*, where the text incorporates self-commenting footnotes, which themselves also refer to a set of marginal notations (an 'Index of Plagiarisms', in fact), which is in turn a parodic play on the marginal glosses of earlier literature, such as the same Finnegans Wake or 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.' Chinese-box-structured metafiction like this frequently upsets (and therefore foregrounds) the normal or conventional balance of the primary text and the traditionally secondary paratextual notes or commentary. (Hutcheon, 2002, pp. 81-82)"

At the same time, the footnotes show us an editor providing useless and generally adverse comments on the text, such as "to have an objection anticipated is no reason for failing to raise it" (Gray, p. 481) or "this remark is too ludicrous to require comment here" (Gray, p. 492). The ironic heading "Index of Plagiarisms", in the margins of the pages, declares the kinds and degrees of intertextuality presented by the novel.

The "plagiarisms" try to draw attention to the text itself by retrospective reading. Thus, it is easy to discover the linkage between the "Implag" "I rise with my flaming hair/And I eat men like air" (GRAY, p. 94) and the original verse by Sylvia Plath "I rise with my red hair/And I eat men like air" (p. 495), but other plagiarisms are harder to find, and many are no more than minor details, of no great importance. For

instance, the references to T. S. Eliot, contrary to expectations, amount to no more than a single line: "I'm something commonplace that keeps getting hurt" is a drab Difplag of the notion of "some infinitely gentle/infinitely suffering thing" in Preludes (GRAY, pp. 487-88). Martinez still points out that, “Finally, and reinforcing the structural approach of the novel, some of the plagiarisms paradoxically refer back to themselves.” (1995, p. 102)

According to Watson, Gray’s novel can be read in the light of the traditional Glasgow novels. Lanark arrives in Provan in a self-consuming trip which ends with his descent in a kind of endless spiral landing; finally Lord Monbodoo offers him the possibility of abandoning Provan through a tunnel which leads him back to Unthank, by now almost turned into an apocalyptic place. The dystopian picture has been completed as a perverse version of Glasgow. Lanark covers an analysis of international issues by means of urban/national representation. Glasgow becomes an example of a post-industrial town in our global world. The depressive and hopeless image of Glasgow is used to represent Western civilization and the political and ideological criticism in Unthank affords international implications.

Interestingly, the pamphlet *Why Scots Should Rule Scotland 1997* resembles passages from *Lanark*. It has a solid account of long history processes used as arguments for a specific political, moral and/or ethical agenda. Monbodoo’s speech for the Council, for instance, demonstrates the same interruptions of the political pamphlet therefore reinforces Stephen Bernstein’s statement that “history comes more and more to occupy the centre of Gray’s concerns.” (1999)

Regarding Scotland’s identity, I would like to use some De Juan’s (2004) ideas that share my view on the issue in Gray’s *Lanark*. In order to sum up Books Three and Four – the part considered fantasy – I will review some points already seen in this study. Lanark arrives in Unthank with no past, no memory and therefore no identity. Lanark meets the Oracle who provides him with an account of his past. The

events he listens to does not prove very useful and Lanark continues his personal quest. He gets involved with politics and is nominated Lord Provost of Unthank. He fails in trying to represent and defend the interests of Unthank at the international meeting in Provan. Relating the novel to the British political context and the place Scotland holds in it, it is possible to read the novel by establishing connections between Lanark and Scotland. Lanark's lack of memory, past and identity can be seen as a reference to Scotland's trouble in defining its own identity as a country, especially if considering the events of the 1979 Referendum.

National identity matters are very important for Gray, whose work has been a valued literary instrument to elicit not only Scottish people but also people from the world to what is really relevant for a free nation. *Lanark: a Life in Four Books* conveys this message by putting in check, through Thaw/Lanark narratives, decent human values, goodness of heart as well as the concern for the weak and disadvantaged, and the importance of local truths, which comes through Gray's novel despite his postmodern playfulness. Moreover, Gray's work has the concern to serve as an argument for Scotland's struggle to be independent from England. Gray's *Lanark* clearly questions traditional assumptions about history and, in doing so, consider history's relation to concepts such as truth, meaning and subjectivity.

Lanark is mixture of parodic elements from *The Divine Comedy*, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Yong Man*, *Ulysses*, and Blake's art among others. While Gray employs a quantity of literary tricks (starting the novel with Book Three, imaginative use of typeface, illustrations that parody political, religious and literary contents, and the "Index of Plagiarisms"), it is his humor and his honesty that make this work successful. Once, in an interview, Gray stated, "Life has no simple, single answer or solution to its problems. Only the crudest religious or political propaganda suggests otherwise." There is no single answer in *Lanark*, but the possibilities contained within are endless. If discussion of Gray's work begins and ends with *Lanark*, it is for the simple reason that all of his other fiction exists within the borders of its imagination. The black sense of humor, the obsession with social injustice, the difficult acts of communication between the sexes, the homage, even in

altered form, to Glasgow—all manifest themselves fully in Lanark. The novel represents the absolute limits of Gray's eccentricity and postmodern inquiry.

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CONCLUSION

It was like an alarm clock going off, a wake up call to another place, a place that was all around me, which I was part of, but that now seemed unfamiliar and exciting.

Kevin Williamson about *Lanark, Alasdair Gray: critical appreciations and a bibliography*, 2002.

Throughout this work I have attempted to make *Lanark*: a Life in Four Books by Scottish writer Alasdair Gray more well-known in our academic circle. In order to accomplish my goal I chose to analyze the novel under a postmodern scope, having as theoretical support Linda Hutcheon's reflection on elements such as history, fiction, irony and parody. For a better understanding of the novel and the universe that surrounds Gray, it was essential to pay attention to important moments of Scotland's history and literary tradition.

It is very interesting to observe that, despite being an old nation – with centuries of history covering battles, monarchy, English domain, cultural heritage, political discussions – Scotland has recently received its Parliament again. Before the satisfactory referendum, Scots fighting spirit for political power recognition encouraged writers to review the tradition of Scottish literature. Through the twentieth century, Scottish literature experienced intense refreshment with the new Renaissance, having MacDiarmid as ambassador, the first New Scottish Writers (Kelman, Leonard, Galloway, Lochhead and Gray), who pointed up working class values in the early seventies, and all writers that followed their steps from the 1980s onwards.

Much of the cultural change of Scotland that preceded the referendum vote of 1997, showing that the majority of the Scottish people wanted their own Parliament, was persuaded by writers. Scottish writer and critic Carl MacDougall (2004) says

that, “Our range of voices, sense of place and the mythologies we’ve created continue to tell the world who we are and what made us this way.” According to him, Scottish literature has been their most vibrant export, spreading their ideas and a vision of a country and themselves across the world.

As a matter of fact, Scotland has always had a very strong literary tradition, which, however, was a bit shaken with insecurity and low esteem provoked by pre-devolution years, especially with the referendum of 1979 that did not approve home rule. Alasdair Gray’s *Lanark*, first published in 1981, plays important part in promoting Scottish identity through literature. *Lanark* did much to revive connections with Scotland's history in an innovative format. Though economics seemed to rule most of the time, the novel helped to remind the people of Scotland that they had once formed a powerful, independent nation.

In *Lanark*, Gray’s genius allows the reader to learn about Scottish history and politics, but the plot also covers universal themes such as love, humankind, faith fears, and identity search. Structured in an out of order way with puzzling illustrations, *Lanark* is what many critics have considered “a modern vision of hell”. I shall say it is a postmodern vision of hell. Due to the extensive use of playful, historiographic metafictional and intertextual devises, Gray is seen as the postmodern voice of Scotland.

I totally agree with the fact that *Lanark* is a postmodern work in the sense that it departs from historical facts to their fictionalized and reinterpretated version, what Linda Hutcheon sees as the detotalization of History through reviewing historical fact(s) and the presentation of other possibilities, other interpretations. However, after finishing this study, I find myself confronting with a few questions. Is the categorization still necessary nowadays? In the eighties – when the novel was published and the concept of postmodernism popped out – and in the nineties was fine to catalogue *Lanark* as a postmodern narrative and Gray as a postmodern author, but in this end of the first decade of the new century, dare I say, that things are changing in the field. Labeling today seems to be retrograde in the century of so many changes in the world, especially in the terrain of theory, in which a number of concepts, ideas, beliefs or interdisciplinary studies such as race, gender,

transnationalism and cyberspace come under the “umbrella” named Cultural Studies. Might we say we are living in the post-postmodern era?

Nevertheless, studying the work of a living writer as Alasdair Gray has been very fulfilling. It gives me the impression of doing something that, hopefully, will contribute to future researches on contemporary Scottish literature and perhaps open more space for this level of discussion in our academic literary courses. As Alasdair Gray is still actively producing books like his latest book, *A Gray Playbook of Shows by Alasdair Gray 1956-2009*, which was launched in the end of last year, the texts he posts in his blog with a certain periodicity, or, yet, the novelties in his website, such as mugs decorated with his illustrations that are for sale. We can never know for sure what expect, therefore, there cannot be any final statement on his work as a whole, and some findings may lay themselves open to be refuted by a future work or statement by Gray.

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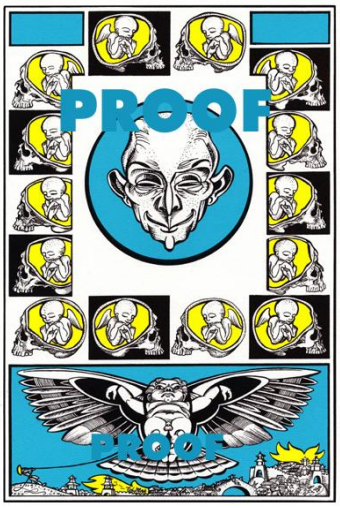

Fig. 12

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ANNEXES

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Alasdair Gray

0-70

10:00:00 - 10:00:18 Alasdair Gray working on mural	10:00:01- 10:00:18 V/O Poet, playwright, artist and illustrator - Alasdair Gray is currently at work on his greatest mural. But it's for the book, Lanark that he is best known. An elusive character, to mark his 70th birthday he agreed to be interviewed by his own harshest critic.
10:00:18 -10:00:39 Artworks titles and music	
10:00:39 - 10:01:09 Two Alasdairs sit facing each other - one acting as the interviewer	Interviewer Alasdair: Mr Gray I have heard people call you a piss artist. One who by hard drinking converts the profits of his

	artistry into piss Interviewee Alasdair: That's partly true. But my use and abuse of alcohol has not yet stopped me working hard and well. Interviewer Alasdair: That may well be an alcoholic delusion Interviewee Alasdair: Posterity will judge
10:01:09 -10:01:17 Lucy McKenzie 10:01:10-10:01:15 Astin: Lucy McKenzie Artist	Lucy McKenzie: I think Alasdair is a great example of an artist in that he seems to do things very much on his own terms

10:01:17- 10:01:29 Edwin Morgan 10:01:19- 10:01:24 Astin: Edwin Morgan Poet	Edwin Morgan: He is his own man and there's nothing quite like him among recent English novels so eh I think his compatriots on that sense would probably be more in Europe or South America.
10:01:29 - 10:01:34 Liz Lochhead 10:01:29 -10:01:34 Astin: Liz Lochead Poet & Playwright	Liz Lochhead: There are certain things that he's written that have actually changed how Glasgow thinks of its self.
10:01:34 - 10:01:43 Stuart Murdoch sitting in front of the Jonah mural 10:01:36 -10:01:41 Astin: Stuart Murdoch Belle & Sebastian	Stuart Murdoch: I can't really think of anybody of that generation who's around anymore that, who I would say is as inspirational to me.
10:01:43 - 10:01:45 door closing on room with Jonah mural 10:01:46 -10:01:49 title & cat graphic	

A Selective Tour of Alasdair Gray	
10:01:49 - 10:02:09 Alasdair in study talking to camera 10:01:55 -10:02:09 scenes of Alasdair working on the mural	Alasdair: In six weeks I'll be seventy and crumbling steadily and at work on the biggest mural commission of my life, which is already pleasing more people than I ever expected to please by my painting.
10:02:09 - 10:02:12 title and animation Beginnings	
10:02:12- 10:02:42 Mora Rolley interview 10:02:13 - 10:02:18 Astin: Mora Rolley Alasdair's Sister 10:02:19 -10:02:28 Scenes of Mora walking into Findhorn Street close	Mora Rolley: Alasdair says I was his first audience because when we were young he would tell me stories at night when we went to bed. In Findhorn Street he slept in the front room and I slept in the back room. He would shout the stories across the hallway. In the morning he would then ask where the story had got to and was rather cross with me when he discovered I'd fallen asleep.

10:02:30 -10:02:42 Mora walking up close - looking out of close window	
10:02:42 - 10:03:01 Findhorn Street 10:03:01 - 10:03:07 photo of a young Alasdair with his parents and sister 10:03:07 - 10:03:11 photo of Alasdair's family (as before) 10:03:11 - 10:03:15 Alasdair as a young boy walking with his mother 10:03:15 - 10:03:19 Alasdair's parents wedding picture	10:02:43 -10:03: Alasdair v/o over shots of Findhorn Street and family photos The first twenty-five years of my life were lived mostly in 11 Findhorn Street, Riddrie where I had been born. Our neighbours were a nurse, postman, printer and tobacconist. So I was a bit of a snob. I took it for granted that Britain was mainly owned and ruled by Riddrie people, people like my father. He worked a box-making machine in a factory and hiked and climbed mountains for a hobby. My mother was a good housewife who served behind the counter in a department store and sang in the Glasgow Orpheus Choir. She never grumbled but I now know she wanted more from life than it gave. My father had several ways of enjoying himself, she had very few.

10:03:19 -10:03:27 Mora walking up close stairs and arriving at their old flat 10:03:27 - 10:03:50 Mora going into flat, meeting the owner and looking around	10:03:26 -10:03:38 Mora v/o My parents were working class people, to have someone as imaginative, as volatile as Alasdair must have been very difficult. Mora: ...it's so different..... that was Alasdair's room
10:03:50 - 10:03:55 exterior shot of Findhorn Street 10:04:01 -10:04:05 b&w picture of Mora & Alasdair as children	Mora in Findhorn Street flat seen 10:03:55 - 10:04:04 heard: 10:03:46 We all had to try and keep close to the fire to get warm. Alasdair always maintained there was so much competition in a house like this. You were competing for heat, you were competing for love and understanding in certain ways, so eh which is why

	we had so many arguments.
10:04:05 - 10:04:11 spire and skyline 10:04:11 - 10:04:15 Alasdair climbing up ladder to mural 10:04:15 - 10:04:17 exterior of spire 10:04:17 -10:04:37 Alasdair working on the mural 10:04:37 -10:04:51 b&w archive footage 10:04:51 -10:04: Alasdair drawing mural - workmen working on Oran Mor. Alasdair taking a break - discussing mural	Alasdair v/o 10:04:06 -10:05:14 I began making pictures and inventing stories as a way of escaping from the dull life of being a schoolboy and living in Riddrie, Glasgow. A way of escaping into a more adventurous and colorful world. The kinds of worlds I saw in the early Walt Disney movies Snow White, Dumbo Jumbo and Pinocchio. But as I entered my teens I began to realise that the people I knew, the Glasgow where I lived was not in fact a dull ordinary place really it was as full of the materials of heaven and hell, of the possibilities of delight and horror as anywhere else in the world or even places you could invent. So you might say while my pictures and stories and novels have often had a wildly fantastic element in them I've always had the realistic bit as well

10:05:15 - 10:06:21 Two Alasdairs sit facing each other - one acting as the interviewer	*Interviewer Alasdair:* Let us discuss your personality Mr Gray. Your manner of appearing to people. In this little book you describe yourself as "in conversation animated and friendly perhaps too friendly. I usually have the over eager manner of one who fears to be disliked." Why do you feared to be disliked? *Alasdair Interviewee:* Because I'm afraid of fights. Afraid of being hurt. As a schoolboy once or twice I was mocked and insulted by tougher boys who knew I wouldn't hit back. *Interviewer Alasdair:* You were a coward? *Alasdair Interviewee:* Oh yes! and I found it quite handy if I met them accidentally afterwards at a bus stop to talk to them quite cheerfully as if nothing painful had past between us and they were usually

	so taken a back that there wasn't anything painful after that. Interviewer Alasdair: So your friendly open manner is a way of manipulating people. Alasdair Interviewee: Oh I don't deny it
10:06:21 - 10:06:24 Inherited Wealth Title and animation	
10:06:24 - 10:06:36 Alasdair placing open books down onto desk 10:06:36 - 10:08:13 Alasdair speaking about the books - starting as a PTC	I was lucky to have parents with a great love of learning and have plenty of books in the house. On this desk and beside it are the books that were in my parents' house when I grew up. One of the ones I found most exciting as a very wee boy was the Harmsworth Encyclopedia printed in I think 1932 about 2 years before I was born and I thought it was wonderful. That here was a book in which you could get everything.

	Here is the sun seen from the planet Mercury. Wonderful things, moths and the flags of nations, this schematic presentation of the interior of the human body as if it were a machine greatly disturbed me rather frightened me. I used to try and pass over that one quickly. There was no separation in my imaginative mind and between the adventures of science and space with the possibility of travelling to other worlds and eh the fantasies of Alice in Wonderland and through the looking glass. It was all material for the stories I told myself and my sister. The books, which impressed me greatly, ...em.. were books that were illustrated by their own authors. Rudyard Kipling Just So Stories, he was a great illustrator, a very great illustrator ..... in planning this book he also designed the capital letters for it. The thing I suppose about these illustrations that struck me was the feeling that yes I can do that too.

10:08:13 - 10:08:16 Art School and an unlikely mural, mostly title and animation	
10:08:16 -10:08:23 Black and White archive of Glasgow School of Art 10:08:23 -10:08:28 scenes of Glasgow School of Art at present 10:08:28 - 10:08:33 Black & White archive of Art School 10:08:33 - 10:08:46 Art School today - corridor / classroom looking in through door - someone in corridor reading Lanark	10:08:17 -10:08:44 Alasdair Gray V/O At Art School I started writing two novels. A realistic portrait of an artist as a young Glaswegian and a fantastic modern divine comedy or Pilgrims Progress without the religion. I soon saw realised by combining these two stories I could make a Scottish Epic. But a writer of epics needs maturity, adult experiences of sexual love, marriage and parenthood and for years I could not get them.
10:08:46 - 10:09:10 Rosemary Hobsbaum 10:08:48 - 10:08:52 Astin: Rosemary Hobsbaum Friend Former	Rosemary: One of the recurring themes in Alasdair's work em is this whole fear or reflections on personal unattractiveness. His eczema was so severe that eh it must often have interfered

Teaching Colleague	directly, we know from what he said it interfered directly with em relationships with women.
10:09:10 - 10:09:58 Archive footage of dance at Glasgow School of Art 10:09:14 - 10:09:19 Astin: Glasgow School of Art Dance 1957 10:09:21 -10:09:26 Astin: Lanark 1981	Lanark extract being read 10:09:17 - 10:09:55 *He thought, I'm being ridiculous, and kept looking in her eyes; the dark pupils grew very clear and her face and head became a dim white and gold shape around them. He thought, She's like marble and honey, and shaped the words with his lips. The music stopped and he had to dance with the smaller girl again. He looked straight across her shoulder and talked about painting and the art school. She said, "Is your father a minister?" "No, my father's a pious atheist. Do I look like a minister's son?" "You look like a kid of twelve. But you sound like an old highland minister."*
10:09:58 - 10:10:05 Exterior of Glasgow School of Art	

10:10:05 - 10:10:34 Ian McIlhenny 10:10:05 -10:10:10 Astin: Ian McIlhenny Friend form Art School 10:10:10 - 10:10:14 Alasdair's Painting 10:10:14 -10:10:20 Alasdair's painting 10:10:23- 10:10:34 Mural on the Horrors of War 10:10:24-10:10:32 Astin: Mural on the Horrors of War 1954-1957 Scottish Soviet Friendship Society	Ian McIlhenny: Alasdair trod his own path. Alasdair went to Art School and I think some of the tutors had quite a difficult time in trying to assess Alasdair's work. While the rest of the students were in their 4th year sitting their diploma exam Alasdair was painting this mural, he had either mistaken the day of the diploma exam or was so preoccupied by this commission.
10:10:34 - 10:11:09 clip of BBC Monitor about Soviet Mural 10:10:38 - 10:10:42	1st Interviewee: " We left it to himself to choose his subject and he chose war and peace. Unfortunately it took some time for Alasdair to finish the murals. For

Astin: Monitor 1963 10:10:34 - 10:10:44 Footage of Mural from monitor 10:10:44 - 10:10:51 mural in present being wallpapered over 10:10:51 -10:10:55 footage of 2nd interviewee speaking from Monitor programme 10:10:55 -10:11:01 mural in present - being wallpapered 10:11:01 -10:11:16 Alasdair & men standing by Mural in Monitor Clip	my own part it certainly was a great inconvenience when Alasdair was here and we do know that he eh created a bit of turmoil by utilising almost every cup we had to keep paint in." 10:11:06 - 10:11:09 2nd Interviewee: I wasn't quite sure what to say about the mural but it did strike me as a really a remarkable production for a young man of twenty-one.
10:11:09 - 10:11:47 The Mural at Scottish Soviet Friendship Society being wallpapered over	10:11:11 - 10:11:43 Alasdair V/O When painting my mural in the

10:11:10 - 10:11:15 Astin: Mural covered by developers August 2004	Scottish USSR friendship society I never thought the Soviet Union would crumble and the building where I worked be privatized anymore than when I was a year or two later painting murals in Greenhead Church of Scotland and Bellisle Street synagogue it occurred to me that …em… these buildings might shortly be demolished. But you learn to take things in your stride.
10:11:47 - 10:11:50 Two Institutions - title and animation	
10:11:50 -10:12:09 scenes of old classroom from the 1950/60s	10:11:51 -10:12:07 Alasdair V/O After Art School I lived by chiefly teaching in order to support the writing and painting for which nobody would pay me. I disliked school teaching because I disliked imposing discipline, which was then usually done with a leather belt.
10:12:09- 10:12:19 Ian McIlhenny	Ian McIlhenny: Teaching Jobs are very easy to find. There were not as many …eh… artists earning a living, if you like from their painting, very few in fact.

10:12:12 - 10:12:25 scenes of old school classroom 10:12:20- 10:12:30 seen: 10:12:25 Rosemary Hobsbaum 10:12:27 - 10:12:40 Scene of old classroom	Rosemary Hobsbaum: It was the first time I had met anyone who en was a real artist selling their work, he wasn't just an art teacher. At that time he was working on a mural and he used to work at it sometimes all night. So in the daytime he was very pale.
10:12:37 - 10:12:59 seen 10:12:40 Ian McIlhenny 10:12:46 - 10:12:50 scenes of old classroom	Ian McIlhenny: He would find it necessary to rest at lunchtime and he would do so by finding a large drawer in the art store cupboard. Thereby falling asleep he had to be awakened from this slumber by one of the other art masters or one of the students who'd be summoned to ask where was Mr Gray to cover his class.
10:12:59 -10:13:29 Scenes of Alasdair painting mural 10:13:29 - 10:13:34 Inge Reading	10:13:01 -10:13:59 Alasdair V/O I had very little money, certainly not enough to marry on, luckily when 26 I was doing cabaret turns at an Edinburgh Festival Nightclub and there I met Inge Sorensen a formidable Danish teenager who

10:13:34 - 10:13:36 Andrew as a Redskin 10:13:37 - 10:13:40 Self Portrait 10:13:40 - 10:13:44 Inge Gray less than a fortnight 10:13:44 -10:13:49 Woman and Flowers 10:13:49 - 10:14:00 Married Couple	accepted my clumsy wing, married me and in the nine years our marriage lasted gave me a son and experiences that would have matured someone half my age. A normal conventional Scottish wife could easily have got me to teaching full-time in order to support her and my son. Inge didn't mind me spending most of the time at home attempting to write and paint. She knew probably that if I was a conventional Scottish husband I would have wanted a conventional Scottish wife and what she wanted was her own way in practically everything and therefore she allowed me my own way in almost everything, at least in how I earned my living.
10:14:00 - 10:14:25 Two Alasdairs sit facing each other - one acting as the interviewer	Interviewer Alasdair: So you're a Control Freak? You're friend the poet Tom Leonard once said that working with Alasdair Gray was like a sandcastle working with the sea. Alasdair Interviewee: I'm certainly the kind of artist who wants to control as much as I can…

	the appearance of the work I do in writing and in painting and how it's produced.
10:14:25 - 10:14:29 Lean Tales Lean Times - Title & animation	
10:14:29 -10:14:55 Alasdair in study painting	10:14:30 - 10:15:01 Alasdair V/O I signed on at the labour exchange as an unemployed scene painter and lived on social security money by working as an unpaid artist and writer. After a year the social security officers realised they would never find me work as a scene painter and proposed having me trained as a carpenter. I was saved from this by Bob Kitts, a friend who was making TV documentaries for a BBC Arts Programme. The documentary he made about my art was almost a hour long
10:14:55 - 10:15:42 Clip from Monitor Programme 10:15:03 - 10:15:08	10:15:02 - 10:15:13 Alasdair talking in Monitor Programme " I don't for instance talk like this with friends, I don't talk like this

Astin: Monitor BBC 1963	with my wife, I don't even talk like this with strangers but it's how I talk to a television machine"
	10:15:14 -10:15:33 Alasdair V/O It paid me very well and brought me to London for several visits in the sixties when that seemed to be a hopeful interesting place for the young. It gave me an idea for a play - The Fall of Kelvin Walker and that brought me some commissions for Scottish BBC plays and a few from England as well.
10:15:42 - 10:15:48 Spire/Street skyline 10:15:48 - 10:16:07 Alasdair working on mural in Oran Mor 10:16:07 - 10:16:16 Clip from Omnibus - Alasdair painting in the restaurant	10:15:42 - 10:16:59 Alasdair V/O For a reason I never really quite understood the BBC stopped commissioning plays from me and I couldn't get publishers to take my novel Lanark. I eh had to live chiefly by illegally subletting rooms in my house. There were several free because my wife and son had left me. That didn't quite pay enough. I got food by doing decorative paintings in

10:16:10 - 10:16:15 Astin: Omnibus BBC 1983 10:16:16- 10:16:24 Paintings on display at People's Palace 10:16:24 - 10:16:26 Exterior of People's Palace 10:16:26 - 10:16:30 paintings on display at People's Palace 10:16:30 - 10:16:33 Painting of Margo MacDonald 10:16:30 - 10:16:33 Astin: Margo MacDonald 1977 10:16:33 - 10:16:36 display at the People's	a local restaurant Ubiquitous chip were I was friendly with the management. And then suddenly I was contacted by Elspeth King, acting curator of Glasgow's local history museum the People Palace in Glasgow Green. And she wished to employ me under the government's job creation scheme to in fact to be Glasgow's artist recorder. Painting views of streets that were about to be knocked down and also portraits of local worthies Teddy Taylor of the Tories, Provost McCann of the Labour Party, Jimmy Reid of the Communists. He was a Communist in those days. This was thoroughly enjoyable work.

Palace 10:16:36 - 10:16:39 painting of Glasgow Street 10:16:39 - 10:16:46 Teddy Taylor painting 10:16:42 - 10:16:46 Astin: Teddy Taylor 1977 10:16:46 - 10:16:54 People looking at display in People’s Palace 10:16:54 - 10:16:59 Display at People’s Palace 10:16:59 - 10:17:03 Liz Lochhead painting Astin: Liz Lochhead 1977 10:17:03 - 10:17:07	

James Kelman painting 10:17:04 - 10:17:07 Astin: James Kelman 1977 10:17:07 - 10:17:10 Painting of Jack House 10:17:08 - 10:17:10 Astin: Jack House 1977 10:17:10 - 10:17:14 painting of Edwin Morgan 10:17:11 - 10:17:13 Astin: Edwin Morgan 1977	
10:17:14 - 10:17:40 Liz Lochhead 10:17:16 - 10:17:20 Astin: Liz Lochhead Poet & Playwright	Liz Lochhead: I'm sure that Alasdair Gray has ..eh.. struggled financially all his life, as well as struggled to do the work and it would be a great advantage if artists didn't have to struggle both financially and to do their work. But I think it's a price that he and all my other writer and artist friends have been perfectly willing to pay in order to

	do the work that they need to do.
10:17:40 - 10:17:43 Lanark Life as a book - title and animation	
10:17:43 - 10:17:46 Alasdair going through the manuscripts of Lanark in Glasgow University Library	
10:17:46 - 10:17: 50 Philip Hobsbaum 10:17:46 - 10:17:50 Astin: Professor Philip Hobsbaum University of Glasgow	Philip Hobsbaum: I think it’s a great classic. I think it will last as long as people read English.
10:17:50 - 10:17:55 Alasdair going through manuscripts as before	Alasdair: Let’s see

10:17:52 -10:18:08 seen: 10:17:55 Lucy McKenzie 10:17:56 - 10:18:00 Astin: Lucy McKenzie Artist 10:18:00 - 10:18:06 Alasdair looking through manuscripts	Lucy McKenzie: It was a book that had always been on my parents' shelf and I always loved the cover but didn't really know anything about it, and they told me Alasdair was a guy you'd always see in the pub always said 'ah I have to go home to write my book' and everyone would go 'yeah right'.
10:18:08 - 10:18:12 Alasdair going through manuscripts 10:18:09 - 10:18:38 seen 10:18:12 Liz Lochhead 10:18:18 - 10:18:28	Liz Lochhead: Alasdair would turn up maybe quite late with a passage of Lanark that he'd just been working on and …eh …he would start to read ..em it out loud. Because I had to go to work the next morning in school I would creep into bed em with my clothes on and kind of get undressed under the covers and go to sleep and ..em there was a few nights I remember drifting off to sleep with the sound of Alasdair's voice reading Lanark out loud. I mean what a thing to tell

Alasdair going through manuscripts	the grandchildren I don’t have
10:18:38 - 10:18:50 Stuart Murdoch 10:18:39 - 10:18:44 Astin: Stuart Murdoch Belle and Sebastian	Stuart Murdoch: It seemed to romanticise this ..eh… city that I lived in eh to a tremendous degree and it made you feel if there was this.. tunnels and shafts that would take you off to dark places.
10:18:50 - 10:18:55 Edwin Morgan	Edwin Morgan: It was partly science fiction and partly very realistic and the mixture was ..eh quite startling at that time.
10:18:55 - 10:19:00 Alasdair going through manuscripts 10:18:56 - 10:19:13 seen: 10:19:00 Alasdair on Omnibus 10:19:02 - 10:19:07 Astin: Omnibus	Interviewer: When somebody asks you to describe your book Lanark, what do you say to them? Alasdair: I say it is a Scottish petite bourgeoisie model of the universe

BBC 1983	Interviewer: Just like that? Alasdair: Yes. I've rehearsed it and honed it down to as few words as possible
10:19:13 - 10:20:20 Alasdair in Glasgow University Library with the Lanark manuscripts	Alasdair: We're in Glasgow University Library which in twelve boxes of this kind ..eh has all the manuscripts of my first novel Lanark. Which I started to writing when I was eighteen years old in 1953. This is the first chapter I wrote it eventually became chapter twelve although it was originally planned as chapter one. I meant it to be an encyclopedia of a book that would show everything that I knew about life or had heard about life and blended into one single tale and ….em.. at the beginning I was afraid I wouldn't now enough. I mean I hadn't had sex. I hadn't, I hadn't had sexual experience - full sexual experience that is to say, before I was about 24 I think, long after I'd left Art School. In fact

	the first person I had sexual intercourse with was my first wife and ..eh .. she taught me a lot.
10:20:20 - 10:20:31 close up of hand written manuscripts 10:20:21 - 10:20:57 seen 10:20:31 Jonathan Coe 10:20:32 - 10:20:37 Astin: Jonathan Coe Novelist 10:20:42-10:20:50 close up of handwritten manuscripts	Jonathan Coe: In a less daring writers hands these chunks of autobiography could seem clunking I think and just seemed plonked into the middle of these books which on the surface are about lots of other things as well. But ..eh .. somehow he earns them I think, I mean he earns the right to include them. By the stage in the novels at which they occur the readers waiting for them and ready for them and hungry for them because suddenly the …eh …trickiness is pushed to one side and an incredibly powerful and authentic and honest and likeable voice emerges I think.
10:20:58 - 10:21:24 Alasdair in University Library as before	Alasdair: I see by the date it was a version I started writing in 1959 in the hose where I was born and I …. Lanark by Robert Walker. At that time I'd

	decided I was going to publish it under a pseudonym so that I could travel anonymously without anyone knowing that I was the famous author of this famous novel.
10:21:24 - 10:21:28 close up of handwritten version of Lanark 10:21:25 - 10:21:46 seen 10:21:28 Mora Rolley 10:21:30 -10:21:35 Astin: Mora Rolley Alasdair's sister	Mora Rolley: All the way through fact and fiction started getting mixed up in that I could recognise certain things that had happened in our childhood, other things I didn't recognise and I found the passages where my mother was dying very painful and ..very ..emotional
10:21:46- 10:22:09 Alasdair in library gong through proofs of Lanark	Alasdair: Here are the proofs with my notes to the typesetter about how everything should be laid out. When Canongate decided to publish it that would be about 1978 that I was working on the proofs because then three years passed before it was actually printed.

10:22:09 - 10:22:26 Edwin Morgan 10:22:11 - 10:22:16 Astin: Edwin Morgan Poet	Edwin Morgan: It gave people the idea that ..eh.. here was a possibility of Scottish literature opening into various ways where it hadn't opened out before, it didn't have to be Scottish in inverted commas didn't have to be realistic as novels ad been, it could be very imaginative indeed yet be somehow in its own way very, very Scottish.
10:22:26 - 10:22:29 More books Mostly different - title and animation	
10:22:29 - 10:22:46 Liz Lochhead	Liz Lochhead: I like Alasdair best at his big fat big book length. Give me a great big fat Alasdair Gray book and it's ..em.. it's a kind of eh desert island book that you could take away …em… with the Bible and Shakespeare.
10:22:46 - 10:23:16 Alasdair Gray books on shelf	10:22:46 - 10:23:15 Alasdair V/O I had no plan to make a second novel after Lanark I'd spent twenty-five

	years making it. I just meant to write a book of short stories, then a book of poems, then a book of essays then a book of plays. Each perfect of its kind. But when I was writing my book of short stories my second book one of the stories began to swell up and swell up and turned into a novel, I think my best novel 1982 Janine
10:23:16 - 10:23:43 Alasdair reading from 1982 Janine at the Poetry library 10:23:17 - 10:23:20 Astin: Scottish Poetry Library Edinburgh September 2004	10:23:16 - 10:23:43 Alasdair reading extract to audience *I am new born, I want to suck sweet and sing and eat and laugh and run and fuck and feel secure and own my own home and receive the recognition due to a man in my position and not have nobody to care for me and not be lonely and die*
10:23:40 -10:23:54 seen 10:23:43 Liz Lochhead	Liz Lochhead: One of Alasdair's ..em.. greatest books is 1982 Janine. It's a terrifying and in many ways a horrible book. It's a very uncomfortable book it's uncomfortably honest.

10:23:54 - 10:24:10 Jonathan Coe 10:23:59 - 10:24:11 scenes of Alasdair reading	Jonathan Coe: 1982 Janine was an exceptionally brave and radical book to publish the 1980s you had to be very very careful what you ..what kind of language you used …eh.. what kind of things you admitted to thinking about and enjoying when it came to ..eh.. talking about sex.
10:24:11 - 10:24:27 Liz Lochhead 10:24:22 - 10:24:29 Alasdair talking with people at the Poetry Library	Liz Lochhead: And I remember him once reading me, one Sunday afternoon reading me big bit and then we went out for a curry round the corner and …em.. I absently mindedly wept into my curry while Alasdair read all those things and then I think I ate Alasdair's curry as well as he kept on reading
10:24:29 - 10:25:53 Alasdair interviewing himself as before	Interviewer Alasdair: Why does so little impersonal criticism of you come out of England? Alasdair:

	Perhaps because I don’t live there. But most English book reviewers have been kind to my books. Interviewer Alasdair: Not all of them. Speaking about 1982 Janine Peter Levi says ‘I recommend nobody to read this book. It is sexually oppressive, the sentences are far too long and it is boring hogwash. Radioactive hogwash.’ Alasdair: American reviewers and French and other European reviewers have generally been kinder. Interviewer Alasdair: Then just let me read what Joe Ambroise said in the Irish Sunday Tribune. ‘There is a respectable school of thought which believes that the best thing to do with writers like Alasdair Gray is to ignore them and hope they’ll go away. Well they wont go away and they take encouragement from the silence of their critics. Gray has been compared with MacDiarmid but on

	closer inspection bears a closer resemblance to the other Scottish buffoon Compton MacKenzie . Those who have seen him on television will know the kind of chap he is. A vain glorious lout the sort of writer who continually practices his speech for the Nobel Prize in front of the mirror and is such a profoundly reactionary penmen that he may well get to deliver it.' Alasdair: I hope he's right
10:25:53 - 10:25:56 A Big Job - title & animation	
10:25:56 - 10:26:07 Alasdair working on mural at Oran Mor 10:26:00 - 10:26:28 seen 10:26:07 Liz Lochhead	Liz Lochhead: When I first met him thirty odd years ago he used to talk about the pursuit of the golden silence. About writing all his words and getting rid of them and being able to paint freely. I don't suggest for a minute that he's not writing anything big at the

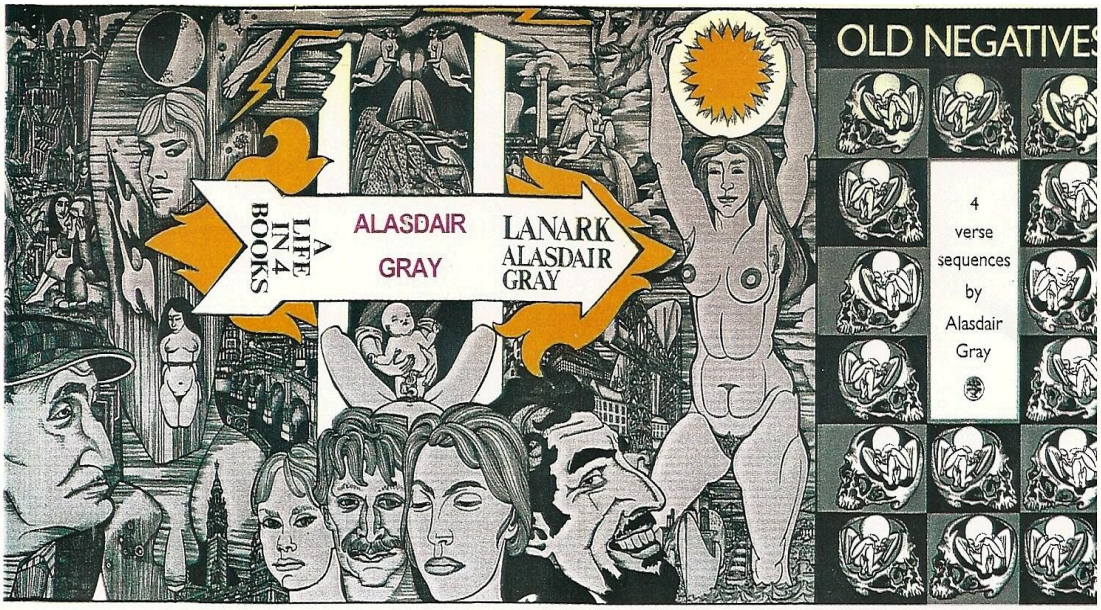
10:26:12- 10:26:55 Alasdair working on the mural	moment but I don't know what that is and I don't think it's burdening him at the moment. I think he's enjoying the freedom of being a painter with ..eh.. apprentices under him doing this great work. 10:26:30 - 10:126:56 Alasdair V/O I had a minor heart attack angina which took me to hospital about the same time Colin Beattie had acquired this great church and was turning it into an arts and leisure centre. And was prepared to let me decorate it. He also said that he realised it would be impossible for me to give him a deadline and for him to give me a deadline for the completion of the work because it was too big a one.
10:26:55 - 10: 27:00 Exterior of Oran Mor 10:26:57 - 10:27:17 seen 10:27:00 Colin Beattie in Oran Mor	Colin Beattie: The idea of Alasdair coming in here and doing something quite special appealed to me ..eh.. it started off with this wall over here and …eh.. Alasdair started asking questions about colours and so on and ..eh.. what developed is this magnificent

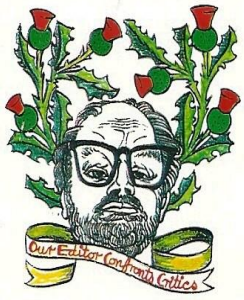
10:27:01 - 10:27:06 Astin: Colin Beattie Oran Mor	ceiling.
10:27:17 - 10:27:42 Views of the Oran Mor mural 10:27:37 - 10:27:56 seen: 10:27:42 Colin Beattie	His stamina is incredible I mean he worked right through the winter here. The dust, the cold climbing up the scaffold six feet high having his tea up there. I joined him many times ..em… just to watch him was an incredible thing… the eh.. the manners in this work is outrageous.
10:27:54 - 10:28:29 Views of the Oran Mor mural fade to black	10:28:04 - 10:28:20 Alasdair V/O I feel this is just about the happiest time of my life. This, of course is partly due to me having a second wife who can put up with me more readily than the first one could.

10:28:30 - 10:28:42 Interviewer Alasdair & Interviewee Alasdair sit opposite -Interviewer Alasdair disappears to leave Alasdair sitting by himself	Interviewer Alasdair: Will I take it from the beginning again? Alasdair: Perhaps we’ve done enough
10:28:42 - 10:29:06 Credits	Camera Neville Kidd Camera Assistant Francis MacNeil Sound Douglas Kerr Brian Howell Dubbing Mixer John Cobban Production Co-Coordinator

	Claire MacKenzie Researcher Graeme Burnet Animation Joseph Briffa Editing Assistant Simon Hipkins Online Editor Ian Ballantyne Executive Producer Andrew Lockyer Series Producer Nicola White Producer John Archer Edited & Directed by Kevin Cameron

10:28:57 - 10:29:06 Artworks Logo End card: Hopscotch Films Logo Artworks BBC Scotland	

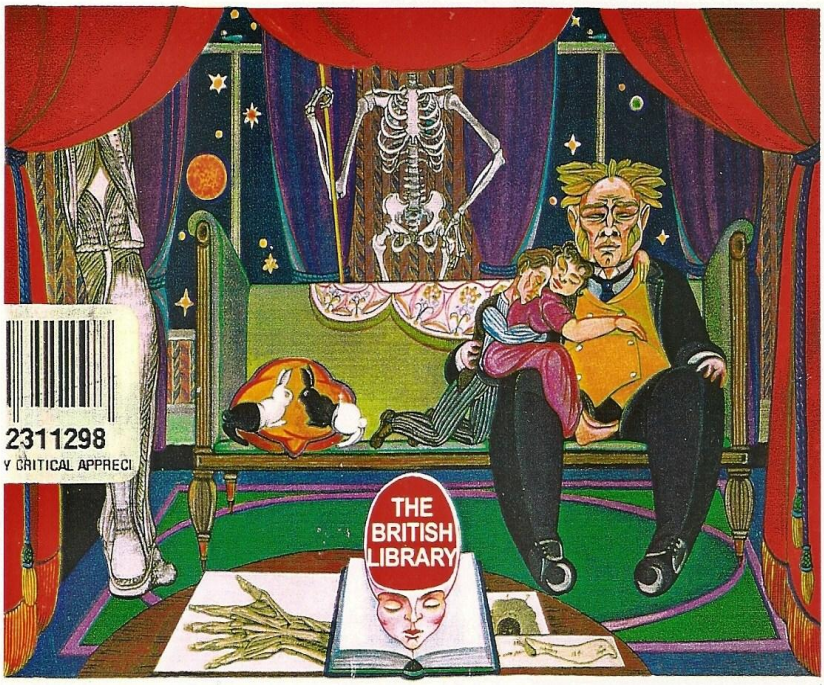




CRITICAL APPRECIATIONS & A BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALASDAIR GRAY
CRITICAL APPRECIATIONS AND A BIBLIOGRAPHY

Edited by Phil Moores



SOMETHING LEATHER Alasdair Gray

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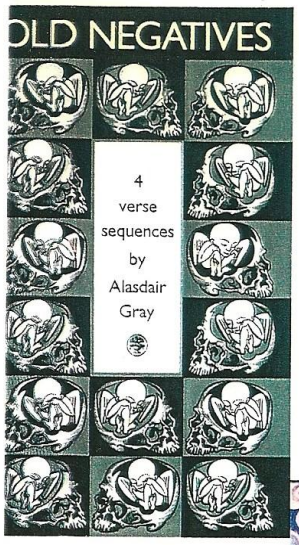
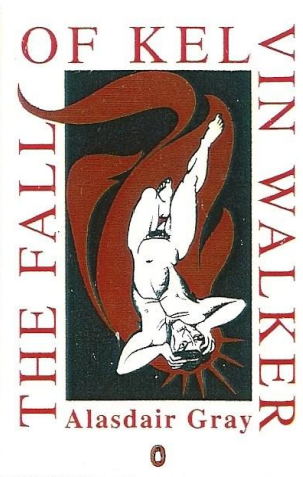
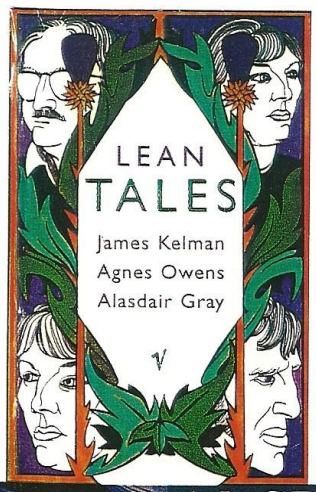
illustrations: A. Gray





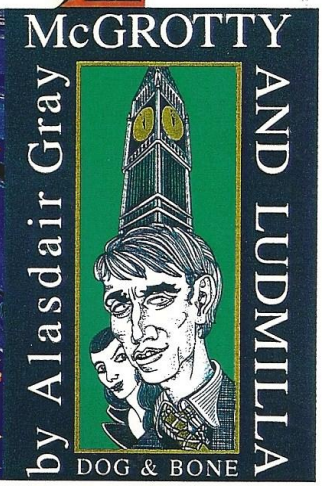


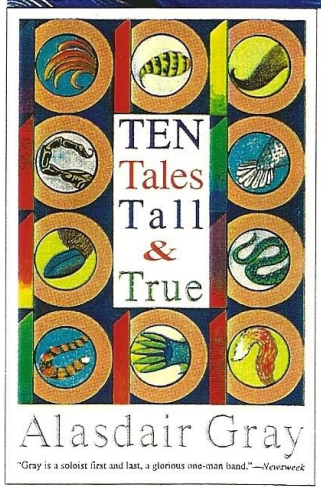
Alasdair Gray: critical appreciations and a bibliography

edited by Phil Moore

R GRAY
RECIATIONS
OGRAPHY

il Moores

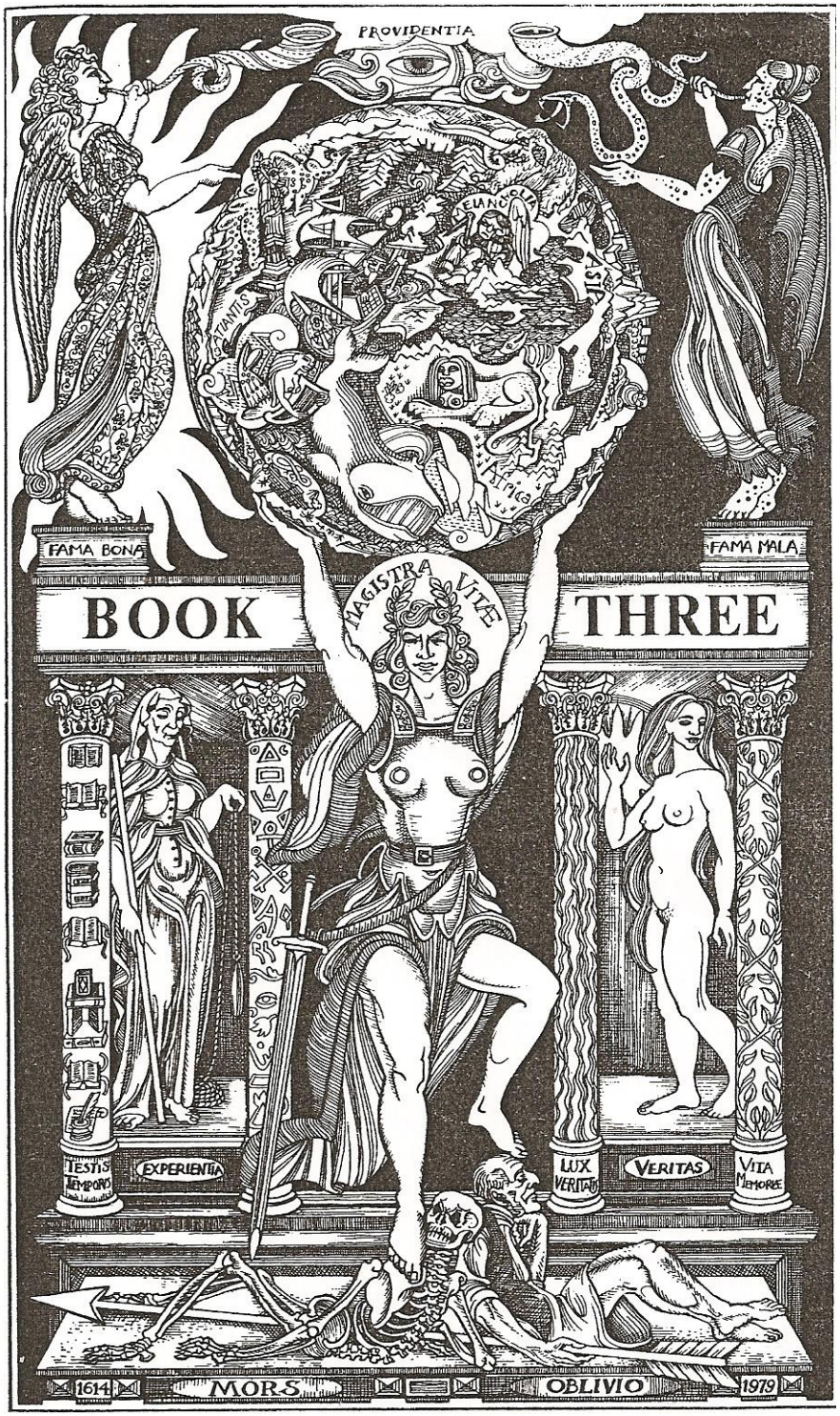




Though already over forty when his first novel, *Lanark*, was published in 1981, Alasdair Gray was proclaimed by Anthony Burgess to be the greatest Scottish writer since Walter Scott and the book itself to be Scotland's *Ulysses*. Each subsequent novel has tested the boundaries of the form, and the patience of his typesetters.

But Gray was an artist before he was ever a novelist, short story writer, polemicist, poet or playwright. The essays in this book celebrate all aspects of his work and is an appreciation of a man not only respected as artist and author, but much loved as a person – for his talent and insight, of course, but also for his lack of pomposity, his passion and, not least, his humour. Who but Alasdair Gray would spend sixteen years writing and lovingly designing *The Book of Prefaces* only to suggest on the jacket that readers keep it in the lavatory for reference?

THE BRITISH LIBRARY


PROVIDENTIA
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BOOK
THREE
MAGISTRA VITÆ
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EXPERIENTIA
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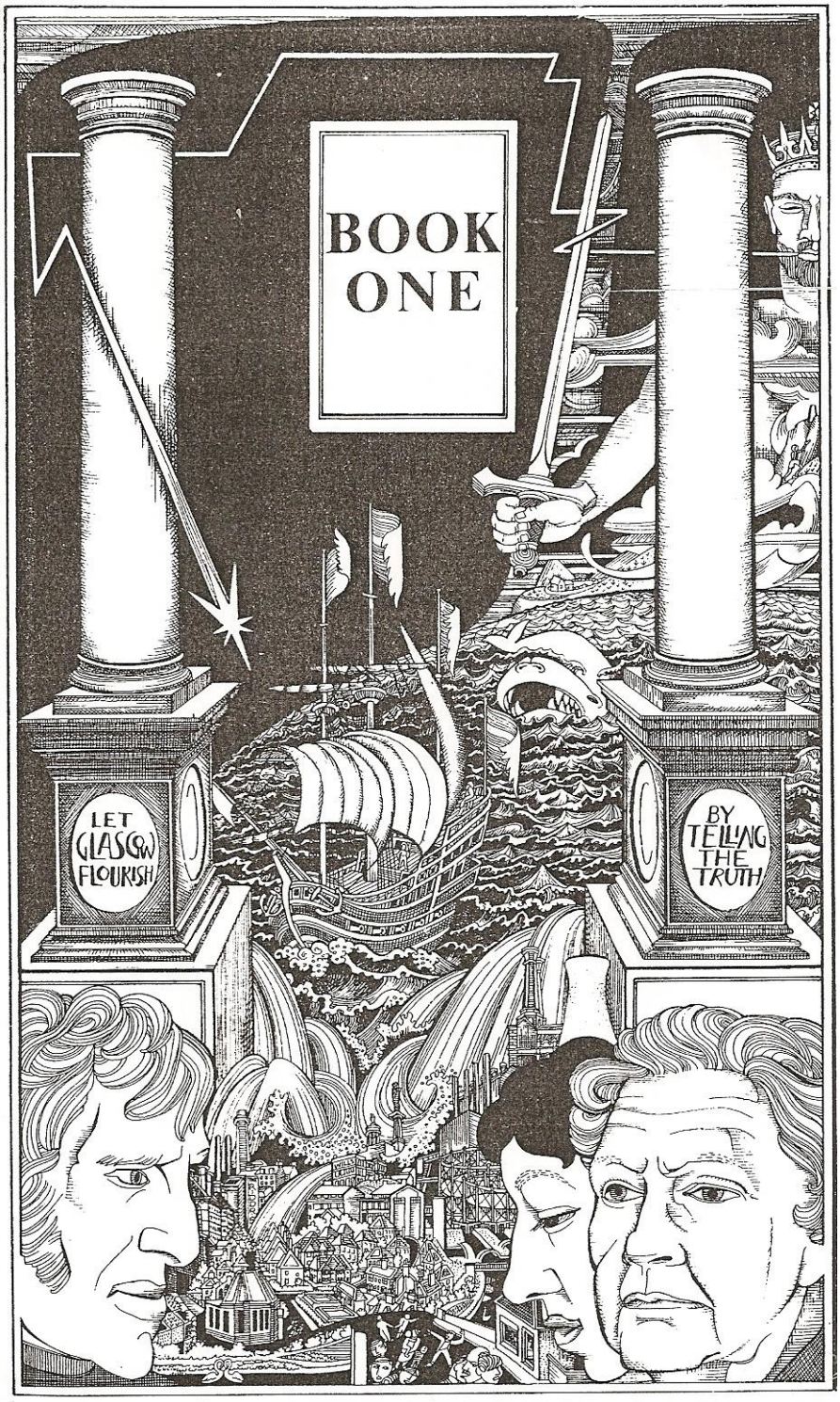
1979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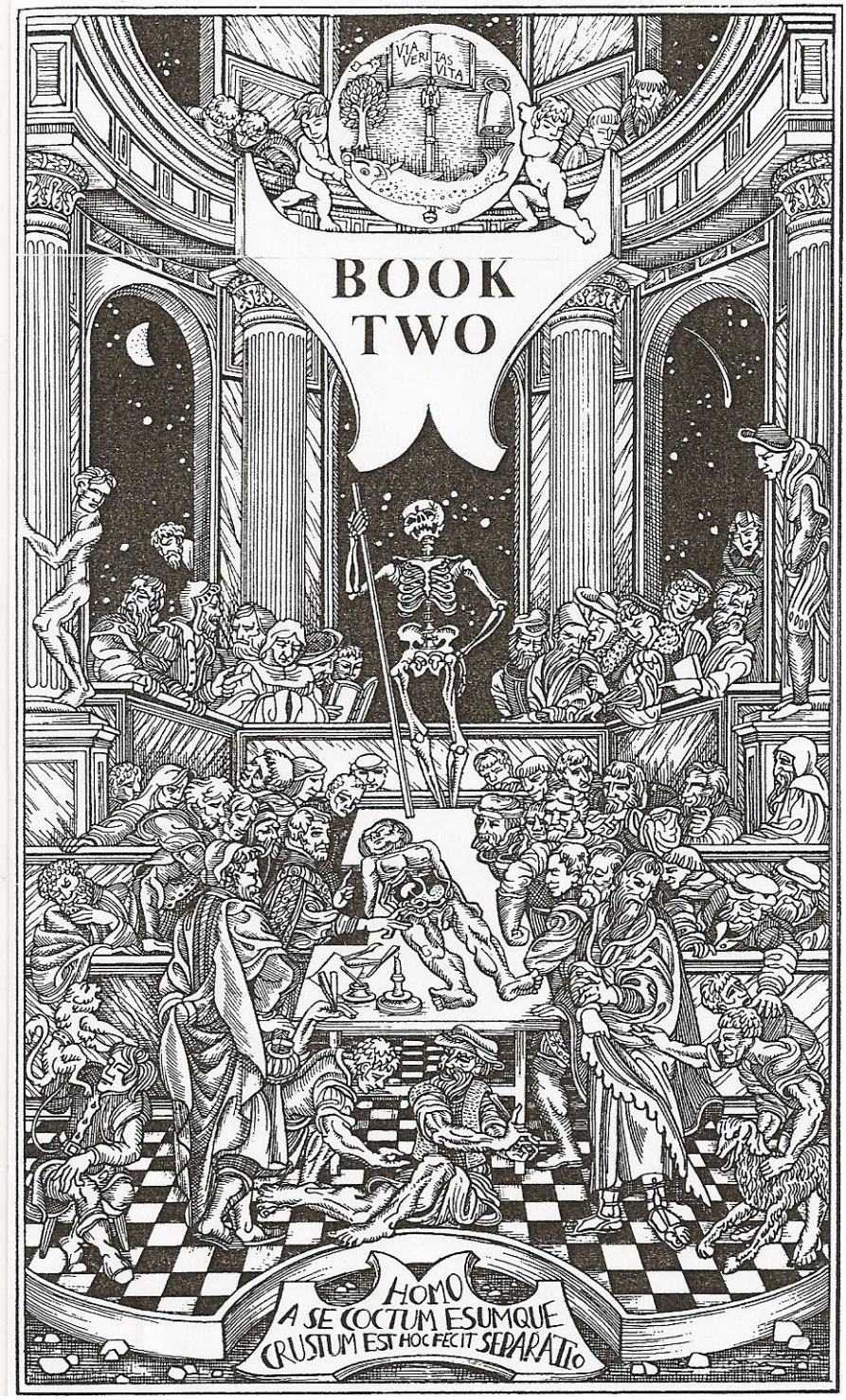
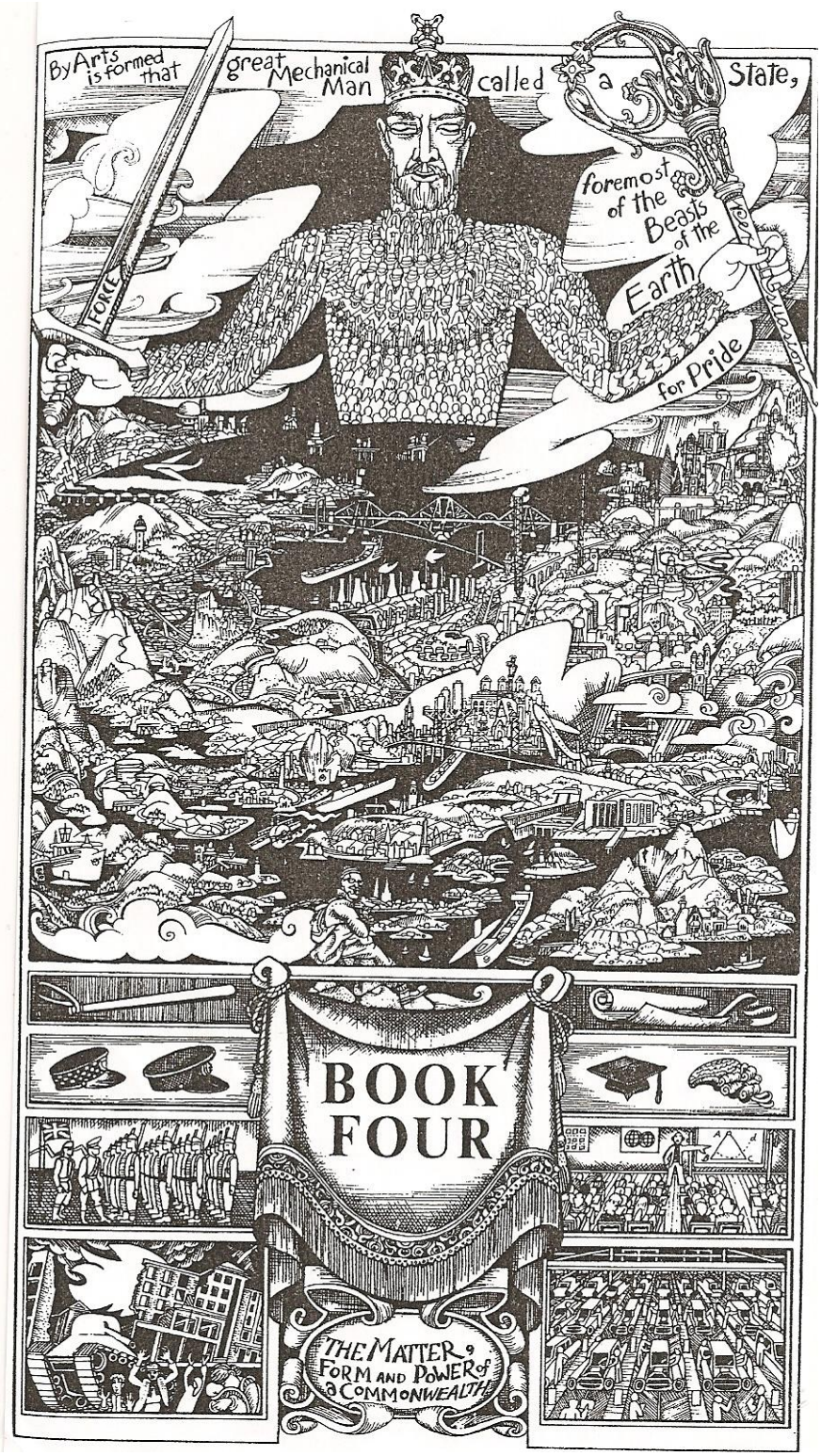

VIA VERITAS VITA
BOOK TWO
HOMO A SE COCTUM ESUMQUE CRUSTUM EST HOC FECIT SEPARATIO


By Arts is formed that great Mechanical Man called a State,
FORCE
foremost of the Beasts of the Earth
for Pride
BOOK FOUR
THE MATTER, FORM AND POWER OF A COMMONWEALTH

1960 – THE FALL OF THE STAR WORMWOOD – oil on canvas, 71 x 34 inches.
Though never satisfactorily completed, this was painted for an exhibition called *Artists Against the Bomb* arranged by Church of Scotland clergy who supported the CND, and in 1961 was exhibited in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Present owner, Petra Boyce.

Public Collections Where Alasdair Gray's Work Can Be Found

Abbot House, (Dunfermline Heritage Trust), a mural

Artemis (Leeds School Museum and Art Loan Service)

Collins Gallery, University of Strathclyde

Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow

National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh

North Ayrshire Council Museums Service

Palacerigg Country Park Visitor Centre (North Lanarkshire Council), a mural

People's Palace (Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries)

Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum

University of Stirling Fine Art Collections

There are also large elaborate but not quite complete murals in Greenbank Church of Scotland, Clarkston, and the Ubiquitous Chip restaurant, Glasgow.

RIMA'S ATTIC

A

A DOWNWARD CLOSE-UP OF TWO BLUE-STRIPED MUGS ON BARE FLOORBOARDS. EACH CONTAINS BLACK COFFEE ESSENCE AND BROWN SUGAR. BESIDE THEM IS A SUGAR BOWL, A BOTTLE OF CAMP COFFEE ESSENCE, A HALF-FULL BOTTLE OF BRANDY. RIMA'S HAND POURS BOILING WATER FROM A SMALL ELECTRIC KETTLE INTO EACH MUG, SETS THE KETTLE DOWN, LIFTS THE BRANDY AND ADDS SOME TO BOTH. PULL BACK TO SHOW—

AN ATTIC WITH SO LOW A CEILING THAT ONE CAN ONLY STAND UPRIGHT IN THE CENTRE. A MATTRESS MADE UP AS A BED COVERS A QUARTER OF THE FLOOR. LANARK'S SHOES, PULLOVER AND TIE ARE BESIDE THE BED. HE LIES ON IT WITH BACK ON THE PILLOW, SHOULDERS AGAINST WALL, WATCHING RIMA WHO SITS ON THE BED-FOOT WITH HER BACK TO HIM. HER DUFFEL-COAT HANGS ON A HOOK ON THE DOOR IN THE WALL BEYOND HER. A CHEST ON THE FLOOR LEFT OF THE DOOR HAS A TABLE LAMP ON IT BESIDE TWO OLD DOLLS: A CHINA BABY AND CLOTH DUTCH MAN. A SWISS PENDULUM CLOCK, CHALET-SHAPED BUT HANDLESS AND MOTIONLESS, HANGS RIGHT OF THE DOOR AND A STRINGLESS GUITAR LEANS IN THE CORNER. ON THE WALL FACING THE BED A ROW OF HOOKS SUPPORT HANGERS WITH RIMA'S OTHER CLOTHES ON THEM. HER SHOES ARE IN A ROW ON THE FLOOR BENEATH. ELSEWHERE THE WALL HAS SMALL CHILDISH CRAYON SKETCHES OF GREEN HILLS AND BLUE SEAS PINNED TO IT. →

B

A TWO-BAR RADIATOR WITH CURVED REFLECTOR SHIELD IS PLUGGED INTO THE SAME WALL-SOCKET AS THE KETTLE.

DESPITE THE POVERTY OF THESE PROPERTIES THE APPEARANCE IS COSY AND PLEASANT. RIMA ALMOST SMILES AS SHE TURNS TO HAND LANARK A MUG, SAYING:

RIMA: You probably won't refuse to drink it.

LANARK: Thanks.

HE SIPS. SHE TURNS HER BACK TO HIM, NURSING THE MUG ON HER LAP. HE STARES AT HER.

LANARK: You're feird to me. (SHE DOES NOT MOVE.) Did you come to this city long ago?

RIMA: (DRILY) What does "long" mean? (SHE SIPS.)

LANARK: Were you small when you came here?

SHE SHRUGS. HE PUTS DOWN THE MUG, GOES TO HER ON HIS KNEES, LAYS A HAND ON HER SHOULDER. HER ONLY REACTION IS TO CLOSE HER EYES.

LANARK: (TIMIDLY) Do you remember a time when days were long and bright?

A TEAR TRICKLES FROM UNDER ONE OF HER EYELIDS. LANARK CANNOT SEE IT. HE PUTS HIS OTHER HAND ON HER OTHER SHOULDER.

LANARK: (SOFTLY PLEADING) Let me undress you?

SHE DOES NOT MOVE. HE UNZIPS THE DRESS AT THE BACK AND DRAWS IT DOWN TO HER WAIST. HER SHOULDER-BLADES, UNDER THE BRA-STRAP, ARE GREEN WITH SCALES AND PRICKLES.

LANARK: (DELIGHTED) You've got dragonhide! Your shoulder blades are covered with it!

RIMA: (STILL NOT MOVING, AND WITH CONTEMPT.) Does that excite you?

LANARK: I have it too! Here!

HE SHOWS HIS GLOVED HAND. SHE FACES HIM.

RIMA: (HARSHLY) Do you think that makes a bond between us?

HE PLACES A FINGER ON HIS LIPS, PLEADING FOR SILENCE, AND CONTINUES UNDRESSING HER.

A SHORT SEQUENCE OF CLOSE-UPS SHOW RIMA'S HEAD AND SHOULDERS AS, WITH OPEN EYES, SHE ENDURES, NOT SHARES HIS LOVEMAKING. IT SOON ENDS. HE COLLAPSES FLAT BESIDE HER AFTER A FINAL GRUNT OF RELIEF.

LANARK: (GASPING) Thanks! Oh thanks!

SHE STANDS UP AND LOOKS DOWN AT HIM.

RIMA: Well? Was that fun?

HE GAZES AT HER, CONFUSED, THEN DEFIANT.

LANARK: Yes! Great fun!

RIMA: How nice for you.

TALKING, SHE TURNS AWAY AND PULLS ON JEANS AND A SWEATER. THE CAMERA CONCENTRATES ON LANARK AND HIS GROWING HORROR.

RIMA: You're not much good at sex, are you? I suppose the best I'll ever get is Sludden.

C

LANARK: You told me.... you didn't .... love.... Sludden.

RIMA: I don't, but I use him, sometimes, just as he uses me. He and I are very cold people.

LANARK: Why did you let me come here?

RIMA: You wanted so much to be warm that I thought you perhaps were. You're as cold as the rest of us, really, and even more worried about it. I suppose that's what makes you clumsy.

LANARK COVERS HIS EYES WITH HIS UNGLOVED HAND.

LANARK: You're trying to kill me.

RIMA: Yes, but I won't succeed. You're terribly solid.

DRESSED NOW, SHE BENDS AND SLAPS HIS CHEEK BRISKLY.

RIMA: Come on. Get up. Get dressed and get out.

HE STARES AT HER THEN STANDS AND ADJUSTS HIS TROUSERS AND SHIRT, NOT LOOKING AT HER AT ALL. SHE HANDS HIM HIS TIE, WHICH HE STUFFS INTO A POCKET, AND PULLOVER, WHICH HE PULLS ON. THE SHOES ARE THE SLIP-ON SORT. HE PUTS HIS FEET IN THEM. RIMA GOES TO THE DOOR, TAKES HER DUFFEL COAT FROM THE HOOK, OPENS THE DOOR AND STANDS BESIDE IT, HOLDING UP THE COAT FOR HIM TO SLIP HIS ARMS IN. HE STARES AT HER.

RIMA: (IMPLACABLY) Goodbye, Lanarka.

HE WALKS STRAIGHT PAST HER OUT OF THE DOOR.

THE STAIRS

A LOW-ANGLE SHOT FROM MIDWAY UP. LANARK, STONE-FACED, DESCENDS BLOCKING ALL VIEW OF THE TOP.

RIMA'S VOICE: Lanark! (A PAUSE) Lanark!

HIS HEAD DESCENDS OUT OF VIEW, REVEALING HER AT THE STAIRTOP, COAT IN HAND.

SOUND: THE STREET DOOR IS OPENED.

RIMA: Lanark, take this!

SHE FLINGS COAT INTO THE CAMERA: BLACKNESS.

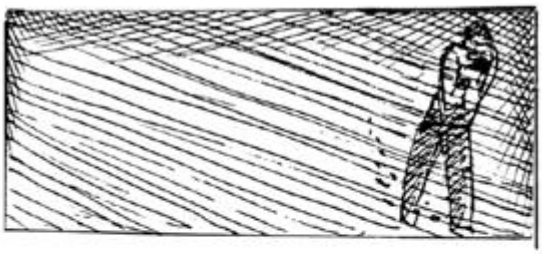
SOUND: STREET DOOR SLAMS.

D

FOG & SNOW

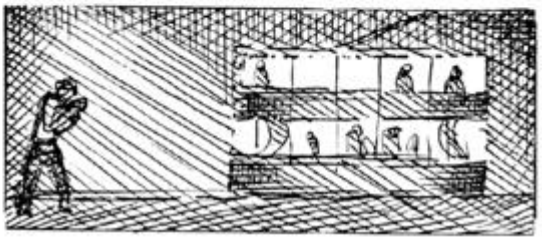
SOUND: FOOTSTEPS IN FROZEN SNOW.

A DIM HUNCHED FIGURE EMERGES ON THE RIGHT AND BEFORE VANISHING OFF RIGHT WE RECOGNIZE LANARK, COATLESS, CLENCHED GLOVED HAND PRESSED TO CHEST, OTHER HAND CLUTCHING WRIST OF IT.



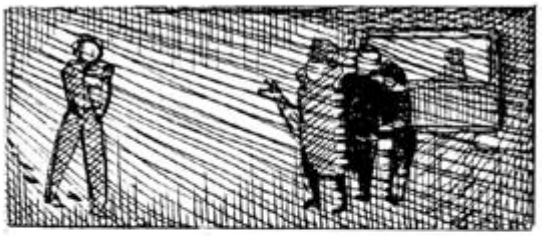
SOUND: THE DRONE OF AN APPROACHING TRAMCAR.

DIM HUNCHED LANARK TRUDGES IN PROFILE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT WHILE THE REMOTER SILHOUETTE OF TRAMCAR PASSES RIGHT TO LEFT. LANARK CLENCHED HAND SHAKES SPASMODICALLY, AS IF TRYING TO BREAK THE GRIP OF THE OTHER HAND.



SOUND: WOMEN TITTERING.

FOG THINS RIGHT TO SHOW 3 WOMEN WITH A COFFEE-STALL BEHIND, ONE OLD AND FAT, ONE OLD AND WIZENED, ONE YOUNG IN FUR COAT AND HAT.
SOUND: FOOTSTEPS IN SNOW.
LANARK EMERGES LEFT. THE YOUNG WOMAN WAVES AND CALLS.



GAY: Lanark!

HE HALTS, STARING. TRACK TO THEM AS SHE APPROACHES SAYING:

GAY: Lanark, where have you been? Sludden's been looking everywhere for you. He wants to tell you something.

LANARK STARES AT HER. HIS GLOVED HAND SQUIRMS. HE TIGHTENS

E

HIS GRIP. IT GOES INERT.

GAY: (SMILING SLYLY) I know why you're wearing a glove, I've got one too! (HE STARES AT HER) I'll show you my disease if you show me yours. (HIS MOUTH OPENS.) Everyone has a disease

SHE TUGS HER GAUNTLET OFF AND AND PROJECTS HER LIGHTLY CLENCHED FIST TOWARD HIM. CAMERA MOVES SLOWLY INTO CLOSE-UP AS SHE UNCLENCHES HER HAND AND THE PUPILS VANISH FROM HER EYES. SLUDDENS MOUTH IS IN THE PALM. IT SPEAKS.

SLUDDEN'S VOICE: (TINY AND CLEAR) You're far too serious, Lanark.

LANARK: Oh . Oh God.

SLUDDEN: You worry too much.

CLOSE-UP OF GAY'S HAND AND FACE.

LANARK'S VOICE: Oh this is Hell.

GAY'S MOUTH FALLS OPEN. SLUDDENS VOICE COMES OUT OF THAT TOO, BUT DEEP AND HOLLOW.

SLUDDEN'S VOICE: But you're trying to understand life and that interests me.

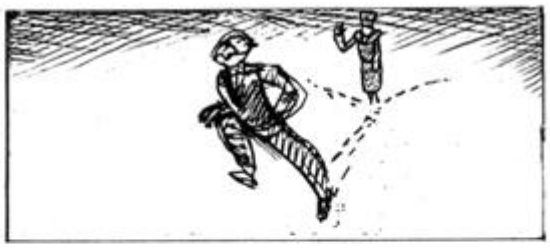
SOUND: LOW SOLEMN ORGAN CHORDS CORRESPOND TO BACK-TRACKING FOOTSTEPS.

CAMERA BACK-TRACKS UNTIL GAY APPEARS HANGING IN THE THINNING FOG LIKE A PUPPET, HER TOES A FEW INCHES ABOVE THE SNOW.

F

SOUND: STRONG ORGAN MUSIC.

ZOOM BACKWARD TO PASS, THEN SHOW FROM IN FRONT, LANARK RUNNING BLINDLY TOWARD THE CAMERA, LIKE ONE NEAR THE END OF HIS EMOTIONAL & BODILY POWER.



THE NECROPOLIS

THE CAMERA ZOOMS BACK BEFORE HIM THROUGH THE STONE PILLARS OF A HUGE OPEN WROUGHT IRON GATE. LANARK SLOWS TO A HALT BETWEEN THEM AND, BREATHING DEEPLY, GLANCES BEHIND HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME. NOTHING IS VISIBLE THERE BUT

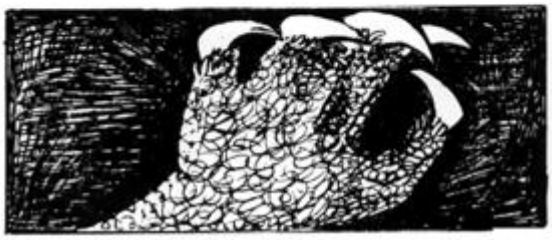
SOUND: ORGAN MUSIC, SOLEMN AND EERIE.

HE TURNS AND THE CAMERA TURNS WITH HIM, KEEPING HIM CENTRAL AS HE SURVEYS A SNOW-COVERED HILLSIDE OF BLACK MONUMENTS, THE TALLEST AND MOST CLOSELY CLUSTERED ON THE SKYLINE. THE WEIGHT OF THE GLOVED HAND MAKING IT HARD FOR HIM TO KEEP BALANCE. HE NOTICES THIS AND LIFTS THE HAND CURIOUSLY TO HIS FACE.

SOUND: END ORGAN MUSIC.

CUT TO CLOSE-UP.

THE HAND HAS SWOLLEN. CLAWS PIERCE THE ENDS OF THE GLOVE FINGERS.



G

WITH AN INDRAWN CRY LANARK THRUSTS THE CLAW AS FAR FROM HIM AS HE CAN, PRESSES HIS FACE WITH THE HUMAN HAND, STUMBLES TO THE GATE PILLAR AND CRIES THROUGH CLENCHED TEETH —

LANARK: Let me out God, Let me out God, God let me out.

— STRIKING THE PILLAR WITH HIS BROW EACH TIME ON THE WORD OUT. THEN HE DROPS HIS ARMS, LEANS BACK ON THE PILLAR. HIS BROW IS BADLY GRAZED, HIS EXPRESSION UTTERLY HOLLOW.

SOUND: A DISTANT MELODIOUS BELL CLANGS RESONANTLY ONCE.

HE LOOKS UP. THERE IS A BRIGHT LIGHT SUDDENLY ON THE HILL AMONG THE HIGHER MONUMENTS. HE PULLS HIMSELF ERECT & STARES AT IT.

SOUND: A FAINT IRREGULAR MUSICAL THRILLING NOISE, OF A SORT TO AROUSE CURIOSITY WITHOUT THE LEAST TOUCH OF DREAD. THE BELL CLANGS AGAIN.

LANARK WALKS TOWARD THE LIGHT. CUT TO —

LANARK CLIMBS A STEEP PATH TOWARD THE LIGHT. CUT TO—

HE ENTERS A SPACE SURROUNDED BY OBELISKS. THE LIGHT COMES FROM THE FAR SIDE OF A MONUMENT IN THE CENTRE.

SOUND: THE TRILLING SOUNDS CLOSER: NOT LOUDER, MORE INTIMATE.

H

HE PROWLS ROUND THE MONUMENT, SEEKING THE SOURCE OF THE LIGHT, AND SEES ON A BRIGHT SURFACE WHAT SEEMS THE SHADOW OF A GREAT BIRD, THE BODY STATIC BUT THE WING TIPS TWITCHING. HE GLANCES UP TO SEE WHAT CASTS THE SHADOW.

SOUND: THE TRILLING STOPS. A LOW BELL-CLANG.

THE SHADOW BECOMES A DISTINCT MOUTH.

MOUTH: I am the way out.

LANARK: What do you mean?

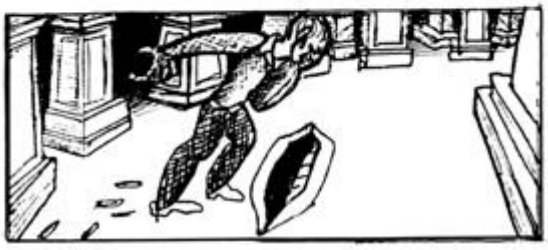
THE MOUTH CLOSES AND DESCENDS TO THE SNOWY EARTH, PASSING LIKE A COLOURED SHADOW OVER THE PROJECTIONS OF THE MONUMENT BASE. IT STOPS AND OPENS JUST IN FRONT OF LANARK'S FEET, AND OPENS. HE PEERS IN. AN UPDRAUGHT MOVES HIS HAIR.

LANARK: Where will you take me?

THE MOUTH SHUTS AND STARTS FADING.

LANARK: (DESPERATELY) Stop! I'll come.

THE MOUTH GROWS DISTINCT.



LANARK: (HUMBLY) How should I come?

MOUTH: Naked and head first.

LANARK: I'll come how I can.

I

HE PULLS OFF PULLOVER AND SHIRT, TEARING THEM ON THE SCALES AND SPINES WHICH COVER HIS RIGHT ARM AND SHOULDER.

HE SITS ON THE HARD SNOW, PULLS OFF HIS SHOES, AND DROPS HIS LEGS INTO THE MOUTH OVER THE UNDERLIP.

HE LEANS FORWARD, GRIPS THE TEETH OPPOSITE AND SLIDES DOWN TILL HE HANGS FROM THEM. SUDDENLY THE HUMAN HAND LOSES HOLD. IT AND HIS HEAD FALL FROM SIGHT.
CUT TO —

GULLET SEQUENCE

AN UPWARD VIEW OF THE OPEN MOUTH FROM FAR BELOW. LANARK'S BODY, LIT BY COLD BLUE LIGHT, DANGLES FROM IT BY THE DRAGON ARM. ALL ELSE IS BLACKNESS.

LANARK: (SHOUTING) Shut! Bite Shut!

THE MOUTH SHUTS.

J

IN COLD BLUE LIGHT HE FALLS THROUGH BLACKNESS, LEAVING THE SCREEN BOTTOM RIGHT.
CUT TO—

DOWNWARD SHOT OF HIM, LARGE, FALLING INTO THE FRAME FROM THE BOTTOM EDGE AND

DIMINISHING TO NOTHING IN THE CENTRE.
CUT TO—

OBLIQUE UPWARD SHOT OF HIM SOMERSAULTING DOWN INTO CLOSE-UP FROM TOP LEFT. BEFORE LEAVING THE SCREEN BOTTOM RIGHT HE IS SUDDENLY CAUGHT BY A HUGE INVISIBLE HAND, THE LIGHT ON HIM GOES HOT ORANGE RED AND

SOUND: HARSH BUZZING

THE INVISIBLE HAND TIGHTENS, SQUEEZING HIM INTO A PAINFUL KNOT.

K

HE FIGHTS THE PRESSURE AND MANAGES TO STRAIGHTEN HIS ARMS. LIGHT ON HIM GOES COLD BLUE AND —

SOUND: BUZZING STOPS

HE FALLS AGAIN. CAMERA KEEPS HIM IN FRAME FOR 2½ SECONDS UNTIL —

SOUND: HARSHER BUZZ

IN HOT ORANGE LIGHT THE HAND CATCHES HIM AGAIN AND SQUEEZES TIGHTER. THE SPINES ON ARM AND SHOULDER ARE FLATTENED AND SNAP. WITH HUGE EFFORT HE JERKS ONE LEG STRAIGHT —

SOUND: ¾ SECOND OF SILENCE.

HE FALLS IN BLUE LIGHT TILL CAUGHT AGAIN —

SOUND: STILL HARSHER BUZZ, AS

IN RED LIGHT HE IS SQUEEZ-ED TIGHTER STILL UNTIL —

SUDDEN BLACKOUT. SILENCE.

L

SOUND: BUZZ.

MEDIUM CLOSEUP. INTENSE PRESSURE IN A DIFFERENT POSITION, IN A DARKER LIGHT, EXCEPT THE DRAGON ARM WHICH GLOWS BRIGHTER.

CUT TO—

BLACKOUT
SILENCE

CUT TO—

SOUND: BUZZ.

CLOSE-UP OF FACE IN DARK CRIMSON LIGHT, DISTORTED BY G-FORCE PRESSURE, THEN SOUND AND IMAGE FADE INTO—

TOTAL BLACKNESS FOR FIVE SECONDS.

SOUND: SCISSORS FAINTLY SNIPPING, THEN SILENCE.

THE BLACKNESS PALES TO DOVE GREY WITH CREAMY BRIGHTNESS AT THE FOOT OF IT LIKE A CLEAR DAWN SKY. THIS IS THE CEILING OF—

THE WARD IN THE INSTITUTE

M

SOUND: SNIPPING. GIRLISH GIGGLE AND WHISPERS.

TILT DOWN PAST DIAL OF A 25 HOUR CLOCK AND ARCHES. COLOURS ARE ALL WARM WHITES APART THE REVOLVING SCARLET SECOND HAND OF THE CLOCK AND AZURE SKY BEHIND CLOUDS BEYOND THE ARCHES.

P.O.V. SHOT OF LANARK'S LEGS AT THE BOTTOM OF A HOSPITAL BED, NAKED AND APART, YOUNG NURSES CLIPPING HIS TOENAILS AND GOSSIPING. LANARK'S RIGHT HAND, HUMAN AGAIN, RISES INTO CENTRE OF SCREEN FROM THE BASE OF IT. THE LEFT HAND RISES TO TOUCH IT. THE NURSES NOTICE.

LEFT NURSE: Feeling better, Bushybrows?

LANARK: (AFTER PAUSE) Yes. (OTHER PAUSE) Why do you call me Bushybrows?

THE LEFT NURSE LIFTS AN OCTAGONAL MIRROR AND HOLDS IT CENTRE SCREEN. LANARK'S FACE IN IT IS OLDER AND MOUSTACHED, WITH BUSHY EYEBROWS.

LANARK: I see. (PAUSE) How old do I look?

LEFT NURSE: (REMOVING MIRROR) A bit over thirty.

RIGHT NURSE: No chicken anyway.

THEY ROLL THE SHEET DOWN FROM HIS STOMACH AND TUCK IT IN. LANARK FOLDS HANDS ON STOMACH.

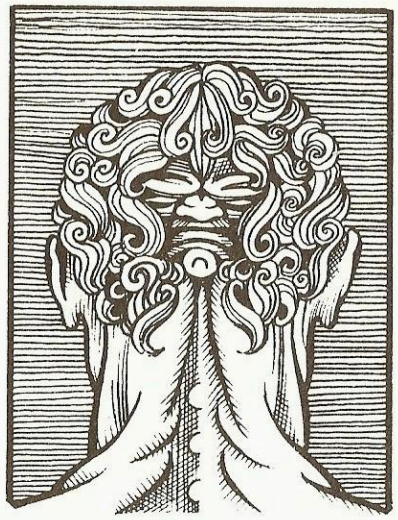
LANARK: A short while ago I was a bit over twenty.

LEFT NURSE: Well Bushybrows, that's life, isn't it?

1974 – MOST OF A MURAL SHOWING WILD LIFE THRIVING AROUND AN OAK TREE – emulsion, acrylic & oil paint, in the exhibition centre of Palacerigg country park and nature reserve near Cumbernauld, in Lanarkshire, and restored by the artist in 2001.

THE SPREAD OF IAN NICOL

One day Ian Nicol, a riveter by trade, started to split in two down the middle. The process began as a bald patch on the back of his head. For a week he kept smearing it with hair restorer, yet it grew bigger, and the surface became curiously puckered and so unpleasant to look upon that at last he went to his doctor. "What is it?" he asked.
"I don't know," said the doctor, "but it looks like a face, ha, ha! How do you feel these days?"
"Fine. Sometimes I get a stabbing pain in my chest and stomach but only in the morning."
"Eating well?"
"Enough for two men."



The doctor thumped him all over with a stethoscope and said, "I'm going to have you X-rayed. And I may need to call in a specialist."

Over the next three weeks the bald patch grew bigger still and the suggestion of a face more clearly marked on it. Ian visited his doctor and found a specialist in the consulting room, examining X-ray plates against the light. "No doubt about it, Nicol," said the specialist, "you are

splitting in two down the middle."
Ian considered this.
"That's not usual, is it?" he asked.
"Oh, it happens more than you would suppose. Among bacteria and viruses it's very common, though it's certainly less frequent among riveters. I suggest you go into hospital where the process can complete itself without annoyance for your wife or embarrassment to yourself. Think it over."

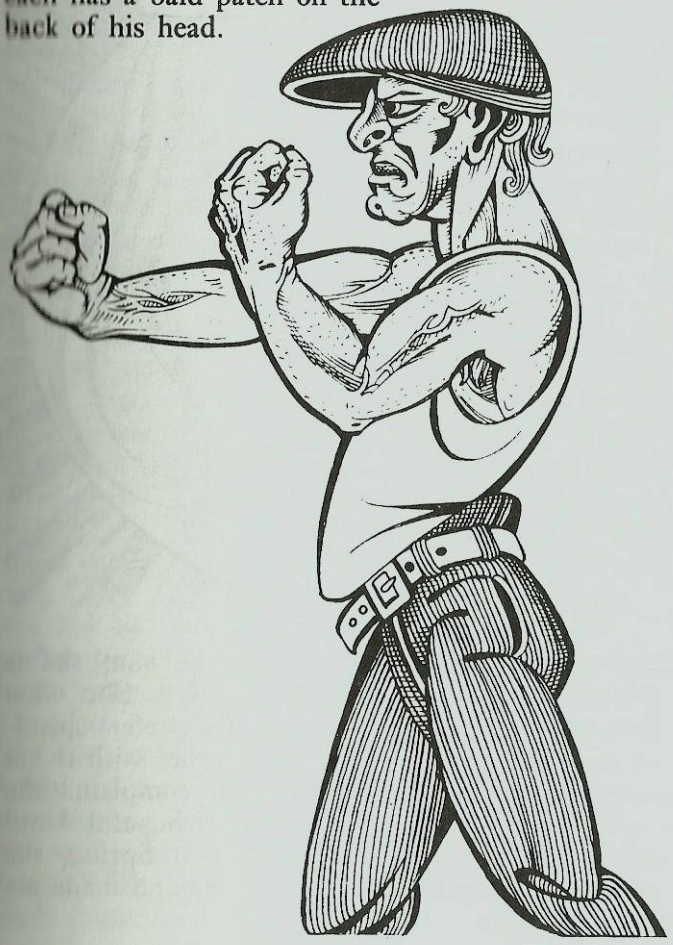
Ian thought it over and went into hospital where he was put into a small ward and given a nurse to attend him, for the specialist was interested in the case. As the division proceeded more specialists were called in to see what was happening. At first Ian ate and drank with a greed that appalled those who saw it. After consuming three times his normal bulk for three days on end he fell into a coma which lasted till the split was complete. Gradually the lobes of his brain separated and a bone shutter formed between them. The face on the back of his head grew eyelashes and a jaw. What seemed at first a cancer of the heart became another heart. Convulsively the spine doubled itself. In a puzzled way the specialists charted the stages of the process and discussed the cause. A German consultant said that life was freeing itself from the vicissitudes of sexual reproduction. A psychiatrist said it was a form of schizophrenia, a psycho-analyst that it was an ordinary twinning process which had been delayed by a severe case of prenatal sibling rivalry. When the split was complete, two thin Ian Nicols lay together on the bed.

The resentment each felt for the other had not been foreseen or guarded against. In bed the original Ian Nicol could be recognized by his position (he lay

on the right of the bed), but as soon as both men were strong enough to walk each claimed ownership of birth certificate, union card, clothes, wife and National Insurance benefit. One day in the hospital grounds they started fighting. They were evenly matched and there are conflicting opinions about who won. On leaving hospital they took legal action

against each other for theft of identity. The case was resolved by a medical examination which showed that one of them had no navel.

The second Ian Nicol changed his name by deed poll and is now called Macbeth. Sometimes he and Ian Nicol write to each other. The latest news is that each has a bald patch on the back of his head.



Adam und Eva (1988)
Woodcut 122 x 91.5cm
edition of 30 Glasgow Print Studio

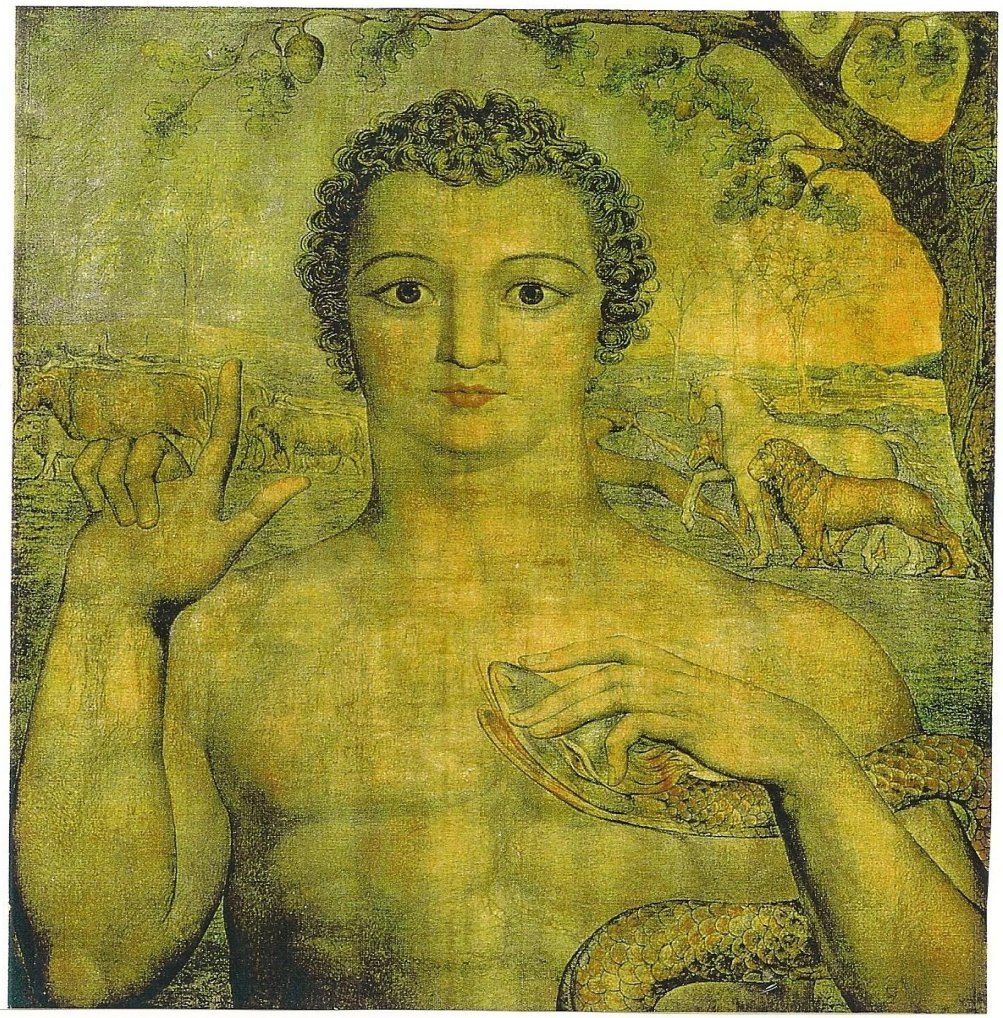


FIG.104 *Adam Naming the Beasts* 1810.
Tempera on canvas
74.9 x 61.1cm. B667
Glasgow Museums:
The Stirling Maxwell
Collection, Pollok
House

Six Variations on a Still Life

1	2	3	4	5	6
black	black	blue	black	tawny	dark
on	on	ground	ground	orange	green
white	white	white	white	ground	ground
wood	wood	line	line	white	white
cut	cut	on	on	line	line
dressing	kitchen	tawny	blue	on	on
table	tale	orange	glowing	rich	rich
two	two	same	yellow	black &	black &
twisted	floppy	table	tawny	dark	tawny
towers	fishes	floppy	orange	green	orange
of	one	fishes	dark	again	cheer
coupled	crab	claw	green	our	the
eels	or	bent	again	friendly	last
one	lobster	eel	table	table	table
aflame	claw	placid	floppy	floppy	floppy
one	one	ashet	fishes	fishes	fishes
floppy	bent	rich	claw	claw	claw
fish	eel	black &	bent	bent	bent
over	in	glowing	eel	eel	eel
hungry	placid	yellow	placid	placid	placid
ashtray	ashet	slices	ashet	ashet	ashet
sharp	await	jig	jig	jig	jig
edged	the	saw	saw	saw	saw
dagger	knife	cut	cut	cut	cut

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