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**Crossing Limits –
Liminality and Transgression in Contemporary
Scottish Fiction**

Julia Maria Hammer

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The University of Edinburgh

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Declaration

This is to certify that that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed:

Julia Maria Hammer, March 2017

Abstract

In my thesis, I aim to show that a focus on liminality in contemporary Scottish fictional texts illustrates underlying developments of relevant social phenomena with regard to class issues, gender and sexual identity. The anthropological concept of liminality looks at a situation of “being between”. The liminar faces a situation of having to renegotiate their values and perceptions in order to proceed. Liminality always involves the existence of limits which have to be transgressed and against which the individual negotiates a personal situation. I further hypothesise that the transgression of limits can be seen as an instrument to create order. I take an anthropological approach to my thesis. Arnold van Gennep’s early studies on rites of passage and Victor Turner’s study of liminality originate in the observation of tribe-internal, social structures of personal development. Van Gennep assumes a tripartite structure among which liminality is the middle stage, the phase in which the initiand has to perform tasks to re-enter and become part of the community. Turner isolates the middle stage and transfers this concept to western societies. This theory is taken up and developed further by several literary critics and anthropologists. While the transgression of limits is often regarded as a violation of those norms which regulate societies, the transgression of limits in a rite of passage and connected with liminality is a vital aspect and socially necessary. Several concepts are related to this theory, which will play a major role in my thesis: Turner’s permanent liminality, Mikhail Bakhtin’s carnivalesque as well as Foucault’s transgression. In the first chapter, I contrast two of Alasdair Gray’s novels, stating that the most powerful message of social and capitalist criticism is not just visible on the surface of the hyperbolic texts, but particularly prominent in liminal passages. The theories of Bakhtin and Turner plays the most important role in this chapter. In the second chapter, A. L. Kennedy’s novels are contrasted. In *So I am Glad* a difficult psycho-social issue is solved by a liminal trigger-figure, *Paradise* is an example of the destructive and restrictive effects of permanent liminality. In chapter three, I deal with the issue of passing and an individual redefinition of gender identity. The performativity of masculinity reveals ambiguous definitions of gender and morale. *The Wasp Factory* portrays a

form of masculinity which has destructive effects on the individual and its environment. It is the tension in the liminal situation of a gender myth, a brutally performed masculinity and the character's biological sex which expresses a harsh criticism of society's definition of masculinity. In *Trumpet*, the binary model of gender is questioned. The text suggests a different definition of identity as fluid, passing between the two 'extremes', formulating the possibility of a state of being 'something in-between'. It is the confrontation with this 'otherness' which provokes a wave of rejection and protest in the environment of the individual passing as a member of the 'other sex'. In this case, it is not the obvious liminal individual, but his son who undergoes a process of change and thus a process of renegotiating his strict value system. The final chapter deals with liminal spaces and how these reflect and support the internal development which the protagonists undergo. The choice of Orkney as a mystical place and the fictional setting in a war game show that liminal spaces – both real and fictitious – trigger a personal development and reconnect present day life in Scotland with historical events which have had a shaping role for Scottish and European life.

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List of Abbreviations

L – Lanark

J – 1982, Janine

P – Paradise

SIAG – So I am Glad

WF – The Wasp Factory

T – Trumpet

NS – Negative Space

EF – Ever Fallen in Love

Introduction: Theoretical Perspectives

Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. [...] They may be disguised as monsters, wear only a strip of clothing, or even go naked, to demonstrate that as liminal beings they have no status, property, insignia, secular clothing indicating rank or role, position in a kinship system – in short, nothing that may distinguish them from their fellow neophytes or initiands. (Turner 1969: 95)

Being ‘betwixt and between’ means being in dialogue with a limit. It can involve crossing this limit. And it also implies a critical reflection on the normativity of this particular border. Crossing a boundary is often thought of as a revolutionary act, an act of rebelling against a system which defines norms, which defines the realm of what is accepted and what is not. It is an act of rebelling against the direction of what is normal and what is not, of what is good and what is not. But is this always the case? What happens when a border is crossed? What happens during this dialogue, this interaction with the norm? What happens when an individual, a place, a situation is termed liminal? In the case above, Turner describes the very origin of the concept of liminality: it is rooted in cultural anthropology.

My thesis is a study of the processes of change which are triggered by liminal and transgressive situations. It seeks to examine whatever norms and borders reveal in order to gather a new understanding of norms, values and, perhaps, ethics dealt with in works of fiction. I focus on the liminal in contemporary Scottish fiction, which appears in a remarkably distinct manner. Liminal and transgressive phenomena appear together and can be identified in many works of recent Scottish literature. They offer the possibility of a negotiation of characters and situations and thus aid a deeper understanding of underlying political discourse within the works of fiction examined.

The condition of ‘being between’ is not the degeneration of a culture but the essential means of its generation. [...] Culture is not an organism, nor a totality, nor a unity; it is the site of a dialogue, it is a dialectic, a dialect. It is being between. (Craig 1996: 205-206)

It is quite a radical step from anthropology to literary criticism. Yet using an anthropological theory forms a highly insightful approach to Scottish literature as I aim to show in the following. In *Out of History*, a collection of essays on contemporary Scottish literature, Cairns Craig deals with the phenomenon of ‘being

between' which is a crucial aspect of the anthropological discourse I am engaging with here. While his focus is on locating Scottish literature in relation to the English literature canon, examining its structural and linguistic aspects as well as the notion of 'tradition' in this context, he develops a new approach to understanding idiosyncrasies. If literature and culture are considered 'in-between' categories, they defy easy or fixed categories. This forces the writer, the reader, and of course the critic to reconsider the categories which are accepted as self-explanatory.

I hypothesise that transgressing norms and being in dialogue with norms in phases of liminality, is a means to create order. I am convinced that liminality is a tool to unveil processes of change that a character undergoes in a work of fiction and to deal with those conflicts which arise in times of radical changes. It is also a tool to open a discourse on alternative ways of being, and to question established norms. I hope to find new perspectives on the changes which take place and consider liminality a useful instrument to vent as well as to seek protection. Jochen Achilles and Ina Bergmann emphasise the significance of the term in literary analysis by highlighting that the concept of liminality is capable of mediating between the aesthetic and the political content. It also allows for an exploration of temporal and spatial dimensions: "Liminal zones appropriate their own chronological interrelation between heterogeneous systems" (Achilles and Bergmann 2015: 6).

Social changes, political upheavals, the pursuit of independence, the departure from historically developed unity; contemporary times are shaped by radical changes and, as a consequence, the feeling of insecurity, the loss of certainty, the possibility of opening new forms of social cohabitation. One facet of contemporary fiction, particularly Scottish fiction, is a tendency to address conflicts in value systems, the existing social order, previously accepted norms of behaviour, or conflicting life plans. Norms are defined, but then again, they are also questioned. What is important for the course of my study is not the definition of the norm itself, but to look at the act of questioning existing norms as well as the interaction of an individual with the norm and the norm-defining authority. So, we wonder, what happens as soon as norms are contested? I suggest that individuals find themselves to be in a situation which is neither here nor there. It is a situation of being between the

norm and the deviation; of being in-between, of being liminal. I will look at selected works of Scottish authors whose literary approaches to contemporary living are relevant with regard to particular issues. Within the literary texts, I will look at the interplay of liminality and border phenomena with power, sexual identity, gender, time and space. I am aware that a selection is always a limitation. It cannot grasp the phenomenon as a whole. The works selected are part of a Scottish literary corpus and deal with alternative life plans, alternative value systems and ethical norms. What is significant about these selected works of contemporary literature is that, in many cases, they question formerly accepted standards of prose writing, be it in form or content. I am careful with the use of 'postmodern' as I see the problem of overuse, of making it a fashion term and it is certainly debatable whether all works I have chosen belong to a postmodern category. However, Stevenson formulates an insightful notion of the term on investigating postmodern aspects in Gray's work. It lends itself to be used in an overall context in my thesis. Stevenson highlights that it is a particular use of time, besides various other facets, which classifies a text as postmodern. Very often it is the case in postmodern literature that the temporal order is destroyed, questioned, and fragmented (Stevenson 1991: 50). "Postmodernism [...] assumes reality to be non-existent or inaccessible and investigates instead what worlds texts can project", describes Stevenson (Stevenson 1991: 53). This means that the text itself is given a prominent position and power. It reflects the instability, but also the multifacetedness of contemporary life. The effect is that form and content of a novel transgress previously known rules. The reason why a restriction to Scottish fiction seems to make sense to me is that Scottish literature of the past three decades has to be read in the context of the political development of Scotland in relation to England and its position in the UK. It often deals with a wide range of socio-political issues and critical voices which make for an interesting discussion. The literature of the time often focuses on socially marginalised individuals, people who do not fit the norm: alcoholics, drug-addicts, people with sociopathic tendencies, ultraviolent individuals or individuals with a deviant sexual identity. These characters tend to live lives that are between two realities, between norms. Contemporary Scottish literature displays a provocative potential, strength and an endeavour to make voices heard. The cultural period between the first referendum on Scottish devolution in 1979, the

Thatcher era, the second referendum which then led to Scottish devolution, and a third referendum – one on Scottish independence in 2014 – is of interest here. Without a doubt, this is a period of significant socio-economic changes. These were years of economic disparity, cuts to the Welfare state, a consciousness of being disadvantaged. With the political climate being tense, feelings of voicelessness and incapacity with regard to political participation increased. This background is said to have paved the way for a new generation of writers; a self-confident, non-conformist generation of writers. Cairns Craig describes this in his foreword to Beveridge and Turnbull's *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture* very fittingly:

[The] 1980s proved to be one of the most productive and creative decades in Scotland this century – as though the energy that had failed to be harnessed by the politicians flowed into other channels. In literature, in thought, in history, creative and scholarly work went hand in hand to redraw the map of Scotland's past and realign the perspectives of its future. (Craig in Beveridge and Turnbull 1989: 1)

Then what does that mean for the literature of the time? Craig explains that literature functions as a voice, an expression of criticism, and an instrument to come to terms with the current socio-political situation in Scotland. Ultimately, it is the question of national identity which forms the main focus of literary criticism; class and language can be seen as further important issues. The Clearances, the lack of influence on British politics and the lack of a parliament since 1707 were seen as decisive influences on Scottish writing. Literature of the time often deals with everyday issues, problematic circumstances of life in the Scotland of the 1980s and the years before, problems that have been smouldering for some time. While the generation of writers who emerged with immense success in the 1980s have had a strong focus on social injustice, economic decline, the flaws and restrictions in Scottish and British culture, a younger generation of writers followed with a more subtle, a more diverse point of view. Rather than writing explicitly on the question of national identity or class, the younger generation deals with issues such as gender identities, race or violence – Scottishness and class issues being interwoven with other topics.

Cairns Craig has published widely on contemporary Scottish literature. In his *Out of History*, Craig describes a history of marginalisation of Scottish literature by many critics. It was seen as parochial, backward and less eloquent than English literature. This is what Beveridge and Turnbull call “inferiorist historiography”

(Beveridge/Turnbull 1989: 16). He traces this back to the lack of a uniform language. With English, Scots, and Gaelic, there are three languages which are accompanied by a particular group identity. The difficulty, he explains, is that thought and feeling were separated by the fact that “language was broken up” (Craig 1996: 174). Here he agrees with Edwin Muir who states in *Scott and Scotland* that “a Scottish writer who wishes to achieve some approximation to completeness has no choice except to absorb the English tradition, and ... if he thoroughly does so his work belongs not merely to Scottish literature but to English literature as well.” (Muir qtd. in Craig 1996: 174). Craig concludes that this then leads to a state of ‘being between’ two cultures, languages and the “fragmentary pasts of a divided Scotland” (Craig 1996: 174). Being between represents an alternative approach to thinking about Scotland, about Scottish culture, about Scottish literature. It is marked by heterogeneity instead of uniformity; it is a dialectic, it is multifaceted. While it lacks uniformity and consistency, it does offer a powerful potential. “In Leonard, Kelman, Dunn and Lochhead – and many others – writing in Scotland becomes the exploration of the intersections between, and the spaces between, a multiplicity of different dialects and grammars.” (Craig 1996: 200) What is obvious in his analyses is that Craig focuses strongly on two main ideas: nationalism and language. For Craig, literature played a decisive role in the process of change in Scotland after 1979. In his 2003 essay on the status of culture after devolution (in 1997), Craig states that

If Scotland voted for *political* devolution in 1997, it had much earlier declared *cultural* devolution, both in the radical voices of new Scottish writing – from James Kelman to Matthew Fitt, from Janice Galloway to Ali Smith – and in the writing of Scottish cultural history that produced, in the 1980s and 1990s, a new sense of richness and the autonomy of Scotland’s past cultural achievements. (Craig 2003: 39)

According to him, the novel is one way of constructing identity (Craig 1999: 10). He thus takes a similar approach to Benedict Anderson who states that the nation is not only a sociological term or construct, but an “imagined community” (Anderson 2006: 6). An important part of this argument is that the novel can be understood as an instrument for people with different backgrounds to define a shared notion of belonging together, a notion of communion or a shared identity (cf. Anderson 2006: 6).

Douglas Gifford explains that Scotland is re-imagined by Scottish writers. In his work he elaborates on how Scotland gains a stronger sense of its potential in the time before Scottish devolution (Gifford 1997: 246). He argues

[...] that a major change took place through the 1980s, with writers like Edwin Morgan, Alasdair Gray, and Liz Lochhead, in poetry, fiction and drama, developing a new kind of imaginative relationship with their country and its culture, a relationship which refused to accept a single realism of generally bleak and economically deprived urban character. [...] A new grouping of writers is emerging who refuse to accept the old polarities, and who create in their novels an interlocking and interweaving of ideas which refuses to accept the premises of Scottish writing in its preciously polarised twentieth-century attitudes. [...] What is the significance of all this reorientation? It is surely that Scottish literature of the 1980s is marked by its commitment to radical new ground-breaking; to reassessing its older texts, and to exploring ways of using a recognisably Scottish perspective in viewing the world outside, while simultaneously reasserting the validity of Scottish fictional and literary tradition as source material for contemporary creativity. (Gifford 1997: 596)

In contrast, Tom Nairn's *The Break-Up of Britain: crisis and neo-nationalism* voices some rather provocative approaches to the issue of inferiorisation and the socio-cultural movement in the 1980s. He argues that the "key to neo-nationalist renaissances lies in the slow foundering of the British state, not in the Celtic bloodstream" (Nairn 1979: 71). Further on, he claims:

Cramped, stagnant, backward-looking, parochial – all these and others are epithets traditionally and rightly ascribed to modern Scottishness. But deformed as they are, these constitute none the less a strong, institutionally guaranteed identity. It is true that political castration was the main ingredient in this rather pathological complex (such was the point of the Union), and that intellectuals have been unable to contemplate it for a long time without inexpressible pain. (Nairn 1979: 131)

Modern Scottish identity is, according to Nairn, built upon a pathological self-image. He diagnoses a deep-rooted fragmentation of identity and culture in Scotland. Scottishness is compared with Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (cf. Nairn 1979: 153). It is obvious that, for many years after 1979, a major focus of literary criticism has been on nationalism, on its alleged inferior status and on social issues.

Michael Gardiner criticises this point: "literature has sometimes been reduced to a cipher for national identity." (Gardiner 2009: 192) Almost a decade after Scottish devolution, Matthew McGuire summarises that the debate on Scottish literature had slowly taken a different direction. He refers to Allan Massie who was convinced that, as devolution had been achieved, Scottish writers did not feel the need to prove their Scottishness (cf. Massie 2002: 1). McGuire then elaborates on a new debate on how the idea of Scottishness has been developed beyond parochialism

and essentialism (McGuire 2007: 312). As one of the younger generation of critics, Stefanie Lehner points out that, even after devolution, the focus of literary criticism is still on the issue of nationalism and that there is a vehement reluctance to depart from this focus and thus concurs with Whyte that this issue has saturated the discourse on Scottish literature (Lehner 2011: 41). In her 2011 monograph *Subaltern Ethics in Contemporary Scottish and Irish literature. Tracing Counter Histories*, she examines how fiction opens a space for debate on social inequalities, marginalisation and oppression, focusing on a post-colonial and a gender perspective. She states that, in recent criticism, there has, in addition to the national issue, also been a tendency “to reconfigure Ireland and Scotland as postnational spaces, reflective of the plurality, hybridity and multicultural diversity that are commonly associated with a condition of postmodern flux” (Lehner 2011: 6). However, under a subaltern perspective, she argues that “such postnational and/or postmodern celebrations of difference efface the continuing inequalities and disenfranchisements by translating them into a grammar of pluralism and inclusiveness” (Lehner 2011: 7). By focusing on the subaltern, she intends to spell out prevailing inequalities in a dialectic with the ‘dominant’ notion in order to illuminate asymmetrical power relations in society (Lehner 2011: 9).

*

Nationalism, gender, race, multilingual settings: Scottish literature of the past decades is full of diverse aspects which give insights into what constitutes life in Scotland today. I aim to examine whether we can find new approaches to these issues by focusing on the liminal. Cairns Craig refers to Scottish literature as being in-between due to its multiplicity of languages. However, I am convinced that contemporary Scottish literature is full of various in-between phenomena which exceed the aspects of language and the theory of the novel. I look at limits, such as ethical ones or social norms, and their transgression. I explore whether liminality and the transgression of limits, as a dialogue with the norms involved, can lead to significant changes, potentially a radical rethinking of values. I look at whether it has the subversive power to criticise and lastingly influence commonly accepted norms. I assume that liminality and related phenomena in literature offer a fruitful setting to

renegotiate and reconsider norms and can help find new perspectives onto these facets of Scottish identities. I want to find out whether it is possible that the representations of the interaction with one's own self in a phase of liminality or in view of a limit can function as a catalyst for a change in the chosen texts.

The liminal and the limit have to be thought together. When looking at boundaries, we also have to bear in mind that related phenomena such as transgression are major concepts which need closer investigation. Boundaries are, in most cases, normative; they are formulated and defined. The transgression of limits can be a subversive act of breaking and opposing the norm as well as the institution defining it. However, we may wonder, is a transgression always a violation of a norm? Does it always imply a radical negation of a boundary? I believe that this is not the case – at least not always. I aim to show that the liminal, as a temporal, personal or spatial phenomenon, serves as a setting to enable a focus on rethinking commonly accepted norms, values and states. Since it is a phase in and out of time, neither being part of everyday routine nor being permanently excluded, representing a temporal isolation of the individual, this phenomenon offers the possibility of an unveiled focus on a particular issue in question. In a tribal setting, this is the reflection on the individual function and position in the social group. It implies redefining one's positions as well as values and requires the individual to overcome this phase of isolation to be part of the tribe again. The decisive aspect is less a question of how they survive a test, but rather the requirement to become conscious of one's personality, one's strengths, and one's origin. In this case, transgression is socially accepted and even expected of the individual to become a mature and worthy part of the social group.

Furthermore, there are specific forms of liminality. Carnival, as a very prominent example, is a temporal permission to violate the given norm. However, this is regulated mockery as there is no real revolutionary force involved. In the theory of folk culture, the temporal subversion of order is tolerated to canalise discontent among the king's subjects. Spatial liminality refers to a location which is not part of an active community and has a quality of evoking or conserving another incident or historical event. It is important to note that liminality is a phenomenon

which is not restricted to youth. The concept only originates in a study on tribal youth. Anyone in any stage of life can undergo a state of liminality, which is why no moral judgement of immaturity is expressed.

*

The term liminality triggers an extensive set of definitions in mainly anthropological and sociological studies. Liminality is always tied to norms. It draws a connection to ethical, cultural and philosophical questions. It is tied to the concept of boundaries and transgressions. The emergence of the term itself implies that, to put it very abstractly, a liminal individual has to undergo a process of change preceded by the transgression of a boundary in order to reach a different status. This boundary often appears in the form of a social norm. In a more general understanding of the term, transgressions question norms, their legitimacy as well as legitimacy of the authority that defines the norm. In their work on liminality and the short story, Jochen Achilles and Ina Bergmann look at the aesthetic functions of the concept in contemporary British and American short fiction. They state that “Liminality as a concept of both demarcation and mediation between different processural stages, spatial complexes, and inner states is of obvious importance in an age of global mobility, digital networking, interethnicity, transnationality, ecological reconsiderations of species boundaries as well as technological redefinitions of the human.” (Achilles and Bergmann 2015: 3) The texts I discuss in this study include works which are strongly determined by the motifs of the journey, of a different perception of time and of space. Other works are based around adolescence and early adulthood as central influences in the plots. These issues are classic phenomena that are closely related to the concept of liminality. I will now start defining my approach to the term, its origins, its implications and phenomena related to it.

*

All academic engagement with the term liminality ultimately has to start with a critical reading of Arnold van Gennep’s studies on rites of passage. I will start with his studies which define the term for the first time in an anthropological context. As it has a very specific meaning, is important to keep in mind that a term cannot just be

translated from one context to another, from anthropology to literary studies. I will contrast his definitions with Victor Turner's understanding of the term and his introduction of a new approach to a concept which had a very narrow definition in the first place. After that, I will deal with the studies of Arpad Szokolczai and Shmuel Eisenstadt, which have had a major influence in the more recent development of the studies in Anthropological discourse in the past two decades. Connections to particular motifs of Mikhail Bakhtin and Michel Foucault's studies can be drawn in this stage, but these will be dealt with in depth in the respective chapters of my thesis.

Arnold van Gennep is understood as the founder of folklore studies and formulated his concept of 'rites de passage' on the basis of his study of the Algerian Kabyle people. A central aspect of his approach was that he rejected a dichotomist interpretation of tribal behaviour in favour of a tripartite structure. This was the basis of his understanding of all human interrelations. Several decades later, van Gennep's studies were taken up by younger scholars and gained wide attention from the 1960s onwards following Victor Turner's work. Turner, the Scottish anthropologist, worked with the Rhodesian Ndembu tribe, focusing on the inner structure of tribal group dynamics.

Van Gennep's work originated in the following assumptions: in his studies of totemic structures in so-called "semicivilized" societies, van Gennep identified several aspects that subdivided a tribe. He observed that semicivilized societies attributed particular characteristics to man and woman with regard to economic, political and magico-religious aspects aside from a division into age and generation (van Gennep 2). Therefore, the succession of particular age levels gains a special importance in the course of a human life. He then explains that it must be absolutely logical that the transition from one age group to the next has to be accompanied by a rite of passage. Van Gennep states that "a man's life comes to be made up of a succession of stages with similar ends and beginnings: birth, social puberty, marriage, fatherhood, advancement to a higher class, occupational specialisation, and death." (van Gennep 3). To go from one level to the next, the individual has to go through subsequent stages. These are accompanied by particular rites of passage. He

defines these stages as the following: “Therefore the sequence is: (1) separation, (2) a transitional period with gradual removal of barriers, and (3) reintegration into ordinary life” (van Gennep 44). These rites are mostly part of ritualistic exams, festivities, cleansing methods. The transitional phase is also called the ‘liminal’ period. The term ‘liminal’ is derived from the Latin term *limen*, meaning threshold. Arnold van Gennep differentiates between different types of rites, between positive and negative rites, direct and indirect rites (van Gennep 9). Negative rites describe social taboos. In this context, we can draw a parallel between the theoretical basis of van Gennep’s concept of negative rites and Bakhtin’s understanding of taboos in carnival. I will focus on this related notion further on in the discussion of liminality and its wider theoretical context in my analysis. A ‘rite of passage’ is the overall term in van Gennep which includes particular sub-rites which all aim at a person’s social transition:

It will be noted that the rites carried out on the threshold itself are transition rites, “Purifications” (washing, cleansing, etc.) constitute rites of separation from previous surroundings; there follow rites of incorporation (presentation of salt, a shared meal, etc.). The rites of the threshold are therefore not “union” ceremonies, properly speaking, but rites of preparation for union, themselves preceded by rites of preparation for the stage. Consequently, I propose to call the rites of separation from a previous world, *preliminal rites*, those executed during the transitional stage *liminal* (or *threshold*) *rites*, and the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world *post-liminal rites*. (van Gennep 20-21)

It is important to note that van Gennep presupposes the necessity of the tripartite structure in a ritual. In his theory, a rite can only be complete when it undergoes all three stages. However, while the tripartite structure is necessary, van Gennep points out that the stages do not necessarily have to have the same quality and emphasis (van Gennep 11). During a funeral, for example, the main emphasis is on a rite of separation, whereas during a wedding ceremony rites of incorporation are more important (van Gennep 11). Despite the completely different possible natures of rites of passage, Arnold van Gennep summarises the similarities of all of them: firstly, they have a necessary, recurring pattern. The tripartite structure is vital as the individual’s passage is incomplete if this pattern has not been fulfilled. And secondly, each social passage goes along with a territorial passage. In other words, symbols of transition play a major role in the performance of rituals (van Gennep 191-2). This is why wedding ceremonies often end with the bride and groom’s passage across a symbolic threshold in order to finalise the union, the reintegration

movement. In summary, Arnold van Gennep's theory of the rites of passage is based on a model of progression. A symbolic development has to take place in order for the individual to mature, to become a fully accepted adult in the respective social group.

On discovering Arnold van Gennep's studies in the 1960s, also a time of social upheaval, Victor Turner approaches the theory of the liminal, which was first published in 1909, anew. Turner reapplies van Gennep's theory, develops it further and defines a new approach to liminality as a contemporary phenomenon. Turner agrees with van Gennep that rites of passage are universal phenomena.

Rites de passage are found in all societies but tend to reach their maximal expression in small-scale, relatively stable and cyclical societies, where change is bound up with biological and meteorological rhythms and recurrences rather than with technological innovations. [...] Such rites indicate and constitute transitions between states. By 'state' I mean here 'a relatively fixed or stable condition' [...]. (Turner 1967: 93)

The difference with regard to van Gennep is that Turner mainly focuses on the middle stage, on liminality, and thus on only one isolated part of van Gennep's rites of passage. He describes the term as a "betwixt and between" or an "interstructural situation" (Turner 1967: 93). When he explains that a person in a transition rite, particularly in the liminal phase, is in-between or interstructural, he alludes to the fact that the liminal being has previously left his former position in the tribe. The liminar has cut himself off from his former status in the community via a rite of separation. He has entered this liminal phase, but he has not yet returned to the community. He does not belong to a particular place or group. "The structural 'invisibility' of liminal personae has a twofold character. They are at once no longer classified and not yet classified." (Turner 1967: 96). He continues:

A further structurally negative characteristic of transitional beings is that they have nothing. They have no status, property, insignia, secular clothing, rank kinship, nothing to demarcate them structurally from their fellows. Their condition is indeed the very prototype of poverty. (Turner 1967: 98)

Elsewhere, Turner develops this thought by stating that the experience of liminality is always also an experience of humility.

From all I infer that, for individuals and groups, social life is a type of dialectical process that involves successive experience of high and low, *communitas* and structure, homogeneity and differentiation, equality and inequality. The passage from lower to higher status is through a limbo of statuslessness. (Turner 1969: 97)

This 'limbo of statuslessness' means becoming a blank space: the past is erased, the future is open. At the same time, it is a phase of complete equality.

The neophyte in liminality must be a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate, on which is inscribed the knowledge and wisdom of the group, in those respects that pertain to the new status. (Turner 1969: 103)

All liminal personae are equal in this phase. They have the same starting point from which they have to take responsibility for their own career, their own status in their future lives. It is, in some way, a process of abstraction, an invitation to actively transform or re-create oneself and reconsider one's own position in the community. To put it differently, the *tabula rasa* stage offers the liminar the opportunity to inscribe new meaning to one's personal objectives, goals and positions. Everything is open and yet to be defined, which is a great chance for a new start, but it also confronts the individual with the insecurity of the unknown, of a new beginning.

The important aspect, in my opinion, is that the way a ritual is performed offers a deep insight into how the social system of the particular community in focus functions. We can use this study as a filter to gain knowledge of how a group interacts, how it is constituted. Turner emphasises that for his purpose, the study of the rite of passage in the Ndembu tribe, the isolated liminal phase offers the most significant insights for him, which is why he neglects the other two stages:

We are presented, in such rites, with a "moment in and out of time," and in and out of secular social structure, which reveals, however fleetingly, some recognition (in symbol if not always in language) of a generalized social bond that has ceased to be and has simultaneously yet to be fragmented into a multiplicity of ties. (Turner 1969: 96)

These ties are cultural categories dividing people into caste, social rank and class. During the liminal phase, the unstructured *communitas* is revealed. It is important that the liminal exposes the quality of social structures. It implies that "the high could not be high unless the low existed" (Turner 1969: 97). Liminality is, thus, a dialectal process, a discussion of social structures, positions and categories. To use Turner's words: "The passage from lower to higher status is through a limbo of statuslessness." (Turner 1969: 97) Thus, Turner focuses on the proceedings in the middle stage only, while van Gennep focused on the progression, the development of the liminar through the three stages.

Liminality, be it isolated or part of a rite of passage, is insightful for the course of my analysis for several reasons. It is a phase which offers the chance for a significant development. It is a phase of self-reflection and reflection of one's community. At the same time, it is a humble period. Having nothing means, being nothing; at least in such a particular ritual. Being *nothing* implies that the liminal persona has to invest a huge effort to become *someone*. They have to redefine themselves through their own capacities and in the context of their society. Victor Turner takes a further step away from van Gennep by defining a new concept which he calls 'permanent liminality'. While for van Gennep, a rite is only complete with the final transgression, leaving behind the liminal stage stepping into the post-liminal one. Turner, however, states that liminality can exist on its own and can thus also become a permanent condition. In other words, the liminal entity would then be caught in a state of permanent limbo without being able to develop further. This also implies that the other two stages would become irrelevant for the individual's status. This is an aspect which Szokolczai takes up and which will be dealt with later on in this introduction.

Turner then suggests another new facet of liminality. In order to apply the theory of folk culture and ritual habits onto so-called semi-civilized societies to his own so-called civilized society, Victor Turner develops the notion of the *liminoid*. In very simple terms, the liminoid is liminality applied to a modern, hedonistic twentieth-century culture which he experienced and studied in the 1960s. While the liminoid is based on the idea of the liminal, it actually refers to culture as consumption. This means that the new concept steps back from the anthropological approach which is used in engaging with tribal culture. It is, in fact, a radical development from the original term. He considers art, theatre, cinema and leisure centres, with people gambling, gaming and enjoying other means of entertainment, to be the in-between phenomena of modern times. These can be performed in a similar way as rites of passage, but without having the cleansing, maturing, and progressing effect that a rite of passage implies. One of the scholars in the tradition of Turner, Bjørn Thomassen, formulates a decisive differentiation between the liminoid and the liminal: the former presents optional experiences of change whereas the latter involves a substantial, personal change. The liminoid neither involves a personal

crisis nor a total break from normality as the liminal usually does (Thomassen 2014: 84). In other words, we can summarise that the liminoid is simply a quasi-liminal phenomenon, a playful as-if-liminality, which does not necessarily involve a process of transition. Furthermore, Thomassen criticises that the liminoid is not an analytic tool when looking at a personal development as it does not focus on personal progress.

Thomassen argues that Turner's liminoid does not agree with van Gennep's original ideas: "However, Turner had also suggested that in post-industrial societies such liminal rites would largely become replaced by the liminoid, i.e. by 'out-of-the-ordinary' experiences in leisure, arts and, indeed, sports." (Thomassen 2014: 169). And he continues:

In short, the liminoid develops outside that framework of ritual passage which was so fundamental to the very concept of liminality as proposed by van Gennep. Cultural performance in the ritual-liminal mode therefore stands in opposition to the industrial-liminoid forms of entertainment and performance. Liminality has survived, but is has changed; and thus, Turner argued, we need a different term to capture this 'as-if-liminality': what he termed the liminoid. (Thomassen 2014: 186)

Bjørn Thomassen's elaborations offer a concise overview of the dimensions of liminality as a sociological and an anthropological term which I will use in the course of my analysis. He introduces his work by explaining that liminality refers to any betwixt and between situation or object (Thomassen 2014: 89). Firstly, this implies that individuals can be liminal or undergo processes of liminality. What is more precise about his definition in contrast to earlier studies is that groups or entire societies can undergo this process. This differentiates him from van Gennep and Turner who both focused on individuals within tribal structures. Secondly, liminality has a temporal dimension. Moments, periods as well as entire epochs can be liminal. This is a much more generous understanding of the original term. Thirdly, and related to the temporal dimension, there is also a spatial quality to liminality. As we have seen, van Gennep already stated the parallel occurrence of performing a rite of passage with a spatial transgression. The marriage ceremony ends in trespassing a gate or threshold; funerals end with a march towards a grave. Rites of passage often involve a physical passage as well: across borders, thresholds, or symbolised by

systems of opening and closure – a phenomenon which we will find in Bakhtin and Foucault.

Van Gennep and Turner's studies have been hugely influential for future anthropological and sociological discourse. However, the sociologist Ronald Grimes highlights a critical aspect. While pointing to the strengths of Turner's development of van Gennep's ideas, Grimes criticises that Turner does not pay sufficient attention to the internal development of the ritual; the ritual itself as well as the individual's development during their performance (Grimes 1982: 156). Several questions remain unanswered in Turner: what happens with the liminar in the liminal phase? What are the internal processes, thoughts, and conflicts which influence the person who is transgressing limits in this ritual process? These are crucial questions on which I would like to focus while discussing my literary texts in the following chapters. I am interested in the characters' internal development, in contradictions and struggles.

Arpad Szakolczai raises several crucial issues that clarify the extent of the term liminality. When defining the concept, the question arises as to whether liminality and marginality can be used synonymously. In fact, both terms are often regarded as 'other', Szakolczai states (Szakolczai 2000: 189), but are rarely ever differentiated properly. Thomassen adds that both concepts share the necessity of a border, to define their characteristics (Thomassen 2014: 7). Nonetheless, liminality is neither outside nor excluded or deprecated, it is simply 'in-between' two situations (Thomassen 2014: 7). While the border excludes the marginalised subject or object, it is transgressed in a liminal situation. This is part of the progression and thus a key feature.

This is why transgression is a term which is closely interlinked with rites of passage and with liminality in particular. In his discussion, Szakolszai explains that liminal experiences always border on the transgressive. Sexuality, madness and illness, for instance, can become transgressive (Szakolczai 2000: 194). These are phenomena which I will analyse in the works of A. L. Kennedy. In my opinion it is important to state Szakolczai's position with more emphasis: I am convinced that liminality needs transgression, it does not just adjoin the phenomenon. Transgression is a vital part of the liminal situation. Without transgression there can be no

progression to the next stage in a rite of passage and thus the liminal concept does not function, at least in van Gennep's original understanding thereof. I will elaborate on the concept of transgression below.

Szakolczai adds another component and explains why he is so careful with his use of transgression in the concept of liminality. He focuses on Turner's less recognised notion of 'permanent liminality'. Turner suggests vaguely that liminality can become permanent in the case that the third stage does not occur in order to end the phase of in-betweenness. Arpad Szakolczai extends this idea and develops a new, conceptual tool for social science. On applying the notion of 'liminality that can become permanent' to everyday life, Szakolczai takes up Turner's idea of this new concept of liminality.

Most importantly, a concept developed in small-scale ritual settings must be extended into a real-world large-scale liminality [...]. This implies two fundamental changes to the original conceptualization. In a rite of passage, social order is purposely but temporarily suspended, and this very same order is solemnly reasserted at the end of the performance. In the case of real-world liminality, the previously taken-for-granted order of things has actually collapsed. It cannot therefore simply be restored. This means that the central task in a real-world large-scale liminal situation is an actual search for order, with all the existential anxiety this entails. (Szakolczai 2000: 218)

This implies that, when all order is destroyed, there is "no stable framework, no effective control" (Szakolczai 2000: 218) over the chaos. As the previous order has collapsed, it is impossible for the liminar in real-world liminality to return to the original social situation. Therefore, the reaggregation process, as described by van Gennep, is impossible. On the basis of this assumption, he concludes that the only solution to this problem, the breaking apart of all order and the restoration of normal conditions requires making liminal conditions permanent (Szakolczai 2000: 219). In other words, order can be created by freezing a condition of liminality: permanent liminality is created. This, however, exposes a paradox. A paradox which can also be found in Victor Turner's descriptions. Turner points out that

What appears to have happened is that with the increasing specialisation of society and culture, with progressive complexity in the social division of labor, what was in tribal society principally a set of transitional qualities "betwixt and between" defined states of culture and society has become itself an institutionalized state. [...] Transition has here become a permanent condition. (Turner 1969: 107)

Turner mentions the possibility of institutionalising and thus fixing a particular phenomenon. Szakolczai, of course, points to the inherent paradox in the terminology, as liminality always implies change, a temporary situation, not a fixed state. Nonetheless, he agrees that this process of stabilising the ‘state’ of liminality is possible:

Liminality becomes a permanent condition [and thus a conceptual tool, J.H.] when any of the phases in this sequence becomes frozen, as if a film stopped at a particular frame. This can happen both with individuals undergoing an ‘initiation rite’ and with groups who are participating in a collective ritual, ‘a social drama’. (Szakolczai 2000: 220)

When Szakolczai speaks of “phases in this sequence” he refers to the traditional tripartite structure of a rite of passage. It is possible to be stuck in three different states which correspond with each of the phases of a rite of passage. Certain groups of people can be stuck in the separation phase, such as monks or hermits: “Monasteries are therefore permanently liminal in the sense of forever performing rites of separation and playing the preliminaries of a performance which will only be given in the next world.” (Szakolczai 2000: 221) The same applies to court culture. People are forever caught in the second phase of a rite of passage, a performance of a play or a ritual. In turn, he names Soviet-type Bolshevism as the epitome of the third type of permanent liminality, as the concept itself is built upon the necessity of the end of a World War (Szakolczai 2000: 223) and thus the reconstruction of a new order. It is interesting though that Szakolczai identifies the USA as being permanently liminal “*par excellence*” (Szakolczai 2000: 224): he is convinced that it is a country whose major population stems from people separating themselves from their origins and whose self-concept is built upon pushing the frontier west, he explains. What is more important for Arpad Szakolczai’s modification of Turner’s theoretical basis is that, for him, *permanent liminality* stands as a metaphor for the ‘modern condition’.

Bjørn Thomassen, in contrast, takes a more traditional view on liminality. In his recent work on the historical development of the notion of liminality, Thomassen presents the reader with a less provoking, less radical approach to liminal phenomena than Szakolczai. He focuses the importance of boundaries, borders and norms for the concept of liminality. Following the original definition by van Gennep and Turner,

Thomassen looks at the destruction of norms and order as the precondition for the transgressing individual to go over to the stage of liminality. This then implies that the liminar has to become a nameless, timeless and ‘unstructured’ being (Thomassen 2014: 92). This is what Turner means when explaining that the liminar has to become a *tabula rasa*.

We can conclude that the liminal being necessarily challenges the accepted social order; in other words, the norms of the social group of which he was a part before his ritual. He or she also challenges all previously known patterns of knowledge and identity – of the individual and the tribe. This destruction of knowledge, this non-order, is the fertile ground for re-engaging with one’s life.

Liminality is an insightful phenomenon with regard to globalisation and modern society. Thomassen explains that while it involves a total destruction of the previously known order and values, a “reformation of values” takes place in the succeeding reaggregation phase (Thomassen 2014: 83). This is why the third stage is vital for the initiand, the transgressing individual, who undergoes a process of radical change. In the phase of liminality, the liminal personae have no social significance and have to redefine themselves in order to prepare for re-entering their society. This act of re-entering involves a symbolic transgression of the previously known limit. If applied to an everyday context, Thomassen looks at phenomena such as globalisation and the war on Global Terrorism. The main issue is that boundaries have dissolved; boundaries have been transgressed and broken down. In a brief example, Thomassen explains the phenomenon of globalisation with global wars: “Two essential features legitimized the claim to novelty here: that this war, in contrast to all previous ones, had no spatial or temporal boundaries. It is nowhere and everywhere, and it has no real end; it is boundless and essentially liminal.” (Thomassen 2014: 217) In fact, this phenomenon is only one symptom of the far-reaching effects of globalization. It permeates society. Simultaneous communication, mass and social media, economic relations and maybe also dependencies – previous boundaries have long vanished, boundaries of spatial or temporal character. This is, of course, a radical conclusion which can be drawn from Thomassen’s suggestion. If globalisation results in society being described as liminal, the question of what happens next arises. It is a question

of whether there can be a change, a rethinking of values or whether society will be stuck in permanent liminality. Globalisation, borders and liminality are tropes which occur in Zoë Strachan's novels.

Shmuel Eisenstadt follows quite a different approach on rites of passage in his studies. Power and structure are central phenomena which he connects with liminality. Eisenstadt's understanding of liminality moves further away from its anthropological origin and context as the other studies mentioned above. While avoiding elaborating on the overall origin and context of liminality with its original location as the middle stage of a rite of passage, he uses liminality as a tool in his argument. For Eisenstadt and in very general terms, phenomena of liminality can be understood as symbols of anti-structure – the symbols being socially and culturally constructed and thus specific to a respective society: "Our analysis begins with the recognition of the ubiquity of liminality in human societies. By this term I mean seemingly unstructured situations, 'in-between' more structured ones, and symbols of antistructure and *communitas*." (Eisenstadt 309) It is important to note that, as Eisenstadt explicitly emphasises, the "central focus of the symbols found in such liminal situations is a very strong ambivalence to social and cultural order." (Eisenstadt 309) However, before discussing the instrumental use of liminality, he develops a concept around social order in a community being founded on basic, but existential emotions: the ambivalence to social order is rooted in a feeling of anxiety and existential uncertainty in the consciousness of human mortality (Eisenstadt 310). In other words, anxiety, that is the fear of death and the uncontrollable, can be understood as the underlying motivation or motor to create social order in Eisenstadt's concept. Social order is a tool to cope with the fear of death. Yet, social order is a complex and in itself highly ambivalent concept which he uses as basis of his argument.

All societies construct such a social and cultural order designed in part to overcome the uncertainties and anxieties implied in these existential givens. They do so by constructing symbolic boundaries of personal and collective identity [...], by defining membership in different collectivities in terms of universal biological primordial categories such as age, generation, sex, and territorial attachment [...]. (Eisenstadt 310)

The ambivalence of boundaries arises from the very fact that its construction adds a new component of uncertainty, as the newly constructed order is only one possible

explanation to anxieties out of many. As there can be no definite answer, the basic problem cannot be solved by constructing one particular boundary. In other words, social order constructed by boundary definition is but a mere instrument. This is why Eisenstadt continues:

The awareness of such arbitrariness and limitation and the attempt to convince members of the society that social order, in general, and the specific social order in which they live, in particular, are the 'correct' ones are portrayed in the myths and symbols promulgated in all societies through various ritual and communicative situations. These myths and symbols, the closely related 'folktales', depict the combination of the attraction of the world outside the boundaries of social order and of the fear of stepping outside such boundaries. (Eisenstadt 310).

This aspect highlights various points which are decisive for the continuation of the discussion of liminality and related terms. Firstly, Eisenstadt emphasises that it is a form of social power that constructs these boundaries without further defining it as such in this context. Social order, being arbitrary and restrictive, has to be understood as a tool to control the masses and to prevent social upheaval. Secondly, the next step is the formulation of particular myths and relevant symbols by the respective social group. And thirdly, the transmission of a particular value system is manifested in these folk tales. They claim the purity of a particular social circle and the 'otherness' of those outside. This method is an attempt to convince or to manipulate people to consider their own culture the only correct one. This, again, is a means to guarantee stability and order (Eisenstadt 310). Eisenstadt highlights the importance of previous sociological studies which explain that sustaining social order is guaranteed via the existence of trust and solidarity, the regulation of power and the provision of meaning. However, Eisenstadt, on the other hand, suggests that one has to be conscious of the arbitrariness of cultural and social order (Eisenstadt 311). Relevant for me is his assumption that one of the manifestations of ambivalence of social order is the existence of themes of protest that develop in all societies in socially structured situations. Among these situations, the most important one is that of liminality (Eisenstadt 314). Symbols of protest contain two basic components which can then be subdivided into more precise themes of protest: on the one hand, it is the attempt to overcome limitations of human existence in general, but death in particular. On the other hand, it is about overcoming the tension inherent in institutionalisation of social order, the tension between hierarchy and equality,

between social divisions of labour and regulation of power, and moreover, the quest for meaningful participation by social groups (Eisenstadt 214). The first theme of protest is the search to overcome the tension in the fragmentation of human relations, which is inherent in institutional division of labour. The second one is the search to overcome tensions in the temporal dimension of the human and social condition via the search for immortality (Eisenstadt 314). The third theme is the search to overcome the tension between the notion of an ideal society and real life society. And fourthly, it is about the search to overcome the tension between the autonomous self and its social role. The latter implies the possibility of finding full expression of one's true self in society (Eisenstadt 315). While the third theme of protest is a metaphysical one, the other three hint towards the dissatisfaction with the social and political conditions, on the one hand, and the construction of boundaries on the other. The boundaries affect individuals and their roles in social groups or with regard to hierarchical relationships. According to Eisenstadt, these aspects are general phenomena and inherent in every social group.

These different expressions of themes of protest are articulated in various ways, such as in liminal situations, more particularly – and here he refers to the anthropological origins – rites of passage as they occur in the respective societies. When elaborating on these qualities, he develops a thought which resembles, without being explicitly named, Mikhail Bakhtin's studies on the carnival and its implications of power relations and the reversal of hierarchies (Eisenstadt 316). In the chapter on Alasdair Gray's *Lanark* and *1982 Janine*, I will focus on both approaches to this liminal phenomenon.

Jochen Achilles and Ina Bergmann have a different position in this context. They combine anthropological thought with literary studies. When they explain that liminality is a concept of both demarcation and mediation between processural stages, they abstract the original concept of van Gennep and Turner. This shows that the discourse on this issue has developed a long way since its first definition. Achilles and Bergmann emphasise that liminality is a term that is widely applicable. This, however, implies the danger of overusing the term, of rendering it vague and arbitrary. I strongly agree with Achilles and Bergmann when they formulate a new

understanding of liminality and transgression: “Boundaries and the liminalities often accompanying their transgression thus reveal themselves in important ways as the result of complex cultural, social, and political processes.” (Achilles and Bergmann 2015: 23) So, if boundaries, liminalities and transgressions result from these processes, it is important to look closely at the characteristics of liminality in the texts. The use of the limit and the related phenomena in literary representation can thus be regarded as reflecting and commenting on cultural proceedings. When boundaries are questioned or subverted, the norm and thus the related cultural process is criticised.

In the interplay between fictionality and normativity, the normativity of boundaries becomes obvious in gestures of border crossings and transgression, when existing boundaries are being subverted, removed, or displaced. (Achilles and Bergmann 2015: 23)

All of my chosen texts present different forms of boundary crossings and therefore interact with and reflect upon various forms of restrictions and cultural regulations. I am interested in how the texts engage with these norms, which escape routes are developed, what happens with the character engaging with the limit. I concur with Achilles and Bergmann and would like to summarise that liminality can serve as a useful heuristic tool, “suggesting both interrelation and conflict” (Achilles and Bergmann 2015: 24). The literature of the time presents itself as critically reflecting on the instability and the uncertainty of the time.

When thinking about liminality, the limit is a major benchmark. A liminar moves along and across a limit. Thus it is the concept of transgression which requires a closer look in order to fully grasp the different facets of liminality and limits.

Transgression is an action which involves the limit, that narrow zone of a line where it displays the flash of its passage, but perhaps also its entire trajectory, even its origin; it is likely that transgression has its entire space in the line it crosses. [...] The limit and transgression depend on each other for whatever density of being they possess: a limit could not exist if it were absolutely uncrossable and, reciprocally, transgression would be pointless if it merely crossed a limit composed of illusions and shadows. (Foucault 1977: 33-34)

Transgression and the limit are mutually dependent; neither could exist without the other. Foucault describes the relationship between limit and its transgression as a spiral instead of an opposition, instead of being viewed in a black-and-white way (Foucault 1977: 34). Therefore, we could also speak of the dialectic of transgression. The “flash-like” existence of transgression implies that it is over as soon as the limit

is crossed and has to be reconsidered afterwards. Another transgression can take place, but it would then react to a newly defined limit. It is a never ending process of crossing and re-crossing a line for a particular purpose. For Foucault, the importance of viewing transgression in an abstract way is a vital factor for the course of his argument. In order to fully grasp its analytical potential, it is necessary to view transgression as a neutral concept. Foucault explains that it must be viewed detached from any negative associations. In his understanding, transgression neither intends to make a normative statement nor does it carry any subversive or provocative aspects associated with norms.

Transgression does not seek to oppose one thing to another, nor does it achieve its purpose through mockery or by upsetting the solidity of foundations; it does not transform the other side of the mirror, [...]. Transgression contains nothing negative, but affirms limited being – affirms the limitlessness into which it leaps as it opens this zone to existence for the first time. But correspondingly, this affirmation contains nothing positive: no content can bind it, since, by definition, no limit can possibly restrict it. (Foucault 1977: 35-36)

Chris Jenks shares this position and develops it further. He explains that transgression should not be understood as denying the limit, but instead as the legitimising factor. The transgression completes the limit, because the limit itself carries its own potential fracture (Jenks 7). In his argument, Jenks develops the thoughts that, similar to Szakolczai and Eisenstadt, human existence is the permanent experience of limits due to the immanent presence of death. Thus transgression is a phenomenon, which is omnipresent in life. He adds that every limit causes the desire to transgress which is reflected in the mythology of so-called simple societies and in carnival in the way Bakhtin describes it. Carnival, thus, illuminates the theoretical notion of transgression – but only one facet. It functions as a valve, a limited period of time in which citizens can freely experience and celebrate the transgression of limits.

In a system where it was difficult for others to rebuke the head of a political unit, we might have here an institutionalised joker, operating at the highest point of the unit ... [*sic*] a joker able to express feelings of outraged morality. [...] These figures, representing the poor and the deformed, appear to symbolize the moral values of *communitas* as against the coercive power of supreme political rulers. (Turner 1969: 110)

This is a ritual which has a steering function. It is, as Jenks puts it, a “calculated inversion” of the existing social order (Jenks 162) and does not have a real revolutionary effect. When Jenks concludes that transgression causes chaos only to

be restored afterwards and to remind us of the necessity of order (Jenks 7), he follows a Bakhtinian approach to transgression and the limit. He does not, however, elaborate on or question the origin and function of the norm, but accepts it as given.

The concept of the carnivalesque is inseparably connected with Mikhail Bakhtin. His study of carnival folk culture and Rabelais' works marks the development of a deeply influential theory of sociological and literary studies. While the tradition of carnival itself is rooted in the middle ages, it is a phenomenon which is also widely visible in today's society outside folk culture. The two main and abstract elements of carnival are laughter and the body, which include several traces that are relevant for understanding the concept. Laughter is connected with masks, with the reversal of social hierarchies and festivities, whereas the body carries the circle of life and death, feasting, devouring, hell and earth, grotesque realism and even the entire cosmic order in itself. Both main concepts are not separable, but appear in different qualities. Bakhtin differentiates between two types of carnival: folk festive and romantic carnival. While the former is associated with light, the latter is dark and gloomy (Bakhtin 1984: 41). Folk culture manifests itself in three different versions of carnival: those festivities related to ritual spectacles, such as comic shows on marketplaces, comic verbal compositions, such as parodies, and various genres of billingsgate, such as curses or oaths (Bakhtin 1984: 5). All of these are performed for the sake of laughter. In folk carnival, figures such as giants, dwarfs, clowns and fools are prominent characters that perform their parodies and jokes.

They offered a completely different, nonofficial, extraecclesiastical and extrapolitical aspect of the world, of man, and of human relations; they built a second world and a second life outside officialdom, a world in which all medieval people participated more or less, in which they lived during a given time of the year. [...] Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws. (Bakhtin 1984: 5-7)

As the carnival creates its own rules, it can also reverse the prevailing social order. In folk culture, all "those who are highest are debased, all who are lowest are crowned." (Bakhtin 1984: 383) This is often read as a revolutionary act, as emancipation from feudal societies. "[...] folk festive laughter presents an element of victory not only over supernatural awe, over the sacred, over death; it also means the defeat of power,

of earthly kings, of the earthly upper classes, of all that oppresses and restricts.” (Bakhtin 1984: 92) Nonetheless, its real revolutionary power is restricted as carnival is merely a temporary period of time in a year, the festivities thus accepted by the sovereign as an outlet for potential social upheavals. Thus it has to be understood as a temporary liberation from the established order (Bakhtin 1984: 10).

The body plays a major role in carnival; both in the sense of masking and actual physical deformations. While a mask represents a joyful mockery, a play with changes of personalities and the rejection of uniformity, physical deformations have a more graphic and violent quality: “[...] the grotesque body is not separated from the rest of the world. It is not a closed, completed unit; it is unfinished, outgrows itself, transgresses its own limits. The stress is laid on those parts of the body that are open to the outside world, that is, the parts through which the world enters the body or emerges from it, or through which the body itself goes out to meet the world.” (Bakhtin 1984: 26) The grotesque body is not a private one; it interacts with the outside world. In Bakhtin’s theory, the grotesque and the grotesque body are everywhere and they are deeply positive by nature. One of Bakhtin’s contemporary literary critics, Wolfgang Kayser, rejects this assumption. In his theory, the grotesque is in itself hostile and inhuman (cf. Bakhtin 1984: 47). Bakhtin, however, connects the grotesque body with birth and fertility as carnival as the overall concept stands for the destruction of the old and the birth of the new, particularly the new year (Bakhtin 1984: 410). The grotesque body is always in the act of becoming and of change. It devours, it digests, it defecates, it gives birth: the main focus is on the digestive procreative organs. The womb and the body’s act of swallowing are elements which connect the grotesque body with ritualistic banqueting: “the fat belly, the gaping mouth, the giant phallus, and the popular positive image of the ‘satisfied man’.” (Bakhtin 1984: 292). For the grotesque female body, it is the focus on the womb which has a parallel function. The image of the mouth then draws the connection with hell; the mouth as the gate of hell. Birth and death, swallowing and defecation: the grotesque body impersonates the dichotomies of life.

Transgressions have various functions and occur in multiple contexts, one example being carnival. One main factor is a regulating one. Transgressions regulate

social processes; they are closely connected with inclusion-exclusion mechanisms in the social structure of a group (Jenks 8). A transgression can be seen as an offence against a collective moral consciousness (Jenks 15) and therefore manoeuvres the individual violating the social norm outside the inner circle of society. Jenks suggests that society divides its people into normal and pathological ones (Jenks 24). The normal ones are included into the majority and their task is to re-affirm their status whereas the pathological ones are defined by their fragmented characters, by deviance and a lack of structure (Jenks 24). This dichotomy of clean and unclean, good and bad, secure and uncanny, sane and schizoid divides society and defines directives as well as taboos.

To summarise, Eisenstadt's elaboration on social order and liminality can be read parallel to Foucault, Jenks and Bakhtin, because, according to Eisenstadt, rites of passage and the wider notion of liminality serve as a tool to regulate power and to canalise the forces which are potentially destructive in a particular society. This relates his elaboration on the issue to Michel Foucault's elaboration on power and society as well as on Bakhtin's notion of carnival and its potential to be used as a means of revolt. A lot has been done in the century after the development of Arnold van Gennep's idea. Beginning with a study on liminality in tribal societies, the term was later also applied to many phenomena in modern societies. This is a risky aspect. The term is very easily and quickly overused. Liminality seems to be applicable to a wide range of phenomena. This dilutes its complex and explosive character, which is why it should be differentiated with care. Liminality in its original sense, as defined by van Gennep, describes a legitimate transgression of boundaries to become a different, in this case mature, human being. It is a transgression, a progression from one stage to the next, which is socially expected, required and not stigmatised. Later developments of the term imply a normative association with transgression. Being liminal or transgressing boundaries then has a negative meaning, as a violation of a norm. The former redefines and then affirms an individual's position in society, whereas the latter implies exclusion, the violation an act of rebellion.

The works of fiction which I have chosen to study are part of the Scottish literary canon of the past thirty years beginning in the post-1979 time. For me it was essential to choose approximately the same number of novels from each decade, starting with Alasdair Gray. His oeuvre, particularly *Lanark* (1981), is a fixed part in every Scottish Secondary school canon. I suggest that taking a close look at his use of liminal imagery can give a deeper insight into the mechanisms of revolt at work. Aside from the highly complex narrative structure, its literary references, its self-reflecting attitudes, it is also his use of the carnival which carries the weight of his criticism of a dehumanised, capitalist society. It is a dystopia, a novel about class and the nation, about global capitalism and its effects on the lives of the individuals. However, it is also about the attempted emancipation from the determinations of the system. Liminal spaces help the protagonist liberate himself partly from the external control. The carnival highlights that the system's hegemony influences all aspects of the individual's life and abuses their personal resources. It also points out that contemporary society, as the one Duncan Thaw experiences in Glasgow, would ultimately lead into the apocalyptic world of Unthank and a real emancipation from the system would be a futile attempt. It appears as if humanity would ruin itself. This novel will be contrasted with his 1982, *Janine* (1984) which dramatises a sense of distorted masculinity. It is about violence, alcoholism, and capitalism. It is the spatial and temporal liminality which offers a major insight into the development of the protagonist's change. In a state of delirium, he has to face formerly accepted norms and male role ideals. In the end, he overcomes his suppressive value system. The liminal phase has, similar to van Gennep's primary theory, a cleansing effect. He undergoes all three stages only to wake up as a significantly changed and, one can say, liberated person.

In my second chapter, I will deal with two of A. L. Kennedy's novels. *Paradise* (2005) shows particularly subtle use of liminality. In the novel, we will find transgressions of ethical norms, an elaboration on the pointlessness of existence, the experience of interpersonal isolation in a distancing society and it problematises non-conformist femininity. Inclusion and exclusion mechanisms are at play here and present the more clearly readable tools of analysis. When it comes to liminality, it is probably most reasonable to focus on the mechanisms of permanent liminality in the

novel. The text starts and ends in exactly the same hotel room. The individual is permanently stuck in the phase in-between and has to repeat her state, there is no hope of amelioration. It is a vicious circle of attempting to find order where there is no stability. Neither progression, nor turning back is possible. Permanent liminality highlights the fragility of her fractured identity and her fruitless quest for a meaning in life. *So I am Glad* (1995), however, takes a very different approach. An immense individual progression takes place. The liminal factors, personal, temporal and spatial ones, trigger this development. Magic realism and the second protagonist, Savinien, influence this change. Again, it is a classical, van Gennepian understanding of the term liminality which is used here, however in a slightly changed way. *So I am Glad* shows how the character successfully overcomes her trauma and literally takes a step into a new direction after meeting the romantic hero, Savinien.

In Iain Banks' *The Wasp Factory* (1984) as well as in Jackie Kay's *Trumpet* (1998), I identify a highly interesting process. It is also, but not exclusively, the reader who potentially undergoes a process of change via liminality. Both texts are about the transgression of a binary model of gender identity, about a state of between the two traditional genders. The texts suggest fluid identities and question traditional masculinity. Bank's novel graphically criticises the brutality of overtly prominent masculinity. Transgression is a major instrument, just as is spatial liminality. Kay's novel is about gender passing. Liminality is successful in both cases. Banks' is a powerful warning, while Kay's is a quiet plea, an invitation for the reader and the characters to reconsider their understanding of gender and sexual identity as one facet of identity, which can be plural. The binary is presented as restrictive. It is the pure liminal, middle stage which can be identified in both novels. Thus we can read them in the sense of Turner.

Zoë Strachan's novels *Negative Space* (2003) and *Ever Fallen in Love* (2011) strongly deal with history, Scottish and European history. It is interwoven with personal histories and liminal places. I suggest that engaging with the history of the places and their respective liminal spaces helps find and redefine the individual's own personalities and roots. It is virtual reality as global interaction which enables Richard to re-create his identity temporarily. Virtual reality is an 'other' space in

which there is no way out, an alternative reality, fictional interaction and escape from another life.

I demonstrate how focusing on the notions of liminality, limit and transgression opens spaces of debate on significant issues that are part of the negotiation of contemporary identity.

1. Carnavalesque and liminal motifs as tools to overcome power narratives in Alasdair Gray's *Lanark* (1981) and *1982, Janine* (1984)

Scottish cultural creativity in those years [...] was the direct consequence of the energies of a failed political movement transferring themselves to the cultural sphere. What had changed between 1979 – when, as William McIlvanney wrote at the time, we were proved ‘feart’ – and 1997, was the confidence of the Scottish people in their own culture – a culture which had rediscovered the sense of its *national* values in the long resistance to Thatcherism which the failure of the 1979 referendum had brought to power. (Craig 2003a: 39)

There is no doubt that contemporary Scottish literature, particularly in the beginning of the 1980s, has to be read in the political context. In this chapter, I will look at how Alasdair Gray's debut novel, *Lanark*, published in 1981, and his 1984 novel *1982, Janine* deal with transgressive behaviour, carnivalesque motifs and particular forms of liminality. I am interested in how these tropes serve to unveil repressive social norms that have particular influence on the individual. In *Lanark*, two major forms of liminality are most prominent. Temporal and spatial liminality helps the protagonist, Lanark, overcome the oppressive script of his life and cause a significant change. In this discussion, I follow Thomassen's approach who states that entire epochs and vast territories can be liminal. Furthermore, carnivalesque motifs serve to illustrate the destructive effects of the fictional society of Unthank on the individual. In contrast to Bakhtin's definition, we have to understand the term in a way which is parallel to Eisenstadt's perspective on liminal phenomena even though he does not explicitly speak of carnival: it is a tool to regulate power. The power discourse can also be found in *1982, Janine* in which restrictive social norms regulate the individual's life. While both deal with the abusive effects of power over individuals, the later novel offers a solution to the social pressures. The former reveals an exploitative society which is reflected in liminal phases, whereas the latter unveils restrictive understanding of masculinity. To complete my argument, I consider it necessary to introduce two additional theoretical approaches. To me, *Lanark* reads like an illustration of Marx's notion of the ‘means of production’ in large parts of the novel, particularly in books three and four. This adds to an Eisenstadtian reading of liminality as a mechanism of control. When I use Freud's idea of the psychic apparatus, I aim to analyse the three voices in Jock's head which are in a wild discussion during the liminal phase that is his delirium. I interpret them as the id, the

ego and the super-ego. These three voices are graphically indicated via the special typesetting in the novel. In *1982, Janine*, liminality can mostly be read with the help of Turner's approach. The delirium is a liminal trial which is in focus and which has to be overcome to develop further. With regard to my overall hypothesis of the thesis, I come to different conclusions for the two novels discussed in this chapter. I doubt that the transgression of limits creates order in *Lanark*. Nonetheless, it serves to disturb the destructive order of the system which then leads to an open-ended revolution at the end of the novel. In *1982, Janine*, transgressions and liminality are catalysts for a process of rethinking his previously accepted value system. This enables the protagonist to redefine himself with a changed idea of his own gender identity.

Cairns Craig describes this new renaissance as an organ of speech for Scots to raise those voices which were quieted Thatcher Era. Therefore, a political dimension of the late-twentieth-century novel in Scotland has to be kept in mind while discussing literature produced in that period of time. Craig continues that if "Scotland voted for *political* devolution in 1997, it had much earlier declared *cultural* devolution" (Craig 2003a: 39). Christopher Harvie describes Alasdair Gray as a political symbol: "His phrase 'work as if you were living in the early days of a better nation' from the cover of the Canongate edition of *Unlikely Stories, Mostly*, has become a slogan for the distinctive Scottish resistance to Thatcherism." (Harvie 1991: 77) In his essay, Harvie traces how Scottishness and social turbulences of the time are prominent issues in Gray's work. He identifies a critical distance to and a strong fascination for politics in Gray's texts. Politics, to the author, is "by definition complex and *trügerisch*" (Harvie 1991: 84). Both of Gray's novels demonstrate, in a grotesque and partly satirical way, the protagonists' struggles with the effects of politics on the individual. It is the capitalist society which is in focus and which has particularly destructive consequences for the lives of the main individuals in the novels. Stevenson agrees with Harvie and summarises his essay on the issue of postmodernism in Gray's work by stating that

Lanark, and even more clearly the indulgent miseries of *1982, Janine*, offer symptoms as well as analyses of a country still trying to free itself from a politically-engineered dreariness of daily life; a mechanical education system; churches [...]; emotions which oscillate uneasily between violence and sentimentality. (Stevenson 1991: 62)

However, the novels are not coextensive in their argument. Gray uses two very different approaches and comes to contrasting conclusions when dealing with relevant issues of the time in the novels. Both of his texts deal with the destructive effects of a capitalist society on the individual. *Lanark*, a novel in four interwoven books, offers a pessimistic outlook onto the future of humankind, as modern societies are based on mutual exploitation. The novel ends in an apocalyptic scene: a huge, cathartic wave is expected to destroy, and thus also cleanse, the society of Unthank where a part of the novel is set. The later novel mainly deals with the escapist fantasies of the protagonist Jock. He suffers under the pressures of a capitalist work environment and male role expectations. In *Lanark* it will be most insightful to look at the carnivalesque, the transgression of the norms set by a repressive society and phases of temporal and spatial liminality. I assume that it is not the carnival, but it is the act of violating existing norms which serves as an emancipatory tool. *1982, Janine*, which appears to promote pornographic fantasies at first sight, seeks to undermine a widely accepted notion of hard-man masculinity. The decisive change takes place in a phase of delirium, a liminal phase. While the carnival might appear as the obvious tool to initiate a change, I will argue that it is in fact a tool of suppression. It is in the act of emancipation from this suppression, in crossing boundaries defined by the system, and in the subsequent phases of liminality that the protagonist in *Lanark* can strive towards a greater autonomy, control and, possibly, order in his life. The carnivalesque serves as a harsh critique of capitalist societies. It does not offer a way out, but serves to illustrate how the system abuses its subjects like marionettes and sources of fuel.

1982, Janine offers a more positive outlook on the protagonist's success in ameliorating his fate. By facing the very limit of his life during his suicide attempt, by crossing this line, the protagonist undergoes a mental process which enables him to gain stability in his individuality and accept his deviance from the norm of hard-man masculinity. I hypothesise that in both texts, liminality offers the setting to scrutinise values, norms and one's own position in the context of society. Liminality is a form of trial which intends to provoke a process of soul-searching. I am

interested in the processes which happen in the interim phase between crossing boundaries.

Liminality, the way I understand it in this context, gives the individual space for reflection as it is both in and out of a particular sphere. In *Lanark*, it is the so-called intercalendrical zone which is explicitly isolated from Unthank – temporarily and spatially. In *1982, Janine*, Jock's delirium is the significant liminal phase; it is liminality on a mental or psychic level. This interim phase, however, gives the protagonist the opportunity to negotiate the conflicting positions in his personality in a self-reflexive way. Transgressive behaviour is often used as an instrument either for escape or compensation. In *Lanark*, transgression, such as physical transgression, is used to exemplify repression and thus acquires a political implication. The act of challenging boundaries thus has a subversive quality.

In *Lanark*, several mechanisms of abuse and exploitation are at work. Individuals experience and suffer under the application of power of the system onto their lives. This takes place on various levels of human interaction: in small social groups as much as in the context of the entire society. I will look at how the carnivalesque exposes the mechanisms of oppression in *Lanark* and how they influence the individual. Gray applies strong grotesque symbolism to emphasise the destructive effects of forceful systems. The attempted escape routes are important; Thaw's art as escape from society is less successful than Lanark's self-cure and escape. This text does not lend itself to a carnivalesque reading in the strict Bakhtinian sense, but has to be read through a more critical perspective. This implies that carnival does not serve as a valve to gain control temporarily as it does in folk culture. On the contrary: it is used by the system to restore order. This is why I suggest that Lanark can only achieve liberation and a personal development by transgressing the limits defined by the system. After that, I argue that Jock's identity crisis originates in the failure to live up to the overly masculine standards towards which he strives and in withstanding the pressures of his labour situation. A personal and successful development takes place in the phase of liminality during which, as I suggest, he is confronted with his subconscious. A reading of Freud's theory of the id, the ego and the super-ego is insightful. This phase triggers a development of

progression in Jock who then emancipates himself from the restrictive forces in society.

Alasdair Gray's *Lanark* is a complex novel, set up of two plots which are interwoven with each other. A realist and a science-fictional part are interlinked and reflect, even on the surface of the novel, the split which can also be found on the level of the narration, deeply rooted in the protagonists who suffer under the fracture of their subjectivity. *Lanark* is also a text with a subversive potential.

The body is a vital motif in Bakhtin's theory of carnival. The body with its grotesquely behaving extremities, its functions and its deformities plays a vital role in Gray's novels. In *Lanark*, the body, emancipation, transgressive behaviour and liminal stages are closely interlinked. The body reflects the impact of the system's abuse of its society, which bereaves the individual of its individuality and autonomy. It no longer belongs to a person, but is abused and consumed by the state which nourishes itself from its citizens. This is reflected in the deformation of the bodies. Most individuals are infected with a particular disease. Bodies are used for economic purposes and the profit of the system. This is why it is vital to understand that the emancipatory potential lies in Lanark's self-cure from his dragonhide as well as in rewriting his fate in the phase of liminality in the intercalendrical zone. Struggling to find their way out of the Institute, Lanark and his lover Rima find themselves in a place where the rules of time are non-existent. It is in this phase that they start writing their own script of life bypassing the intention of their fictional author with a significant outcome. Lanark has the chance to liberate himself, to escape where Duncan Thaw, his counterpart, failed. It is in this phase that they conceive a child, which will later be a vital figure in the anarchical movement against the system. This is why the phenomenon of liminality is important in this context. It is a phase between time and space, a place of reflection and independence, a place where they are not subject to any external influence. I consider the phase of healing and escape a key scene explaining the subversive message of the novel, which is why this will form the start of my analysis.

Undoubtedly, Alasdair Gray's writing is politically engaged literature. *Lanark* does not only address global capitalism and its destructive effects on humanity, but

also the issues of the governing of Scotland after 1979, aiming at a redefinition of the nature of Scottish experience in the 1980s. Published in 1981, two years after the first referendum on Scottish devolution and during the Thatcher Era, *Lanark* is divided into four books with two narrative strands of action. Books One and Two deal with the story of Duncan Thaw in the urban surroundings of post-war Glasgow, which is narrated in a realist mode. Books Three and Four frame Thaw's story, as the novel starts with Book Three, and deal with the life of Lanark in the fictional world of Unthank and the Institute. *Lanark* distinguishes itself as a significant piece of literature and a decisive one in the discourse of a "Second Scottish renaissance" and its consequences on the formation of a political consciousness. *Lanark* is a text about power structures and about the effects of capitalism on humanity, about the state of the Scottish nation in a conservative United Kingdom and about a suggestion of a way out. The parallel structure closely interlinks both plots, which complete one another. Two genres, two plots, two protagonists in two distinct worlds, four books, a list of references and editing notes. While the various distinct parts in *Lanark* do not seem to harmonise on first sight, it becomes clear, on having a closer look, that they are tightly interwoven and mutually dependent. Carola Jansen argues that *Lanark* shows postmodern traits: the novel bears characteristics of the realist, the naturalist and the science fiction novel. Moreover, he uses allegories and fantastic elements. It is this multi-layeredness which is one characteristic of postmodern fiction, Jansen summarises (Jansen 2000: 52). Alasdair Gray himself is rather sceptical about this label (cf. Böhnke 256; Stevenson 1991: 48).

The double is a leitmotif in the novel, which is why it is important to decipher how the two facets work in concert and which insights this then offers. One plotline cannot function without the other without reducing the message of the novel. Even the fictional narrator of the novel, who appears in the last book and the Epilogue, Nastler, comments upon the relationship between the two protagonists Thaw and Lanark: "You are Thaw with the neurotic imagination trimmed off and built into the furniture of the world you occupy. This makes you much more capable of action and slightly more capable of love" (L 493). Cairns Craig comments upon the method of doubling in *Lanark*, that "[neither] perspective will suffice by itself – only the dialectical interaction of the two will allow us to live with the unendurable weight of

a history that we still have to believe may go somewhere” (Craig 1991: 104). Here Craig refers to the double serving a narrative purpose of suggesting a realisable alternative future. The doubleness is employed in Thaw’s paintings, the diseases and the narrative structure. It is a dual status which is said to permeate Scottish literature, and particularly so in *Lanark*; dualism as well as the so-called Caledonian Antisyzygy. The term whose application to contemporary fiction has been questioned in recent criticism, was originally coined by G. Gregory Smith in 1919 and describes the “conjunction of opposite moods”, which Smith considers characteristic in Scottish literature (Smith 22). Smith defines that it is

Perhaps in the very combination of two opposites [...] we have a reflection of the contrasts which the Scot shows at every turn, in his political and ecclesiastical history, in his polemical restlessness, in his adaptability, which is another way of saying that he has made allowance for new conditions, in his practical judgement, which is the admission that two sides of the matter have been considered. (Smith 4)

He proceeds by stating that “this mixing of contraries – ‘intermingledons,’ to recall Burns’s word – helps to explain the presence of certain qualities which have come to be considered as characteristic of Scottish literature.” (Smith 34) Gerard Carruthers emphasises that this term gathers together these two moods of Scottish literature, the literary realism and fantasy, which he calls the co-existence between rational and irrational (Carruthers 2009: 11). These two modes are especially visible in the structure of Gray’s work. Gray’s characters challenge boundaries (Craig 1999: 195). They challenge the boundaries between these two modes on the levels of structure and content. Furthermore, it is the phenomenon of fragmentation, of a split in identity, perception and personality, which is a frequently occurring motif in Scottish literature and literary history and which builds the foundation of the protagonists’ internal crisis. In the case of *Lanark*, this dualism occurs in form of two protagonists whose lives are connected in a way that they are possibly the development of one character in two different environments. Craig further elaborates on the significance of the novel in 1981:

[...] with its protagonist split between the lives of two entirely separate characters it took on the burden of the self-division of the Scottish tradition; with part of the novel in an urban realist mode and part in a fantasy style, it directly faced the division of the Scottish novel into two opposing strands; and its political concerns addressed the issues of Scottish government and society in a context when the political debate seemed to have foundered. (Craig 1991: 92)

Following this argument, *Lanark* is not only a highly complex narrative pleading for a socio-political change, but also works self-reflexively dealing with issues of the Scottish literary tradition. In a way, it is an enormous endeavour Gray is undertaking with *Lanark* so that he can justifiably be termed the initiator of this new literary movement of the 1980s in Scotland. The two axes in the novel are Duncan Thaw's story, whose life is marked by loneliness, isolation, eccentricity and his escapist, artistic fantasies. Lanark's narration is mostly about a science-fiction society, determined by inhumanity and exploitation. The world of *Lanark* is, according to Stevenson, an "expanded version of the industrialised capitalism [...] a nightmare and fantasy" (Stevenson 1991: 51). In Unthank and its environment, several governing and executing structures can be found. "The Institute" is the processing organ, which is responsible for the supply of energy and food for the entire population. It belongs to a larger unit, "the Creature", which is an ungraspable administrative organ, which represents the main government structure. These are the centres of power. Capitalism and its effects are portrayed hyperbolically in *Lanark*, crossing what is imaginable and real, employing images of the grotesque. The power of governing bodies has its consequences for and effects on the individual, their psyche and their body – the body making the psychological deformations and burdens visible. One can read the novel in a way that Duncan Thaw's youth is followed by Lanark's life and that Duncan's neuroses, fears and illnesses turn real for Lanark in his fictional world. Thaw commits suicide in the middle of his twenties and Lanark enters life in the middle of his twenties, finding himself in a railway carriage outside Unthank. In other words, Thaw was thrown back "into a second-class railway carriage, creating [Lanark]" (L 219).

After his arrival, Lanark visits a locality in which he becomes affiliated with a group of young people. This location, The Elite Café, is a micro-version of the society in Lanark's world. A system of power structures parallels the general structures in a more private setting. Unthank is ruled by the Creature, which consists of several bodies such as the Institute. A man called Sludden rules and suppresses the small group in the Elite Café; the other members obey his orders. This is why it can be deduced that the system of power-relations is highlighted in miniature via the relationship between the characters, particularly the link between Sludden and

Lanark. Most human beings are ‘thrown’ into the world, to use Sartre’s term, and infected with a terminal illness. This implies that an individual’s autonomy is clearly restricted in this society by those who use them. The diseases are not performed on purpose, but serve an economic purpose: the system ‘consumes’ its citizens for its own profit. One of my main assumptions is that the grotesque bodily deformations are effects of the abusive powers of capitalism which are enforced upon the individual. Each person serves the system, paying with their own resources, which is mirrored in how their individual diseases are used by the ruling Creature. A critique of global capitalism, as it is voiced in Gray’s works, is connected with the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. They set this direction of thought in their work *Capital*, arguing that the private property of the few proliferates at the expense of those who produce it. Thus an accumulation of wealth of the few is the result, while the producer himself would always be excluded from profiting from what he generated. This is what happens in *Lanark*; one part of society enjoys its superior social status at the expense of the majority of society. In *1982, Janine*, the protagonist becomes a tool for the corporation he works for, contributing to their profit. Marx and Engels state in *Capital* that

It is no longer the worker who employs the means of production, but the means of production which employ the worker. Instead of being consumed by him as material elements of his productive activity, they consume him as the ferment necessary to their own life-process, and the life-process of capital consists solely in its own motion as self-valorizing value. (Marx 425)

The worker becomes a mere tool, governed by those “means of production” which he is supposed to control so that he instead of his tool is consumed to contribute to the accumulation of wealth. This is an aspect which can be found in both of Gray’s novels. The Institute is one prominent aspect. It is a factory, the centre of resource production for the entire society of Greater Unthank. The Creature, which is the superordinate complex, consists of multiple individual parts: the Institute, the Council, responsible for the basic administration, and several huge enterprises, Volstat, Algolagnics and Quantum Cortexin, which are the real driving forces and the financial guarantors on which the city-state is built. To the mind of the politically aware person in Unthank, it is a “conspiracy which owns and manipulates everything for profit” (L 410), to a member of the Institute it rather resembles “a conspiracy of

thinkers to bring the light of Heaven down to mankind” (*L* 367). This political complex systematically manipulates, brainwashes, feeds off its citizens and destroys their basic human needs of life, in order to enlarge its profit. In a way, the situation within Unthank is an exaggerated adaptation of Karl Marx’s definition of capitalism¹, in which the poorer classes carry the financial weight of the system and produce the profit for the ruling class. The lower classes are slowly deprived of all time, hope and desires. Even their sexual activity shall in the future be restricted by a judicial act of “libido-canalisation” (*L* 475). Natural procreation of the poor is unwanted and unaccepted. The Creature with its sub-institutions attempts to turn everything into profit. Even time becomes a means of monetary transaction: the more independent part of society who are not fed with ‘three-in-one-bread’, own a ‘Quantum credit card’ (*L* 437), with which they can buy whatever they desire, but pay with segments of their life wherefore people age quicker when they travel or consume a lot. In conclusion, the Creature causes grotesque deformations in its people, bodily and mental, in order to make them controllable and to dehumanise them and conceal this inhumane treatment. The Institute, as part of the creature, shows a subtle architectural construction. Its system, the functions and processes, bears resemblance to a huge, swallowing body. Each corridor within the Institute has a counter-corridor to canalise the movement in one direction so that air and people in the building can circulate like blood through a giant body’s veins. On rescuing Rima, intending to flee with her, the protagonist is forced to violate this rule and hurry along a counter-corridor to get to his friend before the explosion of her dragon armour. By doing so, he upsets the entire system, causes the epidemic of an illness by producing an imbalance of ‘supplies’ which is not needed, a power cut and the freeze of particular vital parts of the building (*L* 93). It is decisive in this context that Lanark survives this process by his own willpower; he is not ‘digested’ but is able to free himself

¹ Karl Marx, translated by Terry Eagleton (Marx 1976: 4): “In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which corresponds definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.”

from the Institute. The will to change his personal situation exists, however the establishment's web is far too spread out for him to flee entirely. He manages to free himself from one institution only to be confronted with the next in the outside world of Unthank. Another one of the Creature's sub-groups, the Council, kills the hope of the poorest of society, slowly but systematically, breaking their will and diminishing their intelligence by feeding them brain-destroying food. The consumption of human food hyperbolises the system of abuse that is capitalism in this criticism.

The diseases give insight into how a person is exploited. On arriving in Unthank, Lanark's physical traits are measured and categorised. He is diagnosed with 'dragonhide', a common illness of the time in Unthank (*L* 21). According to his doctor, "[diseases] identify people more accurately than variable factors like height, weight, and hair colour" (*L* 21). This statement reveals the macabre way of identifying human beings by their degree and type of physical deformation in Unthank. This characterises Lanark's new place of residence as grotesque. This situation of a society stricken with disease is the origin of and foundation on which the arguments of the socio-political criticism are formed. The essential question is why society and its population have turned grotesque and which quality these deformations have. This is the foundation upon which books three and four are built.

Sludden is a person in a primary position of power. Those who rule are not constrained by a disease because they are the ones using those who do. At first, he is the head of the Elite gang; later on he becomes an active part of the regime as the Provost of Unthank. Since he is the only one among his clique who never suffers physical and psychological deformation, he acquires a superior status both within the group, as well as on a political level. Consequently, we can conclude that the possession and application of power are interlinked with physical deformation as superiors abuse inferiors by using their deformations. In books three and four, five major types of diseases can be identified in the novel: the so-called 'leeches', 'sponges', 'rigorists', 'mouths' as well as 'crustaceans'. Lobsters, louses, scorpions and dragons belong to the latter (*L* 31). The protagonist Lanark can be classified as a dragon with symptoms of dragonhide, just like the woman of his desire, Rima (*L* 26). To illustrate the difference between two of the diseases which influence Lanark's

first month in Unthank, it is insightful to contrast his ‘dragonhide’ with Gay’s illness, the ‘mouths’. Gay, Sludden’s fiancée, later describes herself as “a silly weakling”, which correlates with her disease (*L* 532). She has a mouth in the palm of her hand, which grins and speaks with Sludden’s sarcastic voice.

He [Lanark] began to say he was not interested in her [Gay’s] disease but she pulled off her fur gauntlet. Surprise gagged him. He had expected dragon claws like his own, but all he could see was a perfectly shaped white little hand, the fingers lightly 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!’ Gay’s hand sank to her side. He saw that the soles of her feet were an inch above the pavement. Her body dangled before him as if from a hook in her brain, her smile was vacant and silly, her jaw fell and the voice which came from the mouth was not formed by movement of tongue or lip. (*L* 45-46)

On showing this symptom to Lanark, both of her mouths start speaking to him, making Gay appear to be but a lifeless marionette, a mouthpiece and an empty controllable vessel for Sludden’s dominance. Her body floats above the ground, her facial expression is “vacant and silly”, and she lacks control over her own movements (*L* 45). A person affected with the ‘mouth’-disease does not only lack strength of personality, but literally turns into a toy of the ‘puppet player’. Sludden’s power enables him to see through her eyes like a spy, speak through her mouth to the one she is watching, and control her actions. The mouth itself is a carnivalesque symbol of hell. In *Lanark*, it does not only occur in the form of the disease, but also as portals: Lanark enters the Institute via a giant mouth, which thus supports the impression of a giant devouring body, the body of society, which processes and digests humans in order to produce those goods that are vital for the ‘body’ to survive, energy and food.

Lanark’s disease, on the other hand, is of a very different nature. He, retreating into isolation, suffers from a lack of emotional warmth in the society of Unthank, even in the company of his clique (*L* 22). On the day of his arrival, his ‘dragonhide’ is but a mere patch of hard and dark green skin on his elbow. It is cold and very solid on the surface, but starts spreading over the rest of his arm very soon after that (*L* 41).

But when the dragonhide had covered the arm and hand it spread no further, though the length of the limb as a whole increased by six inches. The fingers grew stouter, with a slight web between them, and the nails got longer and more curving. A red point like a rose-thorn

formed on each knuckle. A similar point, an inch and a half long, grew on the elbow [...]. The colour was not really black but an intensely dark green. It looked diseased because it grew on a man, but considered by itself the glossy hide, the thorny red knuckles and elbow, the curving steel-blade claws looked healthy indeed. (L 40-41)

During their encounter, the Lord Provost of Unthank tells Lanark that 'dragonhide' is just an "insensitive shell which *contains* the beast" (L 31, emphasis in the original), which foreshadows the expected progression of his illness; the 'beast' being the infected individual. Lanark realises that after being denied Rima's love, who also suffers from 'dragonhide' (L 36), his dark skin grows, mostly over night, until it covers his entire arm and shoulder (L 40). While, to some extent, this disease also has a self-destructive quality, this passage does, at the same time, exemplify the dragonhide's main contrast to the 'mouths' illness. Lanark's reaction to his disease is different, originating in an opposing constitution of his personality in contrast to Gay. He develops anger instead of weakness and

began to have fantasies about the damage it [his dragon hand] could do. He imagined entering the Elite and walking across to the Sludden clique with the hand inside the bosom of his jacket. [...] As Sludden, Toal and McPake leapt to their feet he suddenly would knock them down with a sweeping sideways blow, then drive the squealing girls into a corner and rake the clothes off them. (L 41-42)

These fantasies arise from a severe feeling of loneliness, isolation and lack of appreciation as an individual. In Lanark's counter-world, illnesses spread and they transform bodies even more grotesquely. Rima, Lanark's friend, is infected with a particularly severe case of 'dragonhide', having grown wings like a real dragon. Her entire body is enclosed in this "freezing coffin" (L 73) of dark green armour. Lanark learns that this type of illness occurs when the patient tries to protect himself by isolation from human unkindness, unconsciously generating a 'shield' as a protection. The disadvantage, however, is that this does not only keep negativity out, but it also encloses the body without giving it the chance to reduce its heat, with the consequence that, as soon as the dragon shuts its mouth, the heat inside the armour rises drastically, leading to an explosion of the beast. The energy released in this explosion is used to fuel the system of Unthank. Bakhtin quotes Hippocrates when explaining the process of the grotesque body's death:

Death is near when the warmth of the soul rises above the umbilic to the diaphragm, and all the humours² are burned out. When the lungs and the heart lose their moisture and warmth is concentrated in the lethal parts, the spirit of warmth evaporates, leaving the regions from which it entirely ruled over the entire organism. (Bakhtin 1984: 358)

A 'dragon' can be healed only by making it feel external warmth, by evoking a passion for something in their lives to enable them to 'crack' their own armour. Lanark, who has been promoted to be a doctor after his own cure, later succeeds in helping Rima overcome her existence of being entrapped in her coffin. Their transformation is significant as by curing Rima, he acts against the economic plan the Creature had for them. Both Lanark and Rima will not be economically valuable for the system and have thus opposed the influence of power. As a matter of fact, Lanark and Rima's physical transformations are significant in several ways. Firstly, they deny the system two sources of energy by being cured. As every infected individual is part of an economic plan, the two of them refuse to be consumed. Secondly, if deformations are imposed upon the individuals as a consequence of the outward influence of suppressive power as a means of gaining profit, then the transformation from a beast to a human being is a revolt against and liberation from this oppressive force. By freeing himself from the limitations of the grotesque disease, he is not vulnerable anymore, and he is not in danger of being consumed by the system in the future.

One part of society consuming the other: this has a cannibalistic quality and thus speaks a harsh judgement on this capitalist society. Cannibalism is the foundation upon which Unthank is built and the Institute is literally presented as a giant body. Infected and dying bodies in *Lanark* are turned into profit by the Institute. The apparatus collects the heat produced by the explosion of those formerly human beings, which is then used as a source of energy to support the functioning of the Institute. It *subsists* on the explosion of humans infected with 'dragonhide'. People infected with 'twittering rigor' (*L* 21), 'rigorists', contrary to 'dragons' give their body heat away too generously, transforming into crystals (*L* 70) which are then used for building communication circuits. In general, their essential character trait is that they are very dependent and dependable human beings. 'Sponges' or 'softs' are kept in deterioration wards, where they remain until their lives expire (*L* 63). Over

² i.e. The *four humours*: the bodily fluids which were said to determine a person's constitution.

time, they transform into pieces of rubber and are then served as food in the Institute restaurant. Thus, life in the Institute is based on cannibalism and the process of ‘curing’ patients is not an act of humanity, but a mere means of keeping them ‘fresh’ until new supplies are needed (*L* 89). Randall Stevenson states that “Technology enables ‘the creature’ – ‘a conspiracy which owns and manipulates everything for profit’ (*L* 410) to make entirely literal what used to be only metaphors of commodification and consumption: men and women, in the Institute, are actually turned into food and eaten.” (Stevenson 1991: 51) This is why Lanark refuses to remain part of this murderous system and flees the Institute at a later stage. The decisive fact is that the ruling class can influence and control the degree of the occurrence of illnesses and use them for their purposes. Consequently, the value of a human life is dependent on their potential of economic contribution.

The system declares that citizens “eat the processed parts of certain life forms which can no longer claim to be people” (*L* 373). Even though the majority of the population is unaware of the fact that they are anthropophagi, the ruling part of society advertises its human products as particularly delicious: these products are ‘THE RICH HUMAN GOODNESS IN FROZEN SECRETS, THE FOOD OF PRESIDENTS’ (*L* 432). The other type of food which is available outside the Institute is ‘vegetarian’ and distributed among the poorest, is just as harmful. The ‘three-in-one-bread’ nourishes and warms but damages the intelligence of the consumer. Therefore, it is another instrument of controlling the poor masses. Being promoted and taking the position as doctor in the institute, Lanark’s task is to keep the infected people fresh until they are used. Cure is not the intention of the treatment. In a conversation in the canteen Lanark learns about the cannibalism:

‘You *know* nobody is ever cured, that the treatment only keeps the bodies fresh until we need fuel or clothes or food.’

Lanark looked at her, said ‘Foooo?’ and dropped his spoon in the plate.

‘Of course! What do you think you’ve been eating? Have you never looked into the sink? Has nobody shown you the drains under the sponge-wards?’ (*L* 89, italicisation in the original)

Lanark’s refuses to consume any kind of human food and starts to rebel against his new profession by starting to cure his patient and friend Rima. This is a

revolt against the system. This passage of *Lanark* illustrates the disapproval of the mechanisms of capitalism. Cairns Craig formulates this as follows:

In the world division of labour, people's work is used to support their own domination; trapped in a system which consumes them as they strive to sustain themselves, they become as monstrous as the system they live in. (Craig 1991: 93)

Capitalism demands inhabitants of a capitalist society to invest their work and lives in and for the profit of the system. This way, they support their own domination. The system then consumes them and their individuality. Humans are exploited as tools for economic purposes.

Carnavalesque bodies in *Lanark* thus carry a political message, however not a self-determined one. The bodies interact with their social environment, as traditional folk festive bodies do. However, they mirror and therefore visualise the institutionalised oppression, the physical and psychological abuse of the individual by the state. Michael Gardiner looks at how the criticism voiced within Scottish literature of the 1980s is aimed at at the Scottish people's passivity and refusal to raise their voices against the feeling of suppression and discrimination (Gardiner 2009: 182-83). This means the disapproval of Margaret Thatcher's conservative way of governing home affairs and an utter disappointment of the outcome of the failed referendum in 1979. Gardiner argues that Scotland, ruled by the conservative south, was perceived to be a mere marionette in the United Kingdom. This is reflected in the character of Gay in *Lanark*.

Duncan Thaw's story, narrated in books one and two, is parallel in its structure and content to *Lanark*'s. However, in contrast to his counterpart, Duncan is not successful in his attempt to position himself in society, to determine his own life and live independently. He remains a social outcast who fails to connect to his environment and whose macabre thoughts illustrate the emotional conflicts he has to endure. His escape route, art, will remain unsuccessful resulting in a probable suicide. Duncan is powerless as his escape routes and compensation strategies fail to help him. The fracture of the text and his personality can be found in the complex relationship Duncan has with himself, the internal struggle of the conflicting voices which do not fit into the society of post-war Scotland.

Like Lanark, Duncan Thaw suffers from a grotesque skin disease which is the result of external influences. Simultaneously, he is attracted by physical deformities. He and his family are evacuated during World War Two to the western islands of Scotland. During his childhood, Duncan experiences isolation and a lack of familial love. He develops rashes and asthma, which occur in times of immediate emotional stress, which suggest a psychosomatic reason for both the asthma as well as the skin disease. Thus they are a reaction to his surroundings. A lack of friends and the failure to attract girls makes his condition worse. On being evacuated, Duncan

slept in strange beds where breathing became difficult and he woke up screaming he was dead. Sores appeared on his scrotum and the bus brought them to the Royal Infirmary where old professors looked between his legs and applied brown ointment which stung the sores and smelled of tar. (*L* 132-33)

His disease spreads from his legs infecting other parts of his body. When Duncan's mother suffers from an incurable, terminal illness during his early adolescence and eventually lies on her early death bed, his sores turn particularly heavy. As he has the habit of tearing healthy and infected parts of his skin off with his fingernails (*L* 231), Duncan continually looks as if he had cut his throat (*L* 194), leaving him in a weak, blemished and bloodstained condition. The more he retreats into his imaginary world and the isolation of his art studio and the lonelier he becomes, the more he is afraid of human relationships and the more he finds himself in a state of isolation. As a consequence, his illnesses threaten his life. The rashes are, similarly to the dragonhide, a symptom of isolation within an urban context and illustrate how his nonconformity harms his personality. The rashes also signify the carnivalesque quality of his reality: Similar to Lanark's life, a play with the tension of life and death are prominent issues in the novel. The seemingly cut throat, due to his rashes, simultaneously disgusts and pleases the boy. Duncan shows a strong and morbid fascination for the grotesque body which oscillates between (self-)disgust and clinical interest. He is interested not only in his own infected body, but also in female bodies as well as corpses in the pathology department of the Medical School at the University of Glasgow, particularly the *vivisection* room as desired place of study for drawing purposes (*L* 252). The detailed study of the characteristics and peculiarity of grotesque deformations has a decisive effect on his perception of reality. On being confronted with his fellow students, his social superiors, who subtly bully and

ridicule him in the presence of girls, he “saw that their faces did not fit. The skin on the skulls crawled and twitched like half-solid paste” (L 232). Duncan’s mind develops this thought further:

He grasped a pencil in his trouser pocket, wishing it were a knife he could thrust through his cheek [a fellow student’s] and use to carve his face down to the clean bone. But that was foolish. Nothing clean lay under the face. He thought of sectioned brains, palettes, eyeballs and ears seen in medical diagrams and butcher’s shops. He thought of elastic muscle, pulsing tubes, gland sacks full of lukewarm fluid, the layers of cellular and fibrous and granular tissues inside a head. (L 232)

This is a key passage in Duncan Thaw’s biography: on the surface it shows how he directs his hatred as revenge against the aggressor, but does not physically harm him. Nevertheless, this shows that his state of mind has a dangerously violent quality to it, supporting and reflecting his morbid interests. This contributes to the process of his developing mental illness. Moreover, this passage portrays how Duncan realises that every person has their own grotesque quality or ‘deformation’, be it concerning their health or their personality: “Everyone carried on their necks a grotesque art object, originally inherited, which they never tired of altering and adding to.” (L 228) Bodies are objectified; they are solely lumps with holes in them, secreting and excreting. In Duncan’s perception, neither anything clean nor powerful can be attributed to them. Instead, people are “coloured jelly” (L 232). Coloured jelly is also the human food on the plates of Lanark’s banquet tables in books three and four. They are carnivalesque bodies and Duncan is the one dominating. By portraying his fellow students in the distorted way he perceives them and by distinguishing himself via his allegedly sharp perspective, he gains a strong feeling of power. Like a giant creator he triumphs over those who look abnormal to him.

The grotesque is omnipresent in *Lanark*. To elaborate on this, it is useful to look at Bakhtin. He quotes Victor Hugo who stated that the grotesque was everywhere: “on the one hand, it creates the formless and the terrifying, on the other hand the comic, the buffoon-like.” (Bakhtin 1984: 43). Bakhtin adds that the central aspect of grotesque literature is that it employs “the aesthetic of the monstrous” (Bakhtin 1984: 43). The grotesque and deformed is given space to overturn the conformist aesthetics of beauty and to release the revolutionary powers of carnival. The grotesque in books one and two assume the shapes of different types of the grotesque. There are Duncan’s bodily deformations and diseases, which are visible

but hyperbolised and fortified by his mental illness. Madness is the final state which motivates Duncan to commit suicide; and it is, according to Bakhtin, inherent in the concept of the grotesque. “Madness makes men look at the world with different eyes, not dimmed by ‘normal,’ that is by commonplace ideas and judgements.” (Bakhtin 1984: 39) The grotesque deformities mirror the ugliness of humanity, the violent potential in humans.

A prominent issue of Bakhtin’s carnival is the notion of the banquet, which describes a glutton who devours and excretes in an exaggerated fashion. Bakhtin also describes the practice of cannibalism and this is an issue which is located in the centre of the novel. Bakhtin argues: “This genre often concerned itself with dismembered bodies, their roasting, burning, and swallowing.” (Bakhtin 1984: 347) Devouring the defeated enemy is described as a final triumph, debasing the individual (Bakhtin 1984: 21). It is an act of incorporation and thus total power over the victim. *Lanark* is a novel about cannibalism and profit gained on the expense of others. Lanark’s abusive society is foreshadowed in Duncan Thaw’s nightmare of Flealouse. His fascination with the ugly and disgusting, and his obviously deranged relationships with the body, life and human beings, culminates in a fantasy, which returns as hallucination later on and which foreshadows the leitmotif of his ‘afterlife’ as Lanark: “Man is the pie that bakes and eats itself” (*L* 101). It is a nightmare about a maggot called Flealouse (*L* 233), which is the epitome of the grotesque. Flealouse is characterised by its belly, which is covered with mouths. In other words, its belly represents gluttony and greed. At the same time, it also alludes to the exploitation of the masses through the system, which ‘consumes’ its own subordinates (Jansen 47). Society feeds off its own workforce. Furthermore, these many mouths imply a vision of imminent death and hell. It kills its victims by sweating a poisonous drug-like juice, which paralyses the victim and enables the maggot to feed on its host’s brain. Everyone infected would eventually turn white, swell and burst into grains of tiny maggots. In accordance with Bakhtin’s studies, this reflects the carnivalesque cycle of time: devouring one subject, digesting it and excreting a large amount of new forms of life, which are in Duncan’s fantasy superior to human life. As soon as mankind is extinguished, the lice start eating up each other until only one is left whose body “contained the flesh of everything that had ever lived” (*L* 233).

Flealouse is the perfect embodiment of carnival: “[it] is the body forever consuming and being consumed, devouring and being devoured” (Gardiner 1993: 773). At the same time, it is a powerful image of the forces of capitalism. It is used to emphasise the grievances of the society in which Duncan and Lanark live, and this is done in a hyperbolic way in order to shock and evoke disgust. The dystopian vision is left standing on its own as a warning sign and a foreshadowing element to the destruction done in the future of Duncan and Lanark’s lives. Flealouse impressively epitomises what greed and power do to a society when one part gains the upper hand. This cannibalistic imagination, at this stage only a hallucination or phantasm in Duncan’s head, turns real for Lanark. Symbolic cannibalism³ occurs in different modes in *Lanark*. When young Duncan Thaw is served a dinner of potato, carrot and mince, he imagines eating a real human brain. This originates in the fact that the previous tenant of his family’s flat had committed suicide in their kitchen by putting his head in the oven. Having ‘incorporated’ a human organ, having practised cannibalism on a metaphoric level, the boy feels “excited and powerful” (L 124) and even succeeds in overcoming his fear of the older and rougher boys in his neighbourhood, since they “had never eaten what he had eaten” (L 125).

The Institute, on the other hand, is the “murder machine” (L 101) of an even bigger complex which is mainly referred to as ‘the Creature’, where cannibalism becomes a real experience for the inferior inhabitants of the state. The entire complex exists on the exploitation and consumption of inferior citizens. The main objective of cannibalism here is not the need to feed the population, as other food resources are available, but to enlarge its profit by forcefully abusing them. In contrast to Duncan, who only eats what he *imagined* to be a human organ, the members and patients of the Institute eat real human beings, or to be precise, the leftovers of deteriorated humans who were formerly infected with the ‘softness’ disease.

³ In his essay “Of the Caniballes”, Michel de Montaigne explores the rites and symbolism of cannibalism of indigenous peoples in Portuguese colonies in the ‘new World’ (Montaigne 225). According to his studies, cannibalism, the act of consuming fellow human beings, was practiced particularly after the victory in a fight between groups of people was achieved. The head of the enemies’ leader was taken home as a trophy, whereas this victim’s best friend was slain in the assembly of the victorious village and subsequently roasted and eaten. However, this act did not serve to nourish the group, but “to represent an extreme, and inexpiable revenge” (Montaigne 225). Incorporating the enemy’s body is not only the ultimate victory, but is also said to provide the victor with the powers of his victim (Klarer 395).

Gray's strong imagery, such as his use of the devouring mouth, suggests reading the novel as a story of hell on earth. However, while the folk-traditional background of feasting and distorting is definitely significant in the novel, I consider reading *Lanark* under a carnivalesque perspective adequate but not unproblematic when applied to the portrayal of the body. In the strict Bakhtinian reading of Rabelais, revellers used carnival as a phase of celebrating liberty, of masking themselves, mimicking grotesque figures, playfully pretending to dethrone their sovereign. However, we have to be more critical when thinking about the carnivalesque depiction of the body in *Lanark*. There is no actual emancipatory potential of the carnivalesque in *Lanark*. It is only an instrument to control his subordinates by canalising their forces and desires in a compensatory way. Thus the actual physical deformation of bodies, as depicted in the novel, differs from the Bakhtinian understanding of the body. In contrast to the revellers, Gay and Rima do not deliberately choose to deform their bodies – their illnesses are imposed upon them, they are infected in order to be used. They are not actively disguising themselves in a grotesque way to excessively express their temporary liberty, but they are passive victims of Sludden and the system he represents. Similarly to Thompson, who stated that carnival only has utopian and no *real* power since it is often interpreted as a “utopian allegory that poetically envisioned a collective revolt against Stalinism, rather than a historical reality” (Thompson 116), Terry Eagleton is highly critical of the carnevalesque and its ‘actual’ powers in the Bakhtinian sense. Eagleton’s perspective that carnival in general is only a “permissible rupture of hegemony” (Eagleton 1981: 148) is the crucial addition to my reading of the body in the context of *Lanark*. In fact, the system abuses most of its citizens – their welfare is only a cunning pretence. Even though carnival is often read as having an overturning power, it does not serve this purpose in *Lanark*. It is rather the case that the grotesque is used to control those who would usually celebrate carnival as a revolt. This is why I am convinced that it is not the carnivalesque, but the liminal which carries the potential of the protagonist to emancipate himself from the oppressive system.

According to Victor Turner, liminality is a “‘moment in and out of time,’ and in and out of secular social structure” (Turner 1969: 96). In the so-called intercalendrical zone, the wasteland outside the Institute, time and space follow different laws. This liminal place serves as a medium and locus of reflection. I hypothesise that, by fighting their way through this sphere which is uncontrolled by the authorities, Lanark and Rima gain a chance to rewrite the stories of their own lives and thus to acquire control in a society which does not allow free thinking and self-determination. This passage alludes to the existential situation a tribal liminar undergoes. The liminar is a passenger who has to cross a threshold to enter an interim situation which enables him to reflect on his existence and status in society (Turner 1969: 94). Liminality gives the individual a particular space, which is in the world in which they live, but secluded and protected from everyday life at the same time. However, liminality is also ambivalent as it can be a phase of retreat to engage with its own self, but it is also dangerous, as Lanark and Rima have to find ways to survive in an unknown territory. The threshold from the Institute to the intercalendrical zone is a control mechanism which implies a narrative of failure and danger. This myth of death and destruction behind the gates of the Institute serves the purpose of keeping doctors and patients inside to serve the system. It is an instrument of control and intimidation. Therefore, to trespass this gate means rebellion against the oppressors. Both transgression and the process of change in the phase of liminality are not approved of by the system, which is a significant contrast to van Gennep and Turner’s definition of liminality.

The protagonists leave through an “EMERGENCY EXIT 3124”-gate to make their way through a liminal space. It is an escape from the ‘murder machine’, the Institute. The setting is appropriate for the performance of a rite of passage. The threshold marks the separation from the old system. The next step, the phase of liminality leads the liminars into an impassable terrain in which they have to survive without sense of direction. What happens after crossing this gate is the turning point of the novel which enables both characters to redefine their lives by partly freeing themselves from determination. While this zone appears daunting and dangerous, as it follows its own rules, it is also the space where individual liberty is most present in the novel. The intercalendrical zone is an ambivalent place and thus lends itself as a

liminal testing ground for them. As this terrain is not incessantly observed, and only vaguely set out, it gives the individual the chance to reconsider and redefine their thoughts, lives and values without control and punishment. Neil Rhind states that “Leaving behind the institute and the temporal system which orders it, the couple find temporary respite from entrapment.” (Rhind 2001b: 113) It is a difficult journey the lovers undertake, having to make their way through a foggy, rough and unfamiliar landscape without a sense of direction. Their experiences during their voyage away from the Institute back towards Unthank are illogical: Another system of time and spatial order exists in this in-between zone. It is not directly subject to the authority of the Creature, but has its own rules. While walking next to each other, following a guiding line through the fog, one begins to walk uphill on one side of the line, the other walks downhill. Both exist simultaneously and Lanark observes:

‘Rima. The road slopes downhill on this side of the line and uphill on the other.’ ‘That’s impossible!’ ‘I know. But it does.’ (*L* 377)

After passing through several, or possibly the same, iron doors marked with the warning sign, their sense and logic of time is questioned. Both characters notice the figure of Rima in the distance, however, they realise that they observe Rima as a version of herself in the past (*L* 378). Past and present exist simultaneously; the logical order of time is rescinded. In Cairns Craig’s words, the intercalendrical zone is a place in and out of history. It is a place which is not subjected to any external authority; it is a surreal place which can also be read as an allegory of reflection and individual development, at least in Lanark’s case. Lanark’s struggle to move uphill and not to stumble downhill reflects that he “is able to achieve an uphill recovery of his lost humanity” (Craig 1991: 97) despite this downhill environment. Time and the repetition of one’s own experience, shown in observing the second Rima who has to return to the starting point of her journey in the zone, suggests that action is required to break this circular movement of time. They decide to leave Rima-of-the-past behind in the desert and to stop “living in the past” (*L* 378) in order to redefine an alternative future. The intercalendrical zone is a test. Overcoming the obstacles enables the characters to liberate themselves from the system’s heteronomy. It offers a chance for individual development in this space of paradox. Both Lanark and Rima take steps towards self-determination, without being consciously aware of it at first.

Later on in the narration, Lanark learns that all life in Unthank is determined by an author called Nastler who writes the stories of their lives. The lovers manage to circumvent and rewrite these scripts which were intended for them and thus change the plot of the world. This is the crucial aspect, the necessary development which takes place in the liminal sphere. During their short journey, Rima discovers she is suddenly several months pregnant.

Rima stirred and sat up, spilling sand from her shoulders, then stretched her arms and yawned. ‘Ooyah, how fat and sticky and stale I feel.’

‘Fat?’

‘Yes, my stomach’s swollen.’

‘It must be wind. You’d better eat.’ (L 380)

The change in the temporal order accelerates Rima’s pregnancy with Alexander to the point of delivery within less than a week (L 386). In an encounter with Nastler at a later stage of the novel, Lanark realises that he has changed the plan of his life without the fictional author’s intention and permission:

‘What happens to Sandy?’ said Lanark coldly.

‘Who’s Sandy?’

‘My son.’

The conjuror [Nastler] stared and said, ‘You have no son.’

‘I have a son called Alexander who was born in the cathedral.’

The conjuror, looking confused, grubbed among the papers on his bed and at last held one up, saying, ‘Impossible, look here. This is a summary of the nine or ten chapters I haven’t written yet. If you read it you’ll see there’s no time for Rima to have a baby in the cathedral’ She goes away too quickly with Sludden. (L 498).

Lanark achieves emancipation from the God-like figure of the author by writing his own story, being the author of his personal story. This is an act of temporary self-determination. Both characters manage to liberate themselves partly and determine their lives and family-planning wish themselves. By doing so, they do not only violate the authority of the state, but also ignore the fictional narrator’s authority by reformulating the plot which was intended for them.

Whether or not this escape route is actually fruitful and whether it leads to a better future, “the world beyond struggle that is utopia”, which Neil Rhind describes, is, in my opinion, still debatable (Rhind 2001b: 110). Rhind states that utopia is always implied in the novel as the desirable state, but located outside the novel (Rhind 2001b: 119). The novel envisions a utopian future. However, the bitter open ending leaves the reader unsure whether there is real hope for a better future. The

majority of the narration is determined by the effects of a dystopian society and only a glimpse of hope for this new nation is given in the end. Nonetheless, the past is not completely swept away and cleaned by the gigantic, cathartic wave in the end. Hope lies in the new generation which suggests a revolutionary potential. Neither of the escape routes Lanark or Thaw choose prove to be fruitful on a larger scale. While Lanark does not manage to achieve an improvement of the socio-political level, he does develop personally and achieve individual emancipation from the script of his life.

In summary, the negotiation with limits is vital in the discussion of *Lanark* as different mechanisms of revolt and emancipation are attempted and partly achieved through the engagement with norms, limits and borders. While carnival suggests itself to carry an overturning potential, the real individual development in the novel can be found in situations that are connected with liminality. The cultural tradition of carnival is vital for the discussion of *Lanark* as it illuminates the mechanisms of oppression in the novel. Carnival is often seen as being a part of the notion of a critical utopia, although this is not explicitly declaimed by Bakhtin. Utopias were more than mere fantasies of mystic, ideal cities. They were regarded as consciously constructed “manifestation[s] of pervasive social and ideological conflicts” (Gardiner 1993: 22). In other words, this concept is based on a necessity of social criticism and a willingness to alter and improve this state of affairs. Carnival expresses harsh criticism of the existing social order and intends to estrange established symbols of domination from their original meaning to reveal the arbitrariness of hierarchies, social roles and the concept of reality, history and time (Gardiner 1993: 35). Furthermore, carnival is always politically explosive and confrontational, dynamic as well as self-reflexive (Gardiner 1993: 37). According to Michael Gardiner, it is the ‘antibody’ in a pathological society which is always on the verge of breaking out (Gardiner 1993: 37). He continues by stating that “the utopian dream is furtively glimpsed in the symbols and practices of carnival” (Gardiner 1993: 47). In Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory, carnival and grotesque realism aim at influencing the prevailing socio-political order, which is why these categories are particularly significant in the context of Bakhtin’s life in Russia, as well as in the United Kingdom since the late

20th century. Stallybrass and White highlight that Bakhtin's theory fulfils three main functions:

it provided an image-ideal of and for popular community as a heterogeneous and boundless totality; it provided an imaginary repertoire of festive and comic elements which stood over against the serious and oppressive languages of the official culture; and it provided a thoroughly materialist metaphysics whereby the grotesque 'bodied forth' the cosmos, the social formations and language itself. (Stallybrass/White 10)

Bodies in *Lanark* are not carnivalesque in the traditional Bakhtinian sense. They are not disguised, but reflect the suppressive powers of the authorities which use their subjects for their economic prosperity. This is why the function of the body as a medium is not as straight forward as it might appear at first. It does not suffice to apply a Bakhtinian reading of the text, as the carnivalesque cannot explain all the facets of criticism voiced. It has to be read parallel to the position that the body is also the physically visible indicator of an influence of power, as the oppression is inscribed into their bodies as illness. It is a medium to make visible the individual's sufferings in the system. As an effect, two major groups of society oppose each other; one exploiting the other.

How much self-determination can Lanark achieve? What is the outcome of his development? Is his rite of passage successful? The world of Unthank is a difficult starting point for realising individual freedom. In a society in which every facet of human life is controlled by the system, people are controlled and exploited; the individual's self-determination is rather limited. As the exploitation is forcefully inscribed into the lower classes' bodies and it is almost impossible for them to receive a healing treatment, they are entrapped in the system's structure which predetermines and impedes their lives. This system is based on power relations and the accumulation of profit of the few. Revolt and emancipation are partly possible, as Lanark's life demonstrates, but only achievable with the investment of the strongest physical effort. Lanark manages to emancipate himself from this oppression and only receives little help to do so. His rite of passage in the liminal intercalendrical zone is successful. On entering the world of Unthank and in conversation with the author, he realises that he has achieved progress. However, on a larger scale, he cannot succeed in overturning the system. The freedom he experiences lies in the freedom of his thoughts and overcoming the prescribed script of his life, of rejecting the established

form of oppression in which he unwillingly and unknowingly participated by consuming the food which was supplied by the Creature. In his case, it is about the personal emancipation which is partly possible, however, within the framing and restricting circumstances of his society. In the end, long after the prime of his life, the anarchical revolution, in which his son Sandy is a key figure, is successful due to the combined forces of many independently thinking citizens.

Jock McLeish, the protagonist in *1982, Janine*, also suffers in an oppressive system. A strict catalogue of gender norms, a restrictive employment situation, a sense of loss of control, and his alcohol addiction are central factors of negotiation in the novel. Jock's despair of non-belonging, of not meeting the requirements of masculinity leads to a suicide attempt. Paradoxically, this triggers a liminal situation which enables him to redefine his value system and thus emancipate himself from the restrictions of his life.

Alasdair Gray's *1982, Janine* (1984)

1982, Janine is a novel which deals with the idea of fractured subjectivity, challenging traditionally acknowledged notions of identity. Like *Lanark*, Gray's later novel also focuses on the current social and political situation and questions established values and norms. It portrays the life, excesses, and the psychic development of its protagonist, Jock McLeish, who struggles to cope with the conflicting values within himself. A severe case of alcoholism and substance abuse result in a breakdown and a suicide attempt. This interruption of his life is a phase of temporal liminality. It is a space of being in-between – between life and death, between a conservative and a new approach to masculinity. This phase is a turning point in his life. The transgression of taboos enables him to find peace and stability after awaking from his near-death experience. I suggest that a Freudian reading is most insightful, as the three psychic forces argue for the dominant position in Jock's mind.

Similar to *Lanark*, *1982, Janine* is a subversive text. It is a text about emancipation and about power. Alasdair Gray's later novel especially questions traditionally accepted values, particularly gender models. The underlying, psychological structures which influence the characters' behaviour, uncover the discourses of power which restrict the individual development of the protagonist. While, in the early years after its publication in 1984, *1982, Janine* was partly read or misunderstood as celebrating misogyny and pornography, more recent literary criticism focuses on its powerful message suggesting exactly the opposite. Works such as Lehner (2009) or Schoene-Harwood (2000) discuss the novel's subversive implications by challenging traditional concepts of gender roles, the stereotypical Scottish 'hard man' that is, and an act of re-writing masculinity. Schoene-Harwood in particular, following Hélène Cixous's position in the theory of *écriture féminine*, speaks of a new male identity construction through writing. This new issue dealt with in Men's Studies, *écriture masculine*, is somewhat indebted to feminist thought. "Rather than intending to re-inscribe a categorical separation of men's writing from women's writing, it [*écriture masculine*] is employed to describe the anti-phallogocentric and non-patriarchal disposition that characterises (pro)-feminist men's

writing”, Schoene-Harwood states (Schoene-Harwood 2000: 102). He continues by arguing with Harry Brod that similarly to “‘enculturating’ women” (Brod 1987: 273-4), men’s studies aim at embodying men. *1982, Janine* is a subversive text as it undermines traditional notions of masculinity in general and in its representation in culture. The protagonist, Jock McLeish, undergoes a gradual development throughout the novel towards facing a more diverse, multifaceted notion of his self, new modes of self-expression, and an ability to act autonomously. I read his transgressive behaviour as a symptom of his fractured personality and the liminal phase as the birth of a change which functions as a turning-point in the novel.

My first hypothesis is that *1982, Janine* criticises the power discourses that dominate and determine the perception of traditional roles in society and the way these influence the individual’s self-conception. Secondly, transgression, which occurs mostly in Jock’s fantasy and not in his real-life behaviour, can be read as a point of release, sublimation, and a communicative tool. As a third hypothesis, the linchpin of the narration and its turning-point is his liminal near-death experience, his mental breakdown. It is the restoration of balance within the protagonist’s subconscious, and the confrontation with the limitations of his self which enable Jock to emancipate himself from the oppressive system. His failed suicide attempt structures the novel into two parts, triggering a change in his ability of self-expression and self-perception. The inherent split in text and protagonist gradually develops towards a more self-determined conception of the self and towards more autonomy, presenting the protagonist as a “*sujet en procès*”, to use Berthold Schoene-Harwood’s words (Schoene-Harwood 2000: 143). At the same time, however, the fracture is a motif which structures the novel itself. Jock is able to liberate himself from the power applied to him by embracing the multiplicity of a new form of male subjectivity. In this novel, a more positive approach to emancipation can be found than the one which is offered in *Lanark*. This is why I will start with looking at how the liminal phase of his delirium uncovers the internal forces of the three parts of his psyche and shows how they govern his life. After that I will return to a wider view on the novel, taking the fracture into account.

Transgressive behaviour can be detected widely in *1982, Janine*, but it only takes place in Jock's imaginary world, and not in his real life behaviour. His real life is less prominent in the novel; it steps behind his imaginary life. Taking his sleeping pills is the first physical transgression Jock performs, which changes the course of the action of the novel. By taking an overdose, Jock crosses the limit of life and death. His attempting to commit suicide fails due to his own willpower and the weakness of his stomach. This is in fact the turning-point of the novel, offering an insight into the conflicting forces of Jock's interior life for the first time. In my opinion, this passage strongly suggests a Freudian reading as it is interesting to observe how the underlying psychological structures work in the development of the narration. As Jock cannot maintain the suppressing force of self-control which ruled his previous life, he surrenders to his sleeping pills, which have, paradoxically, a cleansing effect on him instead of killing him. By capitulating to a state of not being able to control his thoughts and actions any more, the over-dominant effect of his super-ego is impaired, allowing the two other forces of his identity to speak up. Thus, the underlying forces determining Jock's life come to light, revealing their suppressive effects.

This passage, which is called the 'Ministry of Voices', is hourglass-shaped, symbolising that Jock's time is trickling away. This interim phase, which ends in two blank pages, is divided into three columns which are distinct content wise, and which take different amounts of typesetting space, depending on which 'voice' is louder. Even though the three 'voices' do not directly debate with each other, they exist alongside the other two, struggling for the argumentative upper hand, struggling to be heard. Relating to Sigmund Freud's structural model of psychoanalysis, the right-hand column resembles the *Es*, the Id, or the subconscious and locus of uncontrolled emotion and instinctual trends. 'Genetically' speaking, the id is the oldest part of the individual. It is the locus of lust (Freud 2013: 23), the origin of the oedipal complex (Freud 2013: 31) and the place where both the Eros and Thanatos, the desire for sexuality and death are housed (Freud 2013: 41). Both are strong forces in Jock; however their release is continually suppressed and forbidden by the overarching force of the super-ego. Consistently capitalised, this right-hand column expresses Jock's basal feelings and perceptions. Beginning with what seems like the

hammering noise in his head, and repeating rhyming rows of words to express a monotonous sound in his head, the voice expresses his basic feelings of being unwell (*J* 178). Jock goes through phases of feeling very hot, almost burning and suddenly very cold. His sighs of “ACH” (*J* 185) are the outcries of pain and can be read as the textualisation of tears on the page, going over into a cry for help, for his parents (*J* 185). He is torn inside, not only by his psychic condition, but also because of the physical pain this is causing. He is on the verge between life and death, as his body is showing the signs of utter emotional and thus also physical ruination. The id is the first aspect which can be observed in an individual. In Freud’s theory, it is the unconscious origin of every psychological drive. It is closely connected to and tamed by the ego.

The reason why the id – particularly the expression of pain and weakness – has a negative connotation in Jock’s life is his education. During his school years, when Mr. ‘Mad’ Hislop was his teacher, the schooling methods were rigid. Mistakes were punished to construct the boys in relation to a model of masculinity which did not allow errors and public displays of weakness. One key scene of his early education shows Jock’s failure to spell three words in front of his class. Each error was to be punished with a stroke of Hislop’s “famous Lochgelly”.

I should never have held out my hand. It allowed him to look dignified while he was hurting me. But nobody ever disobeyed Hislop. When he gave two strokes of the belt he used both hands and drew it from behind his shoulder so it was almost as sore as the legal maximum of six delivered with one hand from the elbow. I cried out at the first blow and at the second crouched almost double over my crippled hands. He said, ‘Now look me in the face!’ and his voice had that hysterical edge to it which is why we called him mad. I looked at him. I was not sobbing but I was weeping, the tears he despised were flowing down my cheeks. He said, ‘You are nothing but a big soft lassie. Get to your seat!’ (*J* 81-82)

This scene is representative of many instances of the school year with Mad Hislop and is especially insightful with regard to Jock’s further development. Firstly, it implies the demand for absolute subordination to an authority. Disobedience was unacceptable and punished even more. It is remarkable that only boys experience this form of violent education as they were intended to be broken and formed. However, this ‘lesson’ does not only teach him to be obedient, not to commit mistakes, but also the structure of a hierarchical society – school being a micro-form of society – and the results for those who do not conform the way it is expected of them. The

individual has to function like an instrument in the system, but if they do not, they have to expect the force of the authorities. In this case it is the boundless and disproportionate violence which the teacher is using against a helpless child. Tears and weeping, the signs of weakness that the injured and humiliated boy expresses, are not tolerated and rejected as feminine. Consequently, the boy reacts by enforcing his masculinity, suppressing his supposedly anti-masculine side. His pornographic fantasies and the behaviour of the ego part of his personality reflect this by envisioning him as dominant.

The middle column resembles the ego – “das *Ich*” – in Freud’s terminology. It is conscious and directly influenced by reality, the outside world (Freud 2013: 23). The id only perceives reality via the ego (Freud 2013: 39). While the width of this column varies significantly, shrinking at first as the other two voices become more dominant, and then re-gaining strength, it starts out by keeping up Jock’s pornographic fantasies (*J* 178). However, this facade of masculine imagination slowly crumbles to a point of insight and a final breakdown:

She gags Superb, unfastens, removes her dungarees and I must not imagine her nakedness the nakedness of women does not excite me it stuns dazzles light pours from their nakedness I have never been able to face it since I got rid of Denny so **ECLIPSE** Superb in black thighlength leather boots with seven-inch stiletto heels linked by a slender chain [...]. (*J* 179, typesetting in the original)

This stream-of-consciousness reveals his suppressed fears which Schoene-Harwood calls Jock’s “paranoid fear of impotence” (Schoene-Harwood 2000: 130). It is a “deep-seated horror of emasculation” (*J* 131). His suppressed guilty conscience and a lack of ability to build emotional proximity prevent Jock from gaining sexual satisfaction of any kind. By interrupting his stream of thoughts and his confession of weakness, Jock uses brutal fantasies to re-gain control over the situation and his masculine self-image. Jock does not derive “pleasure at all in stripping off and dressing up to make the show sexier” (*J* 181). Sadomasochistic games, this tight suit, do not only inhibit his freedom of movements, but also his individual freedom. It is in fact his way of life which resembles masochistic behaviour, enslaving himself in a system of restrictive discourses of social power. Social power in this context refers to gender expectations, the social obligations of work and family structure. By focusing on his memories of his education which had a limiting or canalising effect on the

pupils' personal development, his schooling through 'Mad' Hislop representing the restrictive and controlling establishment and the origin of his canon of thoughts, Jock quiets down his other two voices – only to break down as he realises that he cannot keep up his image of masculinity. In Jock's fragment of memory, hard man Mr Hislop, "set fire to a corner of the pound note, dropped it on the desktop, quenched the flame after a minute with the flat of his hand, places the charred fragment of paper ceremoniously in front of Agnes then went back to his own desk" (*J* 183). This demonstration of self-control and fearlessness contrasts with Jock's current state of break-down (*J* 184-5).

The super-ego, "das *Über-Ich*", develops on the basis of the id. The existence of lust, the oedipal complex, results in societal restriction of these forces due to the father's punishment of the son. This is the basis of the formulation of admonition and prohibitions which can be found as the duties of the super-ego (Freud 2013: 34):

The broad general outcome of the sexual phase dominated by the Oedipus complex may, therefore, be taken to be the forming of a precipitate in the ego, consisting of these two identifications in some way united with each other. This modification of the ego retains its special position; it confronts the other contents of the ego as an ego ideal or super-ego. (Freud 1923: 33)

The super-ego is the inheritor of the oedipal complex as it is formed as a result of the expression of the father's authority (Freud 2013: 36). The child fears and identifies himself with the father at the same time. Mr. Hislop takes the role of this father figure educating his pupils with chastisement and humiliation. It is the ego's instance of punishment as well as his moral conscience which censor Jock's thoughts (Freud 2013: 37). Furthermore, it can be read as the voice of reason in Jock's head, trying to coordinate rationally what happens to him as he is about to die. Jock's super-ego reflects on his situation, appeals to him and pleads with him to listen (*J* 178). This voice states that he does not represent any kind of societal, potentially restricting authority, but that it is someone trustworthy: "I am not mysterious am no king judge director inspector supervisor landlord general manager or any kind of master" (*J* 179). It speaks in favour and defence of Jock, desiring something to hold on to for the isolated man, to rescue him from his "parade of nullity; [his] truly annihilating declaration of barely articulated non being" (*J* 180) to give him "a new past" (*J* 182).

While the ego is on the verge of giving up, crying for help, the super-ego uses words of motivation to make Jock regain his strength, accept his talents and deficiencies:

Listen come alive for gods sake work as if you were in the early days of a better nation i can't take more from you are infecting me not by your vices but by your harsh wee virtues [...] let it come let it come let it come (*J* 185).

The super-ego's words almost tumble when talking insistently to the ego, melting fragments of thoughts together in this stream-of-consciousness. It appeals to the ego to accept both his vices and virtues to use them to regain his personal strength. The super-ego balances out the id's weaknesses, to make the ego find the right path. As Freud states, the super-ego has the same protective and rescuing function as the father in a person's childhood (Freud 2013: 64). This is vital for Jock to awake from his near-death status, to come alive by his own will-power, to rescue himself from his self-induced imprisonment and torture to invest hard work into a new and better nation. 'Living in the early days of a better nation' is a prominent theme in Gray's works. It indicates a phase of transformation (Rhind 2011b: 119), a rethinking of accepted values, however without giving a definite answer or future outlook to the present problems. In the conglomerate of Jock's internal, psychological forces, the super-ego balances out the personal terrors which are caused by the suppression of his instincts. He literally 'vomits out' the toxic, suicidal drugs, and finds himself cleansed. For his psychic balance, this instance is the origin of Jock's 'rebirth'. His grotesquely suffering body discharges the substances which bring him to the edge of his own life. To speak in a Bakhtinian sense, his almost or symbolic death "brings nothing to an end", his body is reborn into a new version of his former self, sublimated and made humble (Bakhtin 1984: 322).

In fact, Jock's super-ego, mirroring the educating and restricting voice of the father, is significantly shaped by the character of 'Mad' Hislop and the societal set of values he stands for. For a period of time, Jock had the suspicion that Mr Hislop might be his biological father (*J* 82). He both fears his teacher as well as identifies with Hislop's values whose humiliations moulds Jock's canon of rules and prohibitions. By internalising this image of masculinity and wish for subordination and obedience, Jock performs this act of identification with his school teacher. Identification with the father figure is also the key moment for the definition of the

super-ego in Freud's theory. According to Freud, it is the father who has the initial power to shape his child. He is the one setting up rules, the one against which categories of right and wrong are fixed. In *1982, Janine*, it is Mr. Hislop, apart from his potential fatherhood, taking this same role of defining rules. To take a step further and connect this with Schoene-Harwood's position, Freud states that the super-ego's influence is that strong as it implies the ego's fear of castration:

On the other hand, we can tell what is hidden behind the ego's dread of the super-ego, the fear of conscience. The superior being, which turned into the ego ideal, once threatened castration, and this dread of castration is probably the nucleus round which the subsequent fear of conscience has gathered; it is this dread that persists as the fear of conscience. (Freud 1923: 56)

This is the leading force in *1982, Janine*: Jock's fear of 'castration', which is nothing else than the fear of emasculation, makes him obey his overtly strict canon of rules of masculinity, which he cannot fulfill.

As an intermediate summary, the super-ego has to balance out the other two psychic voices, strengthening Jock's personality. In the context of the novel as a whole, however, the super-ego has a dominant position, restricting Jock's life by maintaining its harsh system of values which regulate and imprison the protagonist. The mechanisms of Jock's subconscious are vital for the discussion. Not only do they shed light on Jock's internal struggle with his fractured self, they also support the position of a gendered reading of the novel. The psychological development from an externally controlled individual towards self-reflexivity and towards a more tolerant understanding of himself, is the pivotal point. The borderline experience fulfills the processes which Arnold van Gennep described in his theory of a rite of passage. The liminal phase requires an internal dialogue of the liminar with himself; it requires him to question his ideals and own positions in society. Like Lanark, Jock experiences a change due to the process he undergoes in the liminal situation.

1982, Janine is split into two main parts and a liminal interim phase in which Jock experiences a state of subconscious chaos, which has a cathartic effect and which is the turning point in the novel. In fact, form and structure of the novel support the main theme of the personality split in the context of a national crisis. Jock's behaviour is a pathological one in the sense of Freud. The written text reflects

this neurotically-pathologic and imbalanced relation of the three psychic forces of the individual. Jock uses his overly brutal, pornographic fantasies as compensation for his fear of emasculation and failure to live up to his standard of masculinity. The subversive qualities of *1982, Janine* lie in Jock's emancipation from the dominant ideal of his gender roles, which are enforced upon him, as well as in his individual redefinition of those norms he aims to follow.

The first part of his narration presents Jock McLeish's solitary life which mainly takes place in his fantasy. Surveillance and control are leitmotifs in his life. While working as a supervisor for the installation of alarm systems he uses his imagination of brutal pornography as a refuge from reality, a compensation for the world with which he is unsatisfied. Even though the reader does not learn much about his adult life, it is clear that he wears two 'faces', his public working persona, and his private, secluded, sexually dominating persona. His "intrinsic self-and-otherness", to borrow Stefanie Lehner's words (Lehner 161), is designative and builds the core of his internal battle. His daytime job is the work with security installations; a job with some responsibility and the requirement to function precisely. "Security installation, an expanding field" (*J* 33), Jock explains, but has to admit to himself at a later stage that

I am not a man, I am an instrument. I am the instrument of a firm which installs instruments to protect the instruments of firms which produce meat cloth machines and whisky, instruments to feed, dress, move and stupefy us. [...] Instruments serving instruments are the whole show. (*J* 105)

The ironic situation is that Jock works with surveillance and control instruments, but lacks self-determination and control over the course of his own life. He himself is the instrument of the company for which he works. He builds surveillance instruments which secure a functioning process of production. Moreover, this is also indicative as he feels observed by the state, restricted and controlled. They are instruments of control for both the industry as well as the individual. I assume that to solve this conflict, he has created an alternative to experience control and recreate order: imaginary authorship. He writes and composes his transgressive sexual fantasies which read like manuscripts for pornographic movies. The narration slips in and out of these fantasies and explicitly point towards Jock's imaginatively writing and

reconstructing his personal porn. Jock lives on the verge of the imaginary, oscillating between a pornographic fantasy world and real life. In order to maintain control, he rewrites whichever passage of his porn script does not work for him and his obsession for dominating: “This is splendid. I have never before enjoyed such perfect control. [...] I have total security at last, security until death” (J 28). Here he hints at both the success of his porn script as well as the security measures, insurances and bills which guarantee him a safe place in society. At the same time, though, the failure of not being able to act out his scripts, devastates him, as he loses control:

Momma has caressed her into excitement, she needs me now and as I clasp and slip warmly into her I am entering Jane Russell the editor Janine Sontag Big Momma Helen forget her forget her and I am at home again. At home again. At home again. No. No. No. No I am not. I am not. I am alone. Alone. I am absolutely alone. Oh hell hell hell [...] HELL HELL HELL I lost control. I lost control. (J 55pp.)

This stream-of-consciousness portrays the imaginary writing process. However, as soon as he remembers his wounded spot, the loss of his wife Helen, the imagination ends. Jock is actuated by the fear of losing control. In this case, it is also the fear of admitting feelings of defeat and loss resulting from the failure of his marriage, of having to accept his loneliness, his wish for proximity and inability to connect with women. While his public persona seems to be in order and functioning, his private persona’s deep-dark urges rampage within him. This is ambivalent as his fantasies are a means of compensation, a tool to stop his fear of emasculation. Jock is perfectly conscious of this mechanism of escape he is performing. His fantasies are a retreat from reality, from his discontent with politics as well as his psychological fears: “*I can stop raving by retreating into fantasy (retreat)*” (J 311). In a way, he oscillates between the line of reality and fiction, moves in and out of his fantasy world to be able to endure his life. It is a mental retreat in the sense of Victor Turner’s notion of liminality in which only this exclusive phase is in focus. The value system transmitted in education, the ideas of ideal gender behaviour, the hard man versus the soft, caring, domestic female, are discourses which are used to govern the citizens as a means of ordering and structuring, to prevent irregularities. The individual male has to function as Jock does: He is an instrument of an instrument of society. Berthold Schoene-Harwood describes that Jock “represents an exploitative system based on a rigidly organised hierarchy of power that renders the individual male at

once a perpetrator and victim of systemic oppression” (Schoene-Harwood 131). According to Stefanie Lehner, Jock’s porn script is a means of regaining this lost power: “Jock seeks to offset his sense of emasculation and disempowerment by asserting patriarchal dominance in his pornographic projections.” (Lehner 158) She continues by saying that women, or rather ‘woman’, are a screen for man’s projections, to live out his fantasies and obsessions (Lehner 159). His fantasies, however, are not only projections of his desires and obsessions, they are not only means to apply his wish for mastery and control; they are highly ambivalent in themselves. They are also “symptomatic of [Jock’s] own violently repressed condition” (Schoene-Harwood 2000: 133), and thus show how he subjugates himself. In my opinion, this tension is distinctive in this context and both symptom of as well as reason for his fractured identity.

Jock’s pornographic fantasies have different qualities. Firstly, they are a surrogate for real sexual relationships. Secondly, and this is the decisive factor, pornography serves the performance of male domination and a compensation for the disappointments in his real life. His sexual fantasies are of a violent, partly sadomasochistic quality. The misogynist subordination and domination of women develops a more violent quality the weaker Jock feels so that he hyperbolises the power of male sexuality in his fantasies. He does not only objectify women, he reduces them to the mere abstraction of their bodies to a capital “Y”:

Singly each woman stands like an upsidedown capital Y [...] yes but do not try to get carried away. They have been standing a long time like this, they are very tired, yahooohay. Their sweatdamp white silk shirts (no bras) are unbuttoned but in different states. (*J* 116)

The ladies’ spread legs stand for their readiness to receive Jock’s abuse. In other words, by performing this transgressive behaviour in his fantasies, he creates his own power narrative. This might be seen as a compensation for his own suffering under the power narratives of his society. On the surface, transgression in this context implies the violation of a social norm, of individual freedom and equality. More important, however, is that on an abstract level, the aggravation of his transgressions is a logical development. According to Foucault’s theory of this concept, transgression implies that it can only exist in the short period of time when a limit is crossed. After that, a new limit is defined which can be transgressed anew.

The appearance of his abstracted women is imaginatively modified, tracing Jock's process of creating his 'script'. At the same time, Jock warns himself not to develop this idea too quickly, restricting his sexual arousal and excitement, postponing his climax. He humiliates the women in his sexual fantasies, controls their actions, makes them seem greedy and ruthlessly unfaithful. At some point, Jock makes his temporary and real sexual partner, Sontag, perform like the women in his fantasies for him:

Sontag became Janine for me and I should be grateful, we enacted a very jolly little rape together. I didn't hurt her, I don't hurt people but. I loved feeling ruthless and in charge for once. [...] I wish she had been more of a prostitute. I would have paid Sontag anything to enjoy again in the flesh that illusion of ABSOLUTE MASTERY which real life has never never never allowed me in any way whatsoever. Sontag became Janine for me, briefly, but she refused to become Superb. (*J* 43)

This passage is decisive in several ways. He directly expresses his dissatisfaction with the lack of control in his life. His fantasies are a medium to act out his urgent desire for 'absolute mastery'. The quality of these ideas is particularly disrespectful and brutal against women, which is why he speaks of 'rape'. Even though he does not actually hurt his sexual partner, this implies the violence of his imagination, the rejection of Sontag to perform the even worse things Superb, the name standing for 'Superbitch', has to do. Sontag does him a favour in this moment, giving him a slight illusion of what it is to be in control of one's masculinity. At the same time the reader learns that his transgressive behaviour is mainly located in his imagination, and less in his real-life actions. However, his transgression does not immediately lead anywhere. It is only a valve to get rid of his dark needs. In fact, the violence directed against women is thus symptomatic of his self-repression, his self-chastisement, the pain he feels, but rejects and his pathological state of mind.

Jock actively postpones his erection and climax, which is his method, but never allows himself sexual satisfaction. He often stops suddenly in the process of narrating (*J* 47) or re-writes passages of his porn-script which do not instantly fulfil his expectations ("etcetera. Start earlier." *J* 14). The fact that his fantasies are an escape route to flee hours of inactivity and emptiness often shines through: "In the gymnasium Big Momma stands with no no no no no shortcuts. Take the long way round. I may be awake for hours." (*J* 22). Similarly, this delay of climax in his script

is also a delay of his sexual climax. If his fantasies are stories of domination, of exploitation and applying power onto his actresses, they are also indicators of self-chastisement. As Schoene-Harwood puts it: his “permanently frustrated arousal and a traumatic fear of ultimate impotence shackle and enslave the individual” (Schoene-Harwood 2000: 132). Schoene-Harwood continues by explaining that only the erect male is the powerful and strong, the real male: “Also, since it is imperative to keep the monumentality of the phallus uncompromised by the subversive weakness of the individual flesh, a man’s body is considered perfect only as long as it is hard and erect.” (Schoene-Harwood 2000: 132) This is a constant psychological pressure from which Jock suffers. In his early education, Jock is told to un-learn his anti-male side, forbid tears and prevent showing a softness of character. It is Mr. Hislop’s mad voice of warning not to show weakness which haunts Jock’s life, the voice which can be read as defining the canon of values and prohibitions, becoming the super-ego of his psyche. This super-ego’s influence is overtly dominant, restricting a natural balance of the other two instances, resulting in Jock’s pathologic state of being. His conscious ego suffers under the hegemonic dictatorship of his ideal of masculinity, suppressing all uprising tendencies of the emotional side of his id. Berthold Schoene-Harwood emphasises the significance of this ambivalence of masculinity portrayed in the novel: “Unprecedented in its self-conscious, scrupulous honesty, *1982 Janine* represents a male author’s exposure of traditional masculinity as little more than delirious, automatised self-abuse.” (Schoene-Harwood 2000: 130) Jock’s systematic self-maltreatment and ignorance towards his individual, innermost needs results in the fracture and is laid bare when breaking down. This shows, with devastating effects on Jock, that this gender requirement is nothing but mere indoctrination to rule and govern people. Jock McLeish has two ‘faces’, two personas fight one another, trying to suppress the one which is not socially compatible. Stefanie Lehner formulates this phenomenon fittingly: “This certainly proves pertinent to Jock, who is split between the antonymic forces of trying to restore patriarchal dominance while bewailing his putatively ‘feminine’ marginalisation.” (Lehner 161) While attempting to live up to what is expected from a functioning, male, Scottish middle-class citizen, he suppresses his dark ‘other’, the one which is not desired, needed in society, the one which retreats into a world of pornographic fantasies, outside the mainstream of

the socially acceptable. This retreat is a social transgression, a self-induced seclusion from everyday life and an escape from reality. While many critics speak of Jock's 'feminine' side, or the 'feminisation' of his character in the course of this narration, I prefer to be more careful with this terminology in this context. His traditionally Scottish über-masculine self-expectations oppose his suppressed so-called feminine side as he shows traits stereotypically regarded as feminine at the end of the novel. In fact, I find it inappropriate to use this stereotypical terminology and tend to agree with Carole Jones who formulates the necessity to deal with this 'category crisis' in a way that a new definition of 'man' has to be formulated. She states that "we also have to acknowledge the burial of 'the man that was', the patriarchal ideal that forged the toxic material of hegemonic masculinity which for so long structured lives and relations." (Jones 2009: 28) Furthermore, she argues that it is a challenge "to re-imagine identities and relations outside of the hegemonic masculine models, in modes which do not reiterate their oppressive dominating impulse." (Jones 2009: 191).

It is indicative that Jock is saved by a female after the shocking experience of this most violent physical transgression, the suicide attempt. This moment of a pure internal insight, of a loss of control and the liberation of the three parts of the psychic apparatus of his personality, forms the trigger to accept the duality of his character which undergoes a development. Waking up in a hopeful attitude, he seems to have changed. Obviously, he lets go of the restricting and dominant force of his super-ego, and gives in to another person, a woman, rescuing him. It is a thrill-ride, taking him to an unknown destination. This proof of trust in someone else shows his personal liberation and the lightness of being connected to this, despite all obstacles and dangers:

I sat in an open sportscar speeding over the small wooden hills east of Glasgow between Twechar and Kilsyth. [...] The car, veering and twisting between the treetrunks, followed no track but went smoothly by going very fast. It skimmed through bracken-clumps and crossed ditches and hedges without the slightest jolt. I felt recklessly happy, recklessly sure of the driver's skill. She was driving dangerously but well, I know I would laugh aloud and still love her if the car crashed which happened. Bang! We struck a tree. (*J* 190-191)

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The second part of his narration is interrupted by a phase of liminal experience, which has a cathartic function for the development of Jock's character. Thus, the second part of *1982 Janine* narrates the reminiscing and reconstructing view on Jock's youth leading up to this present. While Jock still retreats into his sexist fantasies, doubts of the legitimacy of his former life, before his suicide attempt, begin to take root. It is a slow process of realising that his life is nothing but a mere tool – a process which takes place parallel to Janine's insight that she is abused for a fantasy. These passages are decisive as they indicate the process of emancipation which Jock and Janine undergo. Jock liberates himself. He quits his job and takes a new route in life:

[...] at which word the story must stop, because Janine has now been forced to see she is a character in it. *She realises it is her inescapable fate to be a character in a story by someone who dictates every one of her movements and emotions, someone she will never meet and cannot appeal to.* She is like most people, but not like me. I have been free for nearly ten whole minutes. For more than twenty-five years before these minutes I was a character in a script written by National Security. That script governed my main movements, and therefore my emotions. How could I learn to love my wife when for half the week I never even slept with her? I made myself completely predictable so that the firm could predict me. I stopped growing, stopped changing. I helped the firm grow, instead of me. (*J* 332-3, italicisation in the original)

Strong parallels between Janine and Jock can be identified. Janine suddenly realises that she is controlled by an external force, namely Jock, her author, which makes any form of self-determination impossible. She does not have power to control her actions as someone else “dictates” her. As a matter of fact, Jock realises that the story of Janine's life is actually his own, respectively the story of his former self. He himself is a tool, an instrument that contributes to the success of his company and never allowed himself to develop. His life is determined by a National Security script and he is not the author of his own story. Nevertheless, he manages to liberate himself from his working condition as well as the suppression of a role of masculinity which does not fit. He even manages to cry – “Ach tears” (337-340) – representing a symbolic release from all that was formerly suppressed; a liberation from the hegemonic rule of the gender role enforced upon him. Writing and being the author of his own story means determining his own fate; regaining control. This shows his conscious decision to take the responsibility for his life and actions, a self-determined emancipation from the forces suppressing him, as well as a new beginning. He actively dissociates from Janine, whose existence is and remains

determined. *1982, Janine* thus ends with a new beginning, a hopeful start, a powerful change.

I will stand on the platform an hour from now, briefcase in hand, a neater figure than most but not remarkable. I will have the poise of an acrobat about to step on to a high wire, of an actor about to take the stage in a wholly new play. Nobody will guess what I am going to do. I do not know it myself. But I will not do nothing. No, I will not do nothing. O Janine, my silly soul, come to me now. I will be gentle. I will be kind. (*J* 341)

By quitting his job, he distances himself from external surveillance and liberates himself from someone else's script for his life. His posture is proud and strong, having adopted the "poise of an acrobat", and not passive and crouched. His new beginning contains the risk of the unknown which has a particular thrill to it and which revives him. The thrill the equilibrist feels high up above his audience balancing on a wire, and the tension of an artist, not knowing how his play and performance will be received. He reimagines his new life in an artistic way. He has overcome his passivity as he "will not do nothing". Whether Janine *is* Jock, or whether she is simply a part of him, possibly a projection of his subconscious fears and desires, is difficult to determine. The parallel between the two characters suggests that Jock has subconsciously outsourced his feeling of inferiority and discontent. She seems to stand for his anti-male side. This new beginning indicates Jock's development of character, his subjectivity in process, which is why I concur with Schoene-Harwood's position that Jock is a *sujet en procès* (Schoene-Harwood 2000: 143). He argues with Kaja Silverman that, what many critics read as femininity in Jock's character, is the core of the subversive character of the novel: "to re-encounter femininity from within a male body is ... to live it no longer as disenfranchisement and subordination, but rather as a phallic divestiture, as a way of saying 'no' to power" (Silverman 1992: 389, in Schoene-Harwood 2000: 143). At the same time and in addition to that, the subversive quality is, furthermore, located in Jock's conscious and successful act of emancipation. Subversive potential arises from 'within' his personality, challenging accepted values of masculinity and his former way of life. He actively embraces divergence in the end, the 'otherness' of his character.

In *1982, Janine*, Scotland, its history and culture, is represented via a variety of women. Scotland is one "fat messy woman": rich, potentially feeding and nourishing

– and could thus fulfil all those motherly characteristics which are stereotypically ascribed to women.

I realised that Scotland was shaped like a fat messy woman with a surprisingly slender waist. [...] And the woman was rich! She had enough land to feed us all if we used her properly, and sealochs and pure rivers for fish-farming, and hills to grow timber on. [...] All we needed were new ideas and the confidence to make them work. (J 281)

Scotland has the potential to prosper, but it is also raped by its own people:

But if a country is not just a tract of land but a whole people then clearly Scotland has been fucked. I mean that word in the vulgar sense of *misused to give satisfaction of advantage to another*. Scotland has been fucked and I am one of the fuckers who fucked her and I REFUSE TO FEEL BITTER OR GUILTY ABOUT THIS. I am not a gigantically horrible fucker, I'm an ordinary fucker. (J 136-7)

1982, *Janine* is a novel about an individual's personal crisis in the context of an overarching national crisis. The fracture is, according to Jock's description, inherent in the self-understanding of an entire nation. What Jock expresses here is harsh self-criticism. He blames the Scots for the betrayal of their own country, and he blames everyone, including himself. Every individual has, in Jock's opinion, their own share in this process of abuse. The only one who is profiting is the neighbour in the south. The author of the university play in which Jock takes part in his youth comments on this critically, and quite fittingly:

'The curse of Scotland is these wee hard men. I used to blame the English for our mediocrity. I thought they had colonised us by sheer cunning. They aren't very cunning. They've got more confidence and money than we have, so they can afford to lean back and smile while our own wee hard men hammer Scotland down to the same dull level as themselves.' (J 288)

Jock blames Scotland for carelessly letting the kingdom "spend the North Sea oil revenues [to build] a fucking tunnel under the English Channel" (J 66), helping the profit of the English. Scotland has to carry the responsibility. Jock asks: "Who spread the story that the Scots are an INDEPENDENT people? [...] The truth is that we are a nation of arselickers, though we disguise it with surfaces: a surface of generous, openhanded manliness, a surface of dour practical integrity" (J 65). This is severe criticism of his fellow citizens. For a long period of time, Jock is certain, Scotland has experienced this abuse. Jock's imaginary women are often read as representatives of different historical stages of abuse. They are mastered, betrayed and controlled, suppressed and held as marionettes. They are objects of projection and suffer in this asymmetrical relationship. The surface of which Jock speaks is but

a mere hypocritical facade which harms the Scots more than their neighbours. He openly denounces the passivity and mindlessness of his fellow citizens in his narration. In an imaginary interview with the Prime Minister, Jock reflects on the state of the nation and the passivity of its inhabitants:

If you lobotomised half the nation it would carry on as usual. The politicians do our thinking for us. No they don't. 'But Prime Minister, for the last twenty years the interest rate/inflation/un-employment/homelessness/strikes/drunkenness/breakdown of social services/crime/death in police custody have been steadily increasing, how will you tackle this?' 'I am glad you asked me that, Michael. We can't change things overnight of course.' No the only people who need to think nowadays are in stock exchanges and the central committees of some eastern communist parties. (*J* 12)

Here, Scots, as they are portrayed in the novel, seem to give up their self-determination voluntarily, as well as their liberty of thought and their political participation. Even their elected representatives refuse to think, so that it is left to capitalism, people in stock exchanges, to govern the world. Gray's frequently declared critique of global capitalism is thus a dominant phenomenon of his 1984 novel. The remedy, to Jock's mind, could lie in socialism, which is hinted at in his statement.

If Jock is able to awake from his passivity and suppression, to liberate himself and change his perspective, to develop further and fulfil personal emancipation, this is a strong appeal for Scotland to be able to do so as well. Therefore, the message of the novel is in fact rather hopeful and positive in its perspective towards the future. Finally, what can be read as a warning sign for Jock, guiding his actions after his breakdown, counts for the development of Scotland as well; a friend once warned him: "Those who forget their own history are condemned to repeat it – as farce." (*J* 192)

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Alasdair Gray's novels tend to hyperbolise and polarise, but they do so to emphasise their underlying message. Perhaps this is why men in *1982*, *Janine* are presented as types, whereas women are objectified. Men in this novel stand for particular version of the Scottish man, giving a particular overview of the stereotypical Scot – they are interchangeable characters. Jock's father is a convinced, working-class Marxist (*J* 62), a miner with a soft and caring personality. He likes everything to be in order and

steady (*J* 170). In fact, he partly took the caring role of the mother who ran away with another man. “My father had no balls, he was worried and thoughtful all the time, no wonder I despised him. NO! I did not despise him, he was a good man. I loved him”, exclaims his son (*J* 138). Contrasting with Mr McLeish, there are the figures of Mr Hislop and Jock’s father-in-law, Mr Hume, who are stereotypical Scottish hard men. The latter is a hard-working, lower middle-class tobacconist with an air of “masculine authority” (*J* 298) and an agent of the Scottish Co-operative Insurance Society, “which was originally founded to give ordinary working people one of the benefits of capitalism” (*J* 298). He despises the pretentiousness of the idle rich. However, he as a lower middle-class man treats Jock’s father derogatorily, as he is his social inferior. A third type of man is represented through the actors of the posh English university theatre company. They represent the highly educated elite of the country, having a distanced, observing perspective, maintaining their countenance even as they realise that the Scottish play ridicules them harshly. They are able to reflect critically upon satire play, analyse its strengths and suggest acting methods to improve the acting, commenting, at the same time, on the political message. Thus the English actor, his name is interchangeable, addresses one of the Glaswegian actors:

You see the play mocks the kind of people *we* are, and mocks us very cleverly, but the impact would be even greater, we feel, if you slightly modify one or two details. [...] You are no longer a sympathetic moron, you have become *it, the thing, the establishment, old corruption*, there are hundreds of names for the power you have become. [...] Use an Anglo-Scots accent. The Scotch do change their accents when they get into positions of power. (*J* 247-8)

The character in the play changes from a “sympathetic moron” to a corrupt figure. The Scottish character becomes powerful and successful by accommodating to Englishness; also by ingratiating, by becoming part of the establishment.

Jock, however, has a different position. He can also be read as a type, but one which does not fit previously known categories. “I could be hundreds of men just now” (*J* 11), Jock states in the very beginning. He is an everyman. His name, John “Jock” McLeish, is an indicator of this. On being clothed for university, his father, who wants his son to thrive and have the best possible education, insists on buying him a seven-trouser-suit, a set of identical clothes for working days and Sundays (*J* 201). It is his opinion, that an employer values consistency in a man (*J* 202). Therefore, Jock is clothed to fit a type of person which is wanted in society, but it is

a society in which he does not fit. While terming himself a nihilist (*J* 152), it becomes clear that Jock actually stands for a new kind of Scot, whose subjectivity is destabilised due to the duality within his personality. He lives in a time of massive changes, an economic crisis agitating the nation, damaging stability and established ways of thinking, demanding a more flexible kind of man.

The essential question which has not been explicitly answered so far is to what extent transgressive behaviour is fulfilled in the novel, and which effect it has on Jock. Can transgressive behaviour offer a way out of his misery? Two major types of transgressions can be identified in *1982 Janine*; they are ubiquitous, but their respective influence varies strongly. On the one hand, transgressive fantasies determine the course of this novel. Jock imaginatively maltreats and objectifies the women of his desire, allowing no individual autonomy. The reason why these fantasies are that important for the course of his action is that they are symptomatic of his own trauma. By trying to live up to his ideal of masculinity, he has to forget his former self and transgress the border of what is emotionally and ethically acceptable. He has to dive into the depth of his dark desires, which is nothing but make believe, trying to convince himself of his masculinity and thus value for society. These fantasies torture him and bring him to the edge of what is psychically bearable for him. This confrontation with the limits of his 'masculinity' eventually leads to his breakdown. However, while these sexual and ethical transgressions exist mainly in his mind and he does not physically maltreat women; his image of women is that of inferiority. On the other hand, his suicide attempt, a physical transgression, has a more immediate effect on his behaviour. Forcefully planning to end his life, crossing the border of life and death is perhaps the ultimate transgression a person can perform. The meaning of this desperate act is most influential for the course of the novel and his personal development. By taking an overdose of sleeping pills, he is not really alive, but not quite dead, yet – he is in-between. This transgression causes a phase of liminality, a delirium, which is the fruitful beginning of a new phase. The negation of life leads to an interim phase in which he awakes by his own will to survive. Therefore, we can summarise that transgressive behaviour is both the

symptom of Jock's state of entrapment, a tool with which he attempts to redefine his masculinity, and also a trigger progressing his personal development.

Alasdair Gray wrote *Lanark* over a long period of time before it was published in 1981, and *1982, Janine* at the beginning of the 1980s, shortly after the failed referendum and the beginning of the Thatcher-Era. According to Christopher Harvie, who summarises the state of his country, "Scotland is threatened both by economic decline and by the centralising policies of a deeply inegalitarian government which treats the Scots as a minority to be ignored and systematically disadvantaged." (Harvie 76) Motifs of fragmentation, self-determination and emancipation are, in this particular historical context and in a Scottish novel, therefore even more powerful. Nevertheless, *Lanark* and *1982, Janine* have different conclusions to these issues. Both texts are deeply subversive, transgressive ones, in which self-determination is theoretically and partly possible, but the later novel tends to be more hopeful as to the realisation of the same.

In *Lanark*, self-determination and emancipation take place in the Intercalendrical Zone, the in-between phase in which they re-write Nastler's script. By escaping from the Institute, in which they would have been consumed at some point, and by starting a family, they alter their original scripts and thus change the entire outcome of Nastler's intentions. This finally results in anarchy; a movement in which their son Alexander, who was not intended by the fictional author, takes a major position. Even though both Lanark and Rima find a way out of their dystopian life, they only do so to find another version of the same. Lanark denies the external influence on him, fights the power which is applied to him, but his capacity is limited. He emancipates himself, at least partly, by escaping and by taking up the responsibility of self-determination.

Jock McLeish, on the other hand, can be regarded as very successful in his process of emancipation, liberation and gaining autonomy. For him it is an act of freeing himself from the oppression of the establishment's demands and expectations. He does so by gaining insight into his psyche as a result of a transgressive suicide attempt. In the end he embraces the 'otherness' in his character, the lack of formerly striven for uniformity and functionality. By finding this solution,

he takes a step into the direction of being able to cope with his fragmentation. His subjectivity is in process. He realises that it is up to him to formulate the script of his life. However, the question of the essence of his self will remain unanswered as, in the words of Craig, Jock's personality proves to be an exemplary model showing the "complexity of the self":

To explore and to celebrate the multiplicities of the self is to recognise the fact that the self is never self-contained – that the 'divided self' is not to be contrasted with the 'undivided self' but with the 'self-in-relation': the 'divided self' is precisely the product of failure of the dialectic of the 'self and other' rather than the outcome of the self's failure to maintain its autonomy and singularity. The inner otherness of Scottish culture – Highland and Lowland, Calvinist and Catholic – thus becomes the model of the complexity of the self rather than examples of its failure. (Craig 1999: 114)

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Several tropes which I have discussed in this chapter occur in other novels that I will focus upon in the following chapters. The particular forms of liminality interlink all novels addressed in my thesis. The trope of masculinity which occurs in *1982*, *Janine*, is the subject of my third chapter which focuses on how characters deal with gender identities through the medium of liminality. I will also look at other spatial forms of liminality in the fourth chapter, focusing on virtual and northern spaces as triggers for an internal development. Carnival is a prominent phenomenon which does not only play a major role in *Lanark*, but also in Banks' *The Wasp Factory* and Kennedy's *Paradise*. In the latter, the protagonist sympathises with circus people, artists and so-called 'freaks'. The moment of her nervous breakdown is also a moment which is dominated by the grotesque and by hyperbolic characters. In the following, I aim to demonstrate that, similar to Jock, the protagonists in A. L. Kennedy's novels have to negotiate the complexities of their respective selves.

2. Communicating the Self in A. L. Kennedy's *Paradise* (2004) and *So I am Glad* (1995)

Unafraid to tackle sexual violence, emotional pain abuse and loneliness, she writes in a style that is laconic and often darkly humorous. [...] Kennedy might have been expected to moderate her forceful style; instead she has created three powerful and demanding novels which compel the reader into confrontation with extremes. (Norquay 142)

For Glenda Norquay, dysfunctional and complex familial relationships are the core of A. L. Kennedy's early fiction. To formulate it very abstractly, we could state that Kennedy's characters are based on constructions of a lack. Both Hannah Luckraft in *Paradise* (2004), as well as M. Jennifer Wilson in *So I am Glad* (1995) are young women who deal with conflicting personal relationships. Liminality in *Paradise* has to be read with Turner and Szakolczai's notion of 'permanent liminality'. The protagonist Hannah repeatedly performs rituals of belonging to overcome a state of chaos and to find stability. For Szakolczai, permanent liminality represents the 'modern' condition, which, in my opinion, reveals that the loss of certainties impedes the process of building a stable personality in Hannah's case. For other forms of liminality it is necessary to have a look at the carnivalesque. Hannah sympathises with circus people and has a strong fascination for the grotesque. Unlike the carnivalesque *Lanark*, the term can be understood in a Bakhtinian way as a way of life which exists outside social norms, which defines its own rules and has the creative power to overturn hierarchies and structures. Liminality in *So I am Glad* has a very different quality. As a novel with strong gothic elements, it focuses on a liminal persona who exists as an in-between being and who is neither wholly human nor ghost. Savinien's liminal appearance can be understood with Turner's notion of the term with a focus on the liminal middle stage. It is impossible to clarify what and who Savinien *is*. He is and is not. Nonetheless, it is not Savinien who undergoes a significant process of change, but Jennifer. Due to having to deal with Savinien's liminality, she undergoes all three stages of a rite of passage, overcoming the limits of her former self in order to become a more active part of society. In both novels characters struggle to conform to particular norms. The novels are about complex interpersonal relationships and demonstrate the complicated relationship of the individual with his or her own self. While Hannah in *Paradise* aims to find stability

and order in her liminal behaviour, which she does not succeed to achieve, Jennifer's previous and personally restrictive order is destroyed so that the possibility of a change is given. Transgressing boundaries, in this case confronting her own inhibitions by engaging with her ghostly counterpart, has a cleansing function for her, which is somewhat similar to Jock's personal development in *1982, Janine*.

Hannah Luckraft is dependent on alcohol and searching for her paradise. M. Jennifer Wilson, a voice-over artist, attempts to be able to feel differentiated emotions after a traumatic event in her childhood which numbed her. Both of them lack the capacity to connect with their environment and to communicate their emotions, their thoughts and struggles. Kennedy's texts are about power and violence, about voice and communication, about isolation and a search for proximity. They deal with the exploration of personal limits and the difficulty to grasp the complexities of their individuality. Glenda Norquay summarises that

Exploration of what it means to be 'me' therefore takes Kennedy into the darkest of areas, examining boundaries of the self and how these are structured. So she is fascinated by the relationship between subjectivity and the body, as pain and pleasure define identity, and interested in the self as constructed through social and cultural contexts and through emotional relationships. (Norquay 145)

The protagonists of the two novels explore boundaries of the self via the abuse of alcohol and violent sexuality. I argue that their transgressive acts are symptoms of a feeling of entrapment, of not being able to locate the self in a social context. Their transgressions are means of searching for stability and a self-concept. While Hannah stagnates in the progress of the narration, Jennifer gains a different perspective on her subjectivity during her encounter with Savinien, the liminal character whose personality is only vaguely defined. The emotional relationship is only possible due to engaging with the complexity of his character. Jennifer seeks for ways to experience her *self*. To feel connected with herself. Norquay thus adds:

In *So I am Glad* Jennifer's inability to communicate leads her into extreme sadomasochistic relationships as a means of connecting with herself and with others through physical pain. (Norquay 148)

We can assume a similar approach to experiencing selfhood in *Paradise* in which alcohol is used to fulfil the same purpose. "Using violent sex as a means to avoid communication", is Glenda Norquay's conclusion to the issue of the performance of

violence (Norquay 147). I assume that transgressive behaviour can be read as a fruitless attempt to communicate in want of a more successful approach. It also serves to give stability and belonging. I hypothesise that both women use transgressive behaviour to make themselves believe that they are in control, even though neither of them are. Hannah's most indicative experience of attempting to gain control is when she abducts an old lady in a wheelchair. For Jennifer it is the situation when she seriously injures her partner during sadomasochistic intercourse as the result of having full power over him. I am convinced that these transgressive experiences do not help them restore power. Their transgression only reveals the depth of their problems. This does not solve but exacerbate the essential issue. And these issues are traumata and emotional isolation, being "lost in urban obscurity", as Philip Tew calls them (Tew 130).

My hypothesis is that liminality is the key to understanding the processes in the novels. However, we have to deal with different types of liminality with very different effects. I suggest that in the novel *Paradise*, Hannah is entrapped in a situation of permanent liminality. In the following, I will use Arpad Szokolczai's definition of permanent liminality, which is a more modern version of Victor Turner's term. Szokolczai emphasises that in real-world liminality, in contrast to tribal, small-scale liminality, the previous order, which was taken for granted does not apply anymore due to a significant change of circumstances. And, Szokolczai continues, as it cannot simply be re-established, the individual has to search for a new order (Szokolczai 2000: 218). The individual then has to repeat rituals of passage as they cannot escape this phase. This offers an explanation for Hannah's situation. She is trapped in a permanent condition of going through extremes. In *So I am Glad*, Jennifer's encounter with the liminal persona Savinien functions as a trigger for a personal development. Glenda Norquay suggests that

With Savinien, who both does and does not occupy a bodily space, there is a liberating tenderness in blurring the boundaries between their bodies. [...] In the fluidity of both his bodily and temporal boundaries he offers a possibility of 'completion' which is comforting and terrifying. (Norquay 148-149)

His liminal presence affects Jennifer's selfhood so that she manages to overcome personal blockade. The process both characters undergo is reflected in the way voice

is used. Voice and writing are ways to communicate and each of the texts shows different approaches to narration, to diary or letter writing and of self-communication. I will take a closer look on this phenomenon, bearing in mind that first-person narration can be deceptive and that narration can be manipulative. The particularly self-reflexive use of writing and speaking; written, narrated and articulated words are keys to understanding her novels. While Kennedy does allow this access, the reader has to be careful, as the narrator's perspective can be deceptive and manipulative. Moreover, Kennedy's texts are often polyphonic texts. Writing has two main functions in the novels: writing is constructing as well as ordering meaning, memories and perceptions. Secondly, writing means having a witness (Dunnigan 149), possibly even deceiving a witness. The aspect of voyeurism and a desire of exposure of intimate thoughts and feelings are side effects here. Therefore, there are two levels of understanding in this context. On the one hand, writing within the text and the characters' own exploration of limits, which contributes to forming a critical message; and on the other hand, the function of the form itself.

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A. L. Kennedy's novel *Paradise* is the narration of a woman, Hannah Luckraft, whose life is determined by her fractured identity, her quest for her personal paradise, and her liminal existence within but not as a part of middle-class society. Hannah has recently lost her position as a cardboard box merchant and is addicted to alcohol. In Robert Gardiner, himself an alcoholic and a trauma victim, she sees both escape and constancy.

My hypothesis is that Hannah is caught in a state of permanent liminality and that there are particular symptoms which illustrate this circumstance. However, she is unable to restore the order in her life (Szakolczai 2000: 218), does not manage to break this permanent cycle and is thus permanently stuck in this state. It is the use of the multiplicity of voice in Kennedy's texts which is a way of expressing the fragmentation of one's identity. Her transgressive behaviour, the substance abuse and the clumsy attempt to help an elderly lady in a wheelchair which ends in an accident, results from the helplessness of being stuck in liminality. I argue that they are attempts to escape the feeling of entrapment, to be in charge and have a positive impact on her own and other people's lives. *Paradise* exemplifies that the protagonist

suffers from the lack of a coherent self. Philip Tew's term 'ontological disorientation' seems to be fitting in this context (Tew 123). This becomes apparent in the protagonist's obviously fractured identity, which is mirrored in her perception and memories.

Thereafter, I will contrast Kennedy's *Paradise* with her earlier novel *So I am Glad*. We will deal with a different form of liminality, temporal and physical liminality in Savinien, as well as the traditional liminality with regard to Jennifer who undergoes a process of change and thus overcomes her in-betweenness. Voice and memory are vital topics in both novels as they give insight to the fractured personalities of the protagonists. They mirror the protagonists' complex characters. Kennedy's texts *Paradise* and *So I am Glad* experiment with multiple voices and perspectives, they reconstruct and deconstructs time and memory. The multifaceted perspective of both novels challenge the reader to distinguish between the supposed real and the effects on the protagonists' psyches. It is clear that while both novels deal with deviant protagonists, they take a different approach as to how to view the individual in society. While a development of the protagonist takes place in the latter, Hannah in *Paradise* is caught in a vicious circle. I aim to find out which mechanisms are at work when exploring the self in relation to the limit and how these mechanisms differ in the two texts. Both have different approaches, but the problem dealt with is a similar one: the characters suffer from the problem that they have a split position towards whether we, as human beings, are able to find out who we are. To use Monica Germanà's words: A. L. Kennedy raises "questions about contemporary paradigms of origin and identity construction" in contemporary western societies. (Germanà 2012: 162) Permanent liminality is a result of the insecurity of being in such a society. It interacts with a fragmented notion of identity, and the inability to take their place in the world. It is her psychic disposition and her perception which mainly does not match the expectations of a functioning member of society. M. Jennifer Wilson's occupation is a highly respectable one, but she is emotionally isolated from her surroundings. Kennedy directs the focus to the characters' struggles, their mental processes and their conflicts. Kennedy's novels question a binary centre/margin structure. They are about deviance and the resulting psychological implications for individuals within the majority of society.

Szakolczai refers to Victor Turner and develops his concept of permanent liminality further, rethinking it in contemporary terms. “Liminality becomes a permanent condition when any of the phases in this sequence becomes frozen, as if a film stopped at a particular frame. This can happen both with individuals undergoing an ‘initiation rite’ and with groups who are participating in a collective ritual, ‘a social drama’.” (Szakolczai 220) He continues to argue that being frozen in the second phase of a rite of passage can explain the situation in court culture. With the initiation rite of crowning, the ruler is permanently separated from the ruled. Thus, court life is permanently liminal life (Szakolczai 222). He adds that “Permanent performance, however, is not only reserved for courts. It is also possible for single individuals to act as if they were continuously performing an initiation ritual.” (Szakolczai 223) This means that the individual would have to prove permanently that they belong to a certain group. This is what Hannah does in *Paradise*. She identifies with a certain social group and permanently performs actions which associate her with alcoholics. However, being part of this group is an ambivalent relationship. It is also important to keep in mind that her transgressive consumption of alcohol is both the cause of her situation of being caught in this permanent liminality and also a symptom of a desire to gain autonomy and control over her life. Liminality and transgression always have to be thought together. To speak with Szakolczai: “In other words, liminal experiences always border on the transgressive.” (Szakolczai 194)

Hannah’s alcohol addiction shows that a process of simultaneous self-inclusion and self-exclusion takes place. Hannah counts herself as an alcoholic and identifies with this group partly. At the same time, she distances herself from the negative publicity alcoholics have. This ambivalent attitude demonstrates the conflicting forces within her and can be read as a notion pointing towards the split in her character stemming from a lack of personal security. Hannah cannot position herself within or outside the group of alcoholics.

I have studied the matter long and hard and have realised – *my condition does indeed mean that I’m ruined without drink and yet, equally, drink will save me from all of my ruinations: those it inspires and every single other trouble, large and small. It keeps me free.* That isn’t torment, it’s a gift. It is my one and perfect gift. (P 33, italicisation in the original)

This passage shows her deep-rooted addiction and almost symbiotic relationship with alcohol, the “adult and liquid relationships”, to use her words (*P* 163). She is aware of her illness and the resulting dependence on the drug: She is ‘ruined without a drink’ and cannot live without its influence. Alcohol is the cause for her personal ruin and leads to further negative consequences. Simultaneously, Hannah perceives her illness as a symbiotic part of herself. While causing her trouble, whisky temporarily soothes her pain and when it does it benumbs. In a way, these lines show how she has arranged herself with her alcoholism: she recognises the dependence, but emphasises its function as deceptive support at the same time, which veils her harmful reality. Similarly, it is a first indication of her ambivalent relationship with alcohol. Two passages in Hannah’s narration illustrate her addiction and identification with her illness significantly. On calling her brother for emergency help, Hannah finds herself in her flat awaiting Simon, having diminished all her alcohol reserves:

*Which meant that I had to drink all of it first, before he got there. He made me. [...] My Cointreau, my bison-grass vodka, my absinthe, my little ceramic leprechaun full of whiskey: I mean each of my friends and acquaintances, the ones that should welcome me home, my special treats and interior outings to see me through troublesome times [...]. I still had to sit on my kitchen floor and rush down the whole of my stock without having the time for a proper goodbye. That’s what my brother drove me to. (*P* 142, emphasis in the original)*

What is striking in the passage is, firstly, her identification with alcoholism and, secondly, the personification of her bottles of alcohol. She feels forced to consume alcohol due to the expectations of her immediate social surroundings. In other words, as she does not belong to the social group of non-addicts, she accommodates to her situation, to her addiction, to a position with which she feels comfortable as it is common to her. While hiding her addiction to evoke an impression of being free from any guilt, from not having consumed alcohol that is, she eliminates her liquor reserves by drinking them to ‘protect’ them from elimination by her brother who would have disposed of them. The personification of alcohol reveals her isolation and highlights that the drug is a surrogate for friendship. She further claims that her addiction is time-consuming:

*And, I mean, my life is nowhere near as simple as it may appear. Being me is a job – is labour so time-consuming and expensive that I have to *get* drink and that isn’t something people give away and then there’s the drink that I need because I *have* drunk and the other drink I have to keep around because, *sooner or later, I will drink it*. That’s a full-time*

occupation: that's like being a miner, or a nurse. I involve constant work. (*P* 84, emphasis in the original)

She identifies herself with her 'profession' as a drinker, but is she unable to tell who Hannah Luckraft really *is*: "Hannah Luckraft = . (Due to the enforced absence of alcohol.)" (*P* 280, typesetting in the original). Without alcohol she is just a blank space. The identification with alcohol and alcoholics is a mechanism of ingroup-building, of not being alone in this situation. Alcohol is glorified as superior, as pure. She adopts the liquid's quality claiming to be refined, filtered, and pure. "Me? – I'm completely simplified, I am distilled. Washed down to nothing, I remain exactly who I am, no matter where or when. I understand my fundamental sources, my provenance" (*P* 19). What happens in this context is that she is presenting herself as someone she would like to be, "understanding" herself. Alcohol is the guiding phenomenon in her life, building the source of reference with and against which she compares herself. One can almost speak of Hannah positioning and identifying herself in relation to alcohol, and not in relation to other people, in the sense of Macmurray and Laing who focus on the relation of one person to another. Furthermore, she foreshadows her personal movement throughout the novel. Hannah's character does not show any development, only movement through time and space. It is a vicious circle, or rather, a vicious spiral moving downward. This short passage shows that she has reduced herself and her needs to the basic desire to and dependence on drinking. Hannah melts the whisky's characteristics and her own character traits, creating a symbiosis, dependence on and identification with alcohol. She engages with alcohol as if to prove that they belong together. I read this as a ritualistic performance of enforcing this relationship. She repeatedly emphasises this with phrases such as: "As drinkers, we anticipate the worst, this is our self-defence." (*P* 211)

A second situation which supports this view of ritualistically proving her connection is pretence: she stylises herself as something or someone she is not; in a telling situation this is the figure of the Samaritan. The situation in which she "threw a woman from a wheelchair to save [herself] some temporary stress" (*P* 84) shows the ambivalent quality of her addiction. She realises the fallacy of this pretended role as it suddenly gets out of her control. On meeting an elderly lady in a wheelchair,

pushing herself backward with one foot, Hannah offers help, which the lady gladly accepts and enjoys: “[...] so why not behave as anyone decent would” (*P* 68), Hannah wonders. She enjoys her role as someone doing a charitable act, stylises herself as a “Samaritan” (*P* 69), experiencing a brief moment of gladness and pride, however, realising that her “role was not a comfortable fit” (*P* 70). She gradually loses self-confidence in this situation in which she has the responsibility for a vulnerable person and the mistrusting voice of the alcoholic within her gets the upper hand.

Because then I clearly understood what a lovely, put-upon, old lady she was and what a jolly time she was having. And because then I also clearly understood how terrible it was going to be when I didn't do this properly and dropped her. I was going to drop her. I could tell. I hadn't a clue what I was doing. I had no advice. There was no way things were going to turn out well here. The lady, she was terribly helpless and fragile and wonderful and no human person like that could be left to rely on somebody like me. [...] My grip was cooling, sliding, on the handles of the chair and the accident was coming, but I couldn't wait for it. I couldn't bear that it wasn't here yet. I was getting upset. So I did what I had to do and opened my hands and the chair kicked forward, bounced, jolted down the second step, while the woman's good hand darted up, trying to ward off the coming sadness. (*P* 71).

This passage is significant and telling in several ways. She surrenders herself to the force of alcoholism which she holds responsible for determining her actions, as she did what she allegedly had to do. The temporary responsibility she has for the elderly lady causes her discomfort, a feeling of incapability to protect the other. Alcoholism is her excuse, but also the reason for her feeling of inferiority. This is why she anticipates the tragic event. Clearly, Hannah has difficulty with human interactions and acts awkwardly in a harmless and simple situation in which she acts in a selfless way. She needs guidance to tell her what to do. The split in her character becomes apparent in her moral position and her behaviour. She is aware of the danger which she represents in relation to others, particularly this fragile elderly lady, but feels discouraged and determined by her addiction. However, she then does not only refuse to take the responsibility for her actions, she also excuses her action with this determination:

She was unable to accuse, or even identify, me. So I allowed myself to be the passer-by who'd found her and then no one in particular, standing for a while and then a stranger who walked away as an ambulance siren echoed in. (*P* 72)

This scene strongly shows her internal struggle. She fights the dominant voice of alcohol which makes her commit this deed hurting the immobile lady.

Her alcoholism raises the issue of ‘gendered drinking’: her liminality is particularly present with regard to her role as a woman in society. The female with whom she contrasts the most is her sister-in-law, Gillian, who Hannah characterises as her binary opposite: Gillian is presented as conformist and middle-class, her house immaculately clean in contrast to Hannah’s affinity to filth. In Hannah’s perspective, Gillian treats her derogatorily, as a person without capability to control her life. As Hannah’s counter-figure Gillian presents a different type of woman, who occupies a conventional female role. Hannah summarises this impression herself:

They always do this: your mother, your father, your brother, your worried partner: whoever it is doesn’t matter, in the end they’ll all develop the same symptoms. They will talk about you in the third person while you are there, as if you were an idiot, or a dog. They will eliminate your booze, as if you have no discipline. They will put you somewhere clean and unfamiliar, as if you have been living in a cave. They will take away your clothes and your belongings, as if you were a criminal, and they will lock you in. As if you were a werewolf, a monster, they will lock you in. (P 143)

She feels like a victim in her position as a beneficiary in her brother’s home, as if she was incapacitated, objectified. Her perspective is of course not self-critical and polarised. She is aware of diverging from the conventional and takes a defensive position. This is a projection of this consciousness of inferiority, of guilt and dependence, of not being part of the majority, of diverging morally from those who are. She is both aware of her deviance and vulnerability. She perceives herself as a burden to her family, a “private shame” (P 285):

And he’s repeating about the money – the cost you didn’t ask them all to pay – and the reasons why they can’t afford it, the coming baby and its needs, the toll of the communal sacrifice. [...] such a monstrous sum spent and with nothing to show, because they have laid down a kind of bet on you, [...] the five of them sending you off to win their bet and recover yourself, grow respectable and better until everyone can pretend that’s the way you were made. (P 160)

As a matter of fact, her alcohol abuse is also a gender issue with which Hannah is confronted. Julie Scanlon speaks of a “gendering of drinking patterns” (Scanlon 149) which is at work in *Paradise*. Hannah explains that “female drinking is a sin” (P 184). She understands female drinking as an act of secretly mixing hard liquor with her tea, hiding bottles, drinking alone to stay unseen. This, she states, would lead to isolation and a lonely death. The other alternative of female drinking, which she strictly despises, is acting like stereotypical young and drunk females: “tarting around in miniskirts and squealing, sucking up bubble gum-flavoured vodka and flashing tits at cars” (P 184). On arriving in Simon’s house, Hannah is fed by her

brother and speaks in what she herself describes as an “unfeminine” way (*P* 139). When Judith Butler famously states that “culture so readily punishes or marginalizes those who fail to perform the illusion of gender essentialism” (Butler 2006: 68), this can be applied to a reading of Hannah’s character in *Paradise*. Scanlon adds that alcoholism can be seen as the “punishment [...] for not being like these other women” (Scanlon 151), a punishment or, in more neutral terms, the devastating consequence of being excluded as “an alternative kind of woman” (Scanlon 151). The performativity of roles, such as “the Samaritan”, seems to be a characteristic indicating her repeated need to justify her status – the transgressive one that gives her a certain form of stability. In Monica Germanà’s words, *Paradise* deals with “problematic notions of belonging, through interrogation of the boundaries separating private/public spaces, but also of centre/margins dichotomies” (Germanà 2012: 153). She feels lost and misunderstood, as a daughter and as a woman (*P* 220), which is one reason for retreating into alleged protection of alcoholism.

Hannah’s life is also physically and locally liminal in many respects. Firstly, her stay in the rehabilitation clinic is the acme of social exclusion. She is positioned both inside and outside society. All of her fellow patients have experienced a similar form of social exclusion due to substance abuse and their own dysfunctional position in society. She experiences society as a “particularly dissonant place” (Scanlon 140). This is why Hannah feels her liminal existence more closely connected to social outcasts such as circus people, clowns and freaks (*P* 215).

In my circus, the band always plays: banjos and flat trumpets, out-of-kilter violins, twisted accordions, steam organs and bad, unresonant drums: they grind out in limping waltz time and make air giddy, gamy with sweat and topple me into my own people. They have parts that are missing, or parts that are extra in sly and unspeakable ways. They lack propriety, love to exhibit, often practice after-hours. They have marvellous, shocking skills which are not useful anywhere, not anywhere without an audience. Their pasts and their futures are sheened with misfortunes, with an enforced appetite for pain. Their damp and close and everlasting present stiffens with blood on demand. They can read strangers, curse them, work them into helplessness. They are freaks. They are monsters. They are my natural family. (*P* 215)

This is the second aspect which emphasises the circus people’s divergent existences. Their concept of aesthetics is different from the mainstream as their music is a bit off beat. She describes their physical appearance as slightly appalling; they “lack propriety” and live salaciously. By doing so, they diverge from the majority and create their own microcosm within society with their own rules and own standards. It

is a carnivalesque sub-society in the classical sense of Mikhail Bakhtin. Hannah feels attracted to those who are ‘other’, who do not conform and whose sly personalities differ from those of the spectators. Just as their music is limping, their lives are marked by misfortunes, failures and accidents. Whether the misfortunes Hannah mentions are personal tragedies or failures within society is not clear, but both are possible. Early on in her childhood, Hannah develops a fascination and sympathy for circus people. She identifies with circus people and their way of life, instead of the one her family leads. Hannah reveals three aspects which parallel with the way she perceives her personal situation. Circus people are not ‘useful’ in everyday life, except for the time they entertain. They are presented as just as dysfunctional for society as Hannah feels her own position to be. They feel an “appetite for pain”, live on the edge of the physically possible when performing their stunts hungry for a challenge. Hannah also challenges her physical limits and needs the experience of extremes. Hannah is captivated by the circus people’s power to ‘curse’ others. While this can be read in a superstitious way, as the fascination has a great impact on the protagonist, it is more probable that it indicates the power of imagination which fascinates, horrifies and haunts the spectators by its violence or curiosity. Artists seem dangerous and mysterious due to their deviance, which is why she calls them monsters and freaks. Their statuses are liminal as they live outside the majority of the society; create their own rules, their own temporal perception, and their own value systems. Carnival, in its folk traditional sense, challenges the dominant world view and the present power structures, questioning their authority and searching for an alternative. It is a means of criticising those who are in power and turn social structures upside-down – at least for a certain period of time. The circus is a permanent version of a carnivalesque way of life.

Hannah experiences a severe form of spatial liminality during her final journey on the so-called “freak train”, which can be read as a delusional exaggeration of the occurrences. She starts her journey in disguise under the name of another passenger whose ticket she received. She enters the train and experiences a phase of withdrawal affects. Alcohol seems to have been a method of escapism so that she is shocked by her own perceptions.

I begin to wonder if this is the next phase of my sobriety – the onset of aimless fear. Or perhaps I am simply acknowledging the whole lifetime of terrors I’ve ignored [...] Reality –

there's nothing but horror in that. *Except that this is something else. A personal problem. I can feel it stroking the back of my hair. This is for me. [...]* Whenever I glance towards anyone, they turn away, they shield their eyes, break off their conversations [...] *Which is insane. A little paranoia is healthy, but this is insane.* (P 310, italicisation in the original)

Her environment appears harmful and threatening, as if a conspiracy was happening. While she experiences horrible and grotesque moments on the long-distance train, she imagines herself to be on a freak-show train where everyone is insane except her, however being aware of a possibility of herself being the cause for this impression:

Because I am not going mad. This isn't something I would do. So the train is mad. I slip round behind the bar, looking for coffee. But thinking a whole train is mad – that's mad in itself. A circus train, a freak train – that doesn't happen. I find the flask, but it's empty. I have been ill and stressed and I am tired. Things like this can make your thinking cloudy. (P 325, italicisation in the original)

Her steward behaves funnily (P 324), passengers creep around the train stalking others (P 312). Finally, she cannot distinguish anymore whether she has fallen asleep or whether she is experiencing this madness, which indicates that she is in a kind of delirium:

I am pushed into the galley, his touch on my shoulders fleeting, cool, before I am there and the door is shut behind me and, kneeling in the gangway, is what must be the manatee mother. Stripped, she is even larger, almost inhuman. [...] The splayed mound of her arse faces the doorway, reddened, purpled with blows, individual handprints visible where the bruising is less severe and on she goes with her tiny consents, her mindless repetition, 'Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.' Robert isn't here. I am sure that I'm dreaming, very sure, but now I do need Robert here. He could make this a good dream. [...] (P 331)

When Robert finally enters, he does not, as Hannah hopes, rescue her, but rape and maltreat the so-called manatee mother. Hannah collapses and is transported into the clinic where she awakes after two weeks of delirium (P 338). Having challenged the limits of what is physically bearable, Hannah has transgressed the limit of how much alcohol her body can cope with and has to experience the direct consequences of temporary organ failure. However, she does not and cannot escape this vicious circle. Hannah is entrapped in the bounds of her addiction without being able to free herself from this vicious circle, this situation of being permanently caught in a phase of liminality. Excessive consumption of alcohol is a symptom of Hannah's bias and fragmentation and does not offer a way out, a mechanism to escape the vicious circle of her situation.

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The use of voice and narrative techniques mirrors the entrapment in the permanent liminal phase and shows the attempts to locate herself and to justify her actions.

Hannah takes a lot of narrative space to introduce and characterise herself in the first chapter, presenting herself as a loner in a desolate, cheap hotel room. She places herself in relation to her environment and it is clear that she has a detached notion of social relationships. She is isolated and appears lost in her own dimensions. She is aware of her alcoholism and has an ambivalent relationship to this illness. Often, it seems, does she justify her unconventional, excluded way of life, her non-conformity, trying to explain her difference indirectly: “Most people exist through what they do, they have lost the clarity that once permitted them to *be*” (P 19, emphasis in the original). What is most striking about the novel is the multiplicity of voice, the use of a regular narrating voice and the drinking voice. This first-person or rather ambivalent-person narration is highly unreliable, which can be identified in the following passage, Hannah starts to wonder about who really cares for alcoholics and comes to the conclusion that God must actually prefer them to all other people which she explains in the following way:

Occasionally, I'll admit, a drinker will meet an unpleasant end, but if logic and justice had their way, this would happen constantly. Murder shouldn't be the exception, it should be the rule. We do terrible things – I don't personally – but some of us are unthinkable, grotesque and punishment is the least that we deserve. Still, when we drink and act as the structure of our characters leads us to, we go almost universally unscathed. (P 37)

Her self-perception and self-presentation do not concur here, presenting her as manipulative and deceptive. It almost sounds like a personal justification of her behaviour in front of a reading audience. On the one hand, she includes herself in the group of drinkers, but excludes herself immediately when it comes to the crimes alcoholics commit: “We do terrible things – I don't personally”. She down-plays criminal acts committed under the influence of alcohol and ‘admits’ faults. On the other hand, Hannah excuses the drinkers from their guilt by stating that their actions are determined by their alcohol induced characters.

In a state of drunkenness she calls her brother Simon for help. “Simon, he's always there for me, truly. Whatever happens, he cares.” (P 136), she convinces herself in this situation of collapse. However her ‘drinking voice’ reveals her other personality facet:

Fooled him. Anything to get him here – that's it, isn't it? Any emotion you can fake. Well, isn't it? You fooled him and you weren't found out. Your own brother. Anything to get your way. Why couldn't you have saved him all this trouble? Why couldn't you have died? (P 136, italicisation in the original).

This interior dialogue is telling when it comes to the novel's use of polyphony. It is a constant stylistic and narrative device to use italicisation to indicate a different tone or quality of message. Clearly, however, both passages in regular and italicised typeface are narrated by Hannah Luckraft. They are significant as they mirror the narrator's conflicting inner forces. While passages in regular typeface represent the standard narrative voice, the italicised ones represent her 'drinking voice', the voice coming from her "Id", to use Sigmund Freud's terminology. It is the voice of her conscience, which comments on the narrated actions cynically, almost self-destructively. When Victor Sage states that, "Kennedy's texts are polyphonic. Many textualised voices act out the different central dramas of masochism which her characters endure or perpetrate" (Sage 69). He also takes up the important issue of different conflicts, here centred on masochism, being dealt with in the novels. The variation in voice reads like an internal dialogue of Hannah with a different part of herself. This double is an expression of self-division. Voice or the multiplicity of voices, thoughts and character traits indicates that she is both one and the other. It is a way of expressing the pain of fragmentation. This is mirrored in the form of a deconstruction and reconstruction of the narration and memories. The two voices indicate her inner struggle and challenge the reader to reconstruct meaning which is presented as the truth by the unreliable first-person narrator.

Her two perspectives are important to understand how her character functions. The inherent split of her character is mirrored in the fragmentation of the narration, the narrative perspective, as well as the construction of narrated memories. The tension and complicatedness of *Paradise* is significantly influenced by the analepses and prolepses which are found throughout the novel. Memory, just as the fragments of the novel, is constructed – sometimes even in a way that she cannot retrace how remembering takes place, which memories reproduce the truth, and which memories are newly produced by her mind: "I can remember both endings [of an anecdote], which is tricky" (*P* 11). David Borthwick summarises this tendency quite tellingly: "[...] the flux of memory and associated emotion is charted in a series of interconnected vignettes – deliberately disorienting in their confused order and

detail – from which the reader must reconstruct the characters’ identities” (Borthwick 265).

The issue of voice is particularly relevant in *Paradise*; however, it has a slightly different quality as in *So I am Glad*. In the older novel, Jennifer lends her voice to other individuals as she is a voice-over artist, but does not express herself. While she lacks the ability to express herself with a voice of her own, she ‘owns’ Savinien’s voice in the end: “What do I have instead of the calm. A voice” (SIAG 280). This signifies the emotional bond between the two and, in Lacanian terms, constitutes an ‘other’ against which she recognises herself. Hannah Luckraft, on the other hand, is just as isolated but her ‘other’ is inappropriate to constitute or define a self. The only two entities with whom she feels comfortable and can build a bond are Robert and alcohol. The former is an alcoholic himself and thus just as unstable as herself; the latter is filling this gap, but leading the consumer on an inescapable track into self-destruction. In order to fill and overcome the inherent lack in a human’s existence, it is in need of an ‘other’. Voice in *Paradise* is less dominated by the notion of voicelessness, as it is the case in the earlier novel, but rather by its multiplicity of voices, representing Hannah’s polyvalent personality, her fractured self, which struggles with conflicting internal forces. It is the graphic representation of the novel’s typesetting, which illustrates her fragmentation as well as her inner conflict and which results in an inescapable stagnation within her liminal status. Scanlon states that “Kennedy destabilizes the notion of a unifying voice. The narrator displays a split, polyvocal subjectivity” (Scanlon 143). This suggests a dialogue between the conflicting forces within Hannah. The voices are the narrating voice, trying to deceive the reader by a manipulating narrative style and an internal voice breaking through the narration with emotions and thoughts driven by experiences as an alcoholic. This happens throughout the novel, particularly when she speaks superficially and distanced about her habits and her ‘drinking voice’ breaks through: “*Filth. I need filth. That’s the only way to swing this, thinking of filth: nothing else is going to get me through. Because sometimes there is nothing else: you have no resources and your personal situation is less than ideal [...]*” (P 101, italicisation in the original). Bearing this fragmentation in mind, Julie Scanlon’s position, as convincing as her later argument is, remains to be questioned critically:

However, the [novel] exhibit[s] a dissonance with postmodern trajectories in that [the protagonist is] represented as searching for some true self through [her] disparate [illness]. This indicates an underlying belief in an ideal identity, yet a concomitant need to escape from their respective environments in order to attain this, to the point of near self-destruction. (Scanlon 139)

Certainly Hannah's sense of dislocation is dominant. Hannah perceives that things happen to her as a consequence of her alcohol abuse, she is passive and does not seem to act in a self-determined way. In her perception, something is done to her, which indicates an estrangement from a part of herself. Her sense of not belonging to the mainstream society, of not conforming to gender expectations, leads her to the deceptive escape route of alcoholism. She is conscious of her actions; however, she is, to a certain degree, influenced by her addiction. She is searching for her 'paradise', for salvation and for a way of being rescued from her present situation in life. Nevertheless, it becomes clear that this is only an illusion, that she wanders aimlessly hoping to be found and rescued. We can conclude that these situations mirror the ambivalent forces she fights, typographically indicated by use of different voices and italicisation. While Hannah yearns for safety and her 'paradise', she needs the security of her family's support. At the same time, she rejects the conformity the mainstream society demands of her to become a part of that group. For Hannah, 'being between' means being stuck in a state of non-belonging. Not being able to define herself, not being able to find a way out. The question arises whether transgressive behaviour can in fact present an escape route to liberate herself from this state of liminality, or whether this is a fallacy.

The act of writing, the tactical use of words and the play with genre conventions has a particularly important function in Kennedy's *Paradise*. Writing means having a witness. Writing can be manipulation, an emotional exorcism as well as a self-referential tool (cf. Dunnigan 147-149). Victor Sage hints at the importance of voice and writing in Kennedy's novels. Writing is a form of being seen and heard (Sage 69). Hannah exposes herself and her deepest, most intimate emotional abysses to a stranger, the reader of her narration. Self-exposure and emotional exhibitionism goes hand-in-hand with Hannah enforcing the reader to adopt a voyeuristic perspective onto her life, expecting the reader to witness her thoughts, deeds and conflicts. The wish to be seen takes up an abnormal quality, when she demands a voyeur who is forced to follow her transgressions:

I was fucking an obnoxious married man in one [hotel room] last night. Don't know what got into me – that is, I'm sure I can guess, but I don't want to. Yes, indeedy [sic], fucking and sucking (I like my degradations to rhyme) with a white-bellied, spineless, wispy-haired freak – that being the sort of lifestyle choice it seems I was born to make. (P 199, italicisation in the original)

She frequently forces the reader to witness her transgressive behaviour. While the reasons for this have a particular motivation, at which she hints, the reasons for revealing these to the readers show her wish to receive attention, to provoke a reaction. Revealing this also aims at evoking empathy for her state of emotional distress which leads her to go beyond the boundaries of what seems socially acceptable, which is implicit in this quote.

She uses her writing as a means of manipulating her readers and also to deceive herself, to make herself believe the stories she recreates. Manipulating, falsifying, justifying; or rather: writing as recreating one's life-story. Hannah's narration is "non-linear but associative" (Dunnigan 146), puzzling memories to a larger composition; reconstructing fragments of experiences, thoughts and recollections. The fragments of memories are starting points for explanations of her present state, of current thoughts and of justifications for a certain action. While she jumps back into her childhood, remembering scenes of a circus visit which she connects with her present state of feeling isolated and outcast, she also counts more recent memories as important. When Hannah starts reminiscing about a photograph which has been taken a while ago and which she keeps in her purse, this indicates the conservation of a memory and a particular feeling on paper, leading Hannah to a free association of thoughts.

I am in a photograph. I'm aware both of the camera and of the new friends that I have to either side and I am keeping myself in check. But I am also smiling. [...] Actually, I'm in quite a lot of photographs, but this is the only one I carry with me. It shows the end of a pre-wedding dinner for somebody's brother, the brother of a distant friend, more an acquaintance. [...] The smiles are why I keep the picture. They are evidence. You see there are many types of smile. [...] But there is a special smile also, one that can be neither prepared, nor simulated, and which convinces me completely of God's essential benevolence: it has the effect of unquestioning, undiluted love and is entirely beautiful. (P 35-36)

This segment reminds her of a time when she was still part of society and not yet under the complete determination of alcoholism. She uses her narrating power to put these fragments into the correct light, creating incongruence between what is narrated as real and what is alluded to as real in the text making the reader guess

which proceedings are more realistic. This is an attempt of self-justification, of wanting to hide this irregularity in Hannah's existence and its consequences. She attempts to persuade the reader to stand by 'her side'. At the same time, it appears as a forceful attempt not to be ignored and to find a witness for her struggles. As the narration has a form of a confession and almost a diary into which she fixates her thoughts, the reader follows what she exposes to him or her and is left to judge critically. An insightful example occurs in the rehabilitation clinic: she creates an apology to explain her reason to quit her treatment. She allegedly has to free herself, as the doctors intend to brainwash her. In fact, it is impossible for her to be cured in this clinic. She would need a drink to endure that, which is her reason to flee:

Not that I'm an idiot – I can calculate the moral costs involved. If there were any other path that I could take, I would have picked it. I just need to be gone before they [the nurses and doctors of 'Clear Spring'] break into my brain and my bedroom and expect me to thrive. I couldn't stand any of that, not without a drink. And that was the point of my coming here – to keep me away from drinking. I have to keep my peace of mind, which is beyond price. (P 195)

Hannah's reasoning appears illogical to the reader. Her perspective does not concur with the objective of her treatment. She cannot grasp its significance and tries to persuade the reader to believe her motivations, which is why a critical reading is appropriate here.

Overall, the function of narration as manipulation is an attempt to reconstruct a new, more positive outward perception. Hannah's narration reveals the desire to redefine how the world perceives her actions and her motivations; her struggles and her feelings of being misplaced in society. In her essay on Kennedy's longer fiction, Sarah Dunnigan states that "the act of writing, the process of recollection, is an emotional exorcism" for the protagonists (Dunnigan 147). By attributing the objective of self-exorcism to the protagonists' deeds, Dunnigan implies that these are 'possessed' or showing a behaviour which has abnormal qualities. Emotional exorcism is used as a process of self-healing, an attempt to overcome the emotional troubles which inhibit the characters. Therefore, one can say that the protagonist has attempted to find an escape route to get rid of the source of her problems. While Jennifer Wilson explicitly relies on the act of writing in *So I Am Glad*, Hannah's narration can be read as a diary entry or a conversation with herself, trying to persuade herself of who she is, or rather, who she would like to be. *Paradise* reads

like a make-believe text in which the protagonist-narrator attempts to recreate her reality by persuading herself with rewritten anecdotes. Writing also has a self-reflexive quality. Writing is a medium to discuss important issues, a medium to enter a discourse. This discourse engages with issues of identity formation, of the confrontation with fragmentation, with non-belonging as well as with the inability to attribute a label onto a particular existence. Writing is an essential factor for understanding Kennedy's novels: they play with the power of language and literary communication. "Writing is the attempt to find presence, to restore an absence or, in Jennifer's words, an emptiness" (Dunnigan 148).

Hannah repeatedly defines herself with and distances herself from her alcoholism. As an individual who does not connect with a conformist way of life, who does not build stable friendships or relationships and who is insecure of her role as a woman, a daughter and a sister, she seeks stability in a substitute, in alcohol. She repeatedly reassures herself that she is part of this loose social group of alcoholics by explaining that her actions are things that alcoholics do. By choosing his mode of narration, by attempting to persuade the reader, by arguing with her other self, she performs actions of belonging which can be read as repeated rites of liminality. This vicious circle of alcoholism which she is unable to break is, in my opinion, a situation of being permanently caught in the second phase of a rite of passage. This is a real-life version of permanent liminality which does not give the individual the chance to progress due to the circumstances and also their own actions.

Jennifer, the protagonist of *So I am Glad*, undergoes a development in the course of the novel. With the help of a trigger, a liminal situation and a liminal person, she manages to liberate herself from her personal and emotional blockade.

A. L. Kennedy's *So I am Glad*

A. L. Kennedy's novel *So I am Glad* deals with issues of anonymity, invisibility and isolation, with psychosis and socially deviant behaviour, and with the quest for selfhood. The weight of the trauma in the protagonist's past determines the course of her life, resulting in personal, voluntary isolation, the construction of psychic and physical borders, and in shielding herself from the outside world, from emotional contacts and social interactions. *So I am Glad* introduces the protagonist M. Jennifer Wilson as a young woman with sociopathic tendencies and an emotional apathy, existing separate from social obligations and emotional bonds. Limits appear in different forms in her life: some related to her person, as she is isolated from her environment, others as social norms. While this novel signifies the incomprehensibility of life in general, the character's behaviour suggests a quest for a coherent notion of the self, which can be defined in and might be determined by her relation to her environment.

I hypothesise that the exploration of, confrontation with and transgression of limits can be read as an instrument to overcome a feeling of powerlessness, to find a way of self-comprehension. However, it is the confrontation and engagement with the liminal which provokes a change in Jennifer's life. It is Savinien, whose existence is undefined, who exists between life and death, being both human and ghost, being presented as a noble time-traveller, who has an impact on her. The interaction between the two serves as a trigger and catalyst for solving Jennifer's state of isolation to take a step forward in the quest for a place in society, for understanding the possibilities, limits and qualities of the personal self. At the same time, it emphasises the existing limits and thus confronts the individual with its own constraints without offering a direct way out. This is a decisive factor for the dialectic of the novel. In my opinion, it is her direct dialogue with the limit – the limit on several levels – which enables the protagonist Jennifer to fulfil a huge personal development from being an “agoraphobic and repressed neurotic” (Borthwick 266) to a person functioning as a part of society, taking small steps towards exploring her personality, as a person able to deal with the limits of her existence. The self-dialogue through the act of writing fulfils a reflecting and

possibly even curing function. While she is far from having a stable identity at the end of her narration, she does achieve a certain amount of self-awareness, creating a sense for her existence. She surmounts those limits and traumata, which have hindered her active participation in society and have caused several forms of violent behaviour towards herself and her environment. At the same time, Kennedy's text is, according to Monica Germanà, also a dialogue "of postmodernist questions about the real and a deconstructive exploration of feminine subjectivity and desire" (Germanà 2010: 135).

The fragmentation of identity and the sense of non-belonging are recurrent motifs in Kennedy's novels, however, *So I Am Glad* offers a more progressive and hopeful outcome. Similarly to *Paradise*, voice and the use of writing is of particular relevance in this novel. Writing in this case means constructing reality, deceiving the reader and reintroducing them to a different version of reality later on. Therefore, one major issue is the protagonist-narrator's highly unreliable status, which we have to keep in mind. I would like to raise the questions of how far transgressive behaviour serves as a tool to deal with her unstable identity. After that, I will look at the use of voice and narrative technique as reflective media.

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The linchpin of Jennifer Wilson's narration is the traumatic experience of her childhood, with one particular incident which burnt itself into her subconscious and forms the foundation of a particular force of determination in her life. *So I am Glad* uses flashbacks to introduce new aspects which explain particular current character traits. In one retrospect, adult Jennifer narrates the occurrences of this key childhood memory which happened after a day trip with her parents, when infant Jennifer was sitting in the back of her parents' car, observing the following proceedings, which harmed her indefinitely:

I asked them to stop – an admission of feeling, of defeat which I regretted immediately – but I think they did not hear. They showed no sign of remembering I was there while I wondered what I meant them to stop. To stop driving, to stop speeding, to stop being so together, to stop being. The car rocked and slipped while Father finished with Mother's breasts. I saw the shadow of him slip under her tensed arms as he dragged up her skirt and then dropped his head against her thighs. [...] It might have been their intention to kill themselves that night. I would have been their unfortunate bystander, a chance casualty. Instead, they accelerated me

from a condition of terror into one of stillness and the dumb assumption that I would die. By the end of the journey I had discovered that I would always be correct in assuming that I would die, anything else would always be more doubtful, disappointing. [...] I'd found out the beginning of a whole Philosophy. Which was much more uplifting than it might seem – quite naturally, if I was going to die, they were, too. They were older, they would go first. I looked forward to that. (*SIAG* 104-5.)

This very short scene marks the source of Jennifer's subconscious issue and is the first instance mentioned in this novel, which reveals the construction of an emotional blockade. Admitting feelings, the wish to be saved from the harm of her own parents and to be protected, implies weakness and 'defeat' in her retrospective view. While the source of her trauma is only alluded to, it is left to the reader to fill the gaps created by the veiled situation. Being ignored and exposed to a situation which hurts her infantile world and caught in the constriction of the backseat of a car, she is in a situation of complete vulnerability, which makes her turn emotionally numb in the aftermath, leaving her with this feeling of internal emptiness she mentions above. While her "Philosophy" and the bitterness in Jennifer's words are certainly developing within the following years of maturity, the repulsion and retreat which the little girl feels is a direct consequence of this evening. It is only when meeting the curious stranger, Savinien, that she starts re-evaluating her habits and undergoes a process of change. I consider this the key moment in Jennifer's life, which results in the construction of and confrontation with boundaries in the following years of her life.

The primary boundary Jennifer has to deal with is her emotional blockage, her rejection of and defence against her immediate environment and her complete isolation from those who try to build an emotional bond with her, such as her flatmates, and which seems to be impenetrable at first. Her isolation is mirrored by her profession as she works as a voiceover artist, spending her work days in a tiny recording box room, giving fictional characters a voice and avoiding any real contact with the outside world: "I've never liked being seen – my job involves being completely invisible and suits me no end" (*SIAG* 10). This "anonymity [in] the public sphere" (Borthwick 267) implies two sides of one coin: on the one hand it exemplifies the coldness between and isolation of individuals in contemporary urban societies, but here it relates to a particular, small social group near Glasgow. On the other, it offers, according to Cristie March, a forum or "a liberating arena for

individual fantasies” (March 2002: 139-40), which is what Jennifer experiences. She constructs a frontier which shields off all external influence, leaving her numb and calm (*SIAG* 5). Her sociopathic tendencies are the driving phenomena of this novel, which are deeply rooted in her childhood trauma of sexual abuse. This emotional damage disturbs her seriously, resulting in her building an emotional shield against a harmful outer world. If this can be accepted as the foundational experience of the way she copes with her life, it is obvious that this understanding of her self, as she is presented in the beginning of the novel, is not a product of individual decision, but the result of a violent interruption of childhood, of the relation with her dysfunctional and harmful environment. Hence, I argue, this is the basis of her emotional instability. Her personality has been branded by this experience, leaving her incapable of developing personal relationships of any kind. She is caught in this cage of emotional distress, a malfunctioning relationship with human interaction and is determined by her disturbing parent-child relationship. This suggests a Freudian reading in addition to Macmurray’s philosophy of persons in relation. Macmurray states that “I exist as an individual only in personal relation to other individuals. Formally stated, ‘I’ am one term in the relation ‘you and I’ which constitutes both the ‘I’ and the ‘you’.” (Macmurray 1961: 28) Clearly, Jennifer’s life has been massively influenced by her childhood traumata, which determine her behaviour. As a consequence, the question where the ‘I’ ends and the ‘you’ starts is permanently disturbed and marked by her defence mechanism, her emotional border. Even if there are not many others in her life until Savinien appears, her self is always haunted by the relationship with ‘the other’, her mother and father. Her emotional withdrawal is a self-constructed shield against any further emotional damage; it is a symptom of her vulnerability and fear of harm in close relationships. However, as will be shown later, it is the construction of an emotional bond, a human trigger, which forces her to face these emotional boundaries.

This leads to a second point, to the non-personal boundaries with which she interacts: social norms. She escapes into the anonymity of casual, but brutal sexual intercourse. Philip Tew refers to her performance and repetition of casual violence as indicators or “paradigms of a ritualistically oppressive world” (Tew 132). This opens up the wider spectrum of the significance of Kennedy’s work in the national context,

reading her text as a criticism of the state of society and its disturbing influence on the individual. While Glenda Norquay hypothesises that violent sex is “a means of avoiding communication” (Norquay 147), I argue that Jennifer’s affinity towards sadomasochism is rather a compensation for her own sufferings and the violence which befell her. It can be read as an attempt to gain control over a situation and a person, to apply power – control being something she lacked in the situation which traumatised her. She states that: “Naturally, if you beat a man, you will eventually be looking, not at him, but at what you have made of him.” (SIAG 94) She reduces her sexual partner Steven to his mere “psychic and material conditions” (Tew 133); he becomes the mere object of her fantasies. At the same time, and on the abstract textual level, her practices fortify her anonymity, so that it is clear that sexual intercourse does not offer her proximity, but strengthens her emotional boundary even more, preventing her from building any social bond, relationship or friendship. The obviously psychic violence she suffered during her childhood result in “emotional deficiencies” (SIAG 93), making her numb and seemingly emotionless, which influences all sectors of her life. Sexuality is a prominent one in her life, but one towards which she has an ambiguous position. She states in the very beginning:

And it really makes no sense to me. Sex. I would lie, flattened out at the end of all the necessary minutes, feeling slightly wild but also useless, and I would be sticky and anxious and far too awake and yet all I have ever intended was to be asleep and I would not know what it meant. Sex. I don’t know what it means. (SIAG 2)

When it comes to sadomasochism, however, her position towards this issue changes:

I had, after all, known my emotional deficiencies for many years by this time. Given a situation I found so interesting, so releasing, I would naturally find it hard to concentrate on another person’s pain. I would forget they were there and be in danger of doing them harm. (SIAG 93)

These paragraphs are symptomatic as they reveal her harmed character traits on several levels. On the one hand, sadomasochism, awakes her fantasies as well as fascination; it gives her the chance to take an active role, applying violence to her counterpart. Violence and pain, she makes the reader believe, is the only way for her to feel anything at all and to ‘release’ herself. On the other hand, it also suggests that sadomasochism is a way of compensation of a lack of control in her life since the incident in the car and her childhood traumata. The feeling of lacking control over her life is a significant burden which she experiences in her childhood, the earliest

instance of which being the fundamentally changing scene in the car. It is a feeling of powerlessness, of being extradited, which has branded her profoundly. Her appeal for them to stop their intimate acts was “an admission of feeling, of defeat which I regretted immediately [...] they accelerated me from a condition of terror into one of stillness” (*SIAG* 104). She does not have a chance to escape or rescue herself from this abuse, she is exposed to the proceedings; she passively experiences those terrors. Whether or not she is under full control is debatable as her self-presentation in the narration does not necessarily concur with her actions. She states that while indulging in applying violence to the other, she would forget that he was there, being in danger of doing him harm (*SIAG* 93). In her very last sexual encounter with Steven, she is immersed so deeply in her role as dominatrix that she does not perceive herself as acting consciously; she seems ‘absent’: “But then I caught myself. As if I had dreamed and then jumped myself awake by taking my own hand and holding it still.” (*SIAG* 127)

This sexual transgression can be interpreted as a social transgression as soon as she voluntarily and consciously violates the law. Even though having previously enquired about the legality of these practices and learned from a lawyer acquaintance that sadomasochism was in fact a criminal act (*SIAG* 124), she consciously decides to continue performing her dominating sex-practices. She willingly violates the law by causing severe physical and psychological damage to her sex partner and therefore injures his physical integrity. She describes their last sexual encounter as follows:

He lay, the perfect, obedient sailor, allowing me to make him almost completely immobile. [...] My aim in thus securing him was not to obstruct the circulation of his blood, but to make sure that twisting or writhing would prove highly uncomfortable. Simply lying at rest, he would also have a constant reminder of his very vulnerable position. [...] We reached the space a moment or two before my first blow. Blow, stroke, lash [...]. At one point Steve had started to make a repetitive, mindless kind of noise which I had not heard before and wanted to stop. The sound of what I did was there also. In a tiny way, I never did actually stop what I did. It carries on. I feel the movements of it in me now. [...] He wasn't really bleeding, not seriously. I heard my voice tell him that several times. What I saw mostly were raised, rust-coloured blisters, subcutaneous eruptions of blood. (*SIAG* 126-7)

Even though he obviously suffers from severe injuries, she perceives his pain but continues the violent actions against him. It is the point where she is in a situation of trance and cannot stop beating him; she finds the source to relax and indulges in her

violence (*SIAG* 93). Gabriele Rippl speaks of a distinct aestheticism of violence which characterises Kennedy's fiction, which, in her perspective and with reference to interviews with Kennedy, are meant to create awareness for ethical questions, for social and individual grievances (Rippl 222). The SM scene is, undoubtedly, an extreme encounter with a social, physical, ethical and emotional limit as their game escalates. As a matter of fact, boundaries are changing even during a game which is played regularly. In a way, both are challenging their limits, breaching them, only to enter the world of what is forbidden. Foucault states in his theoretical essay on transgression that "transgression incessantly crosses and recrosses a line" (Foucault 1977: 34). The transgression of a boundary results in a new definition of this limit. Both characters explore their boundaries, defining and redefining the physically and psychologically bearable until their final limit is crossed. To phrase it in the sense of Chris Jenks, transgressive behaviour does not deny the limit; it surpasses and therefore completes them, so that every rule carries within itself its own fracture (Jenks 7). Foucault argues in his essay that transgression reemphasises the limit and limited being (Foucault 1977: 35 pp.), which is exactly the mechanism at work in this scene. Jennifer's sexual transgressions and their dramatic consequences thus seem to imply the immanent act of reinforcing her insecurities with respect to this limit: the boundary which shields her from personal relationships. In my opinion, the dramatic result of her games reinforces this personally constructed limit and therefore reemphasises Jennifer's psychological instability. She actually creates and furthers her isolation by performing sexually and socially transgressive acts, excluding herself from social groups by building an emotional distance to the few who could represent possible acquaintances, such as her flatmates.

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Liminality can have different qualities when the anthropological concept is applied from tribal societies to larger-scale societies. *So I am Glad* is a novel which can be classified as magic realism and which deals with the love between an undefined, almost ghostly figure and a young Scottish woman. It is a novel which is set around the notion of being between, being between two categories, between life and death, between being here and there, of oscillating between a boundary and the spaces on

either side. Savinien is liminal in several respects. His person is characterised as a time-traveller, the historic figure of Cyrano de Bergerac who suddenly appears in Scotland at the end of the twentieth century. He is both nobleman and drug addict. In the end, he vanishes just as quickly as he appeared. It is Savinien, who functions as the catalyst of a personal development in Jennifer's life. She overcomes her state of numbness, she is able to love. It is interesting in the course of the narration that Jennifer changes significantly, her character develops and her perception of her personal limits change, which is reflected in her habitus and emotional constitution. The act of slowly opening herself to Savinien and ultimately to her immediate environment, flatmate Arthur, can be read as transgressing the limits of her self-constructed personal boundary, which used to shield herself from the world to take a step towards building an interpersonal relationship.

The question is why the protagonists are caught in an in-between-phase, why their lives are liminal and which function this has for the course of the narrated action. What is it that makes them remain in this stage instead of either becoming part of the majority of society or suffering a downward social mobility? Savinien's liminality has a particular quality, showing gothic, ghostly elements. His character has a fluid quality, his existence not logically explainable. In the course of the narration, which is often read as a ghost story, the reader is presented with various facets of Savinien's character which have to be taken into consideration when looking at liminality. David Borthwick summarises Savinien's character by stating that "Savinien de Bergerac [...] represents (Kennedy's contrived version of) the chivalric values of his time, which he [has to] translate into a late twentieth-century context. [He] is able to identify himself and his position within the world with remarkable fluency." (Borthwick 269) Savinien is introduced to the reader as a stranger without a memory and perception of his self in the middle of the 1990s in the West of Scotland. Later he recovers his memory, which make him out to be the 17th century nobleman, duellist, aesthete and artist who died in Sannois in 1655. In the course of the narration and this character's development, two aspects become important: firstly, the recovery of his memory as connected with his production of art in various facets, and secondly, his emancipation from the drug addiction as well as his drug dealer. These processes are closely guided and supported by Jennifer.

While Savinien, in contrast to Jennifer, performs a different type of social transgression, they both aim at the same objective: personal liberation. When he suddenly and without announcement returns to his housemates after having spent a winter on the streets, Arthur and Jennifer find him abandoned and in a terrible state, having to help him through a phase of withdrawal (*SIAG* 160pp.). On the one hand, his addiction to “Atties” (*SIAG* 162) implies his dependency on his dealer, being at this person’s mercy; on the other hand, it results in acts of violence against the same, his dog and himself (*SIAG* 168). Of course, it is his abuse of a drug which makes him appear ‘other’ to his former self, and turn out his worst character traits in eruptions of anger and disrespect towards his hosts (*SIAG* 153), but it is the act of facing these limits of personal integrity, safety and independence, which is decisive for his personal development. ‘Otherness’ to himself is also underlined by his presentation as a ghost whose physical liminality between life and death, between non-entity and physical presence represents a corporeal and ontological paradox. Savinien claims to have sold his soul to James, the dealer, by making himself subordinate to and dependent on him.

How can...if you’ve ever known – in the presence of this man I had no power. Like being a child, like being nothing inside a child. He did things to me that no one has ever done. I would go on my knees for what he could give me, for the Atties, the Eggs, for the crying and the flying. I gave him my soul. A man cannot be without a soul. Tonight I did nothing I have ever done before because I have never had to fight for my soul, only sometimes for my dignity. This is my life begun – free to be yours. So that you will understand me I will say that my heart is clean and that now I can give you access to my soul. *My soul.* (*SIAG* 249 pp., emphasis in the original)

By facing and gaining victory over his former oppressor in what is described as an honourable fight, he restores his personal freedom and self-determination⁴. The imprisonment of his soul is mirrored in his physical location. When he is on withdrawal, Jennifer and Arthur keep him inside the house to detox and recover to prevent his stay in a psychiatric hospital, “guarding [their] domesticated madman” (*SIAG* 164), being “Savinien’s jailers” (*SIAG* 162). Successively, Savinien widens his terrain, starts to work in his and the neighbours’ gardens, and, on freeing his soul

⁴ The park in complete darkness is a *locus horribilis* in this context, a place of both terror and cleansing and contrasts with Savinien’s personal work of art, his garden, as the *locus amoenus*. Both places underline Savinien’s inner development, the latter being the limit of his imprisoned existence. It would be important to open up a new field of analysis here, as both places are also chronotopoi.

during his fight, he becomes ready to transgress the geographical boundaries of Great Britain. As shown above, he liberates himself from his oppression, making himself free to be loved again, a self-determined person. At the same time, he, or his reincarnation in Scotland of the 1990s, also relies on the existence of an ‘Other’, a counterpart in relation to which he can position himself:

I am sure I have no natural place on this planet. In your world or mine. I felt constantly precarious and I need the weight of your attention to secure me and allow me to be justified. I cannot just be, I must also do and be seen to do and be heard to do and known to do and then I can live. (SIAG 44)

Later and after his self-liberation, his desire to be part of a ‘we’, results in an appeal to Jennifer to give his life room, meaning and support:

‘[Jennifer] I’m sorry, I’m afraid. I don’t know what to do.’
 ‘To do – what to do is not to leave me.’
 ‘I wouldn’t.’
 ‘Here you did, your heart did.’
 ‘But you’re leaving me, what am I supposed to-’
 ‘Come with me. I can’t go there without you. I would not.’ (SIAG 254)

Both transgression and liminality are significant for the gist of the story. Victor Turner states in his 1969 study *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure*, that “Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial” (Turner 1969: 95), a description which can be applied to both Jennifer and Savinien. The latter is the epitome of a liminal being. The fictionality of his character on the textual level as well as his existence between reality and fiction is particularly emphasised by the way he appears, or rather, how he is presented to the reader by the narrator’s first impression of him. Jennifer introduces him via an anecdote, which was “the most normal introduction” (SIAG 19) she was able to give him describing a situation of their early acquaintance during which Jennifer discovers that “Martin”, as they first call him, is glowing in the gloomy dusk light, his face and hands shining silvery and bright (SIAG 12pp.). Later he is described as “struck by lightning, transported by lightning, [...] an illusionist, a circus performer, a natural phenomenon” (SIAG 25) – none of these characteristics tying him to reality, presenting him as being between everyday existence and what is physically possible, playing with limits of the perceptible and socially possible – as illusionists and circus people do, existing

between the worlds. This opens up two ways of reading this passage: firstly, the possibility that Savinien is truly supernatural and secondly, regarding him as the projection of Jennifer's deranged mind. As to the first, Savinien's ghostly existence implies that his death in 1655 cannot have been final; that he must have had a duty left to fulfil or discover, which is why he appears as a ghost centuries later. The ghost as a liminal being, wanders between life and death, being neither until he is freed. This ties in with his claim that he has no natural place in this world (*SIAG* 44), but that he exists anyway. Therefore, the phenomenon of liminality is a decisive factor in the process of defining identity in this context. According to Turner, "[...] liminal beings [...] have no status, property, insignia, secular clothing indicating rank or role, position in a kinship system" (Turner 1969: 95); they temporarily exist outside society, free from social obligations, in between their previous life and maturity. As to the second alternative, critics are generally unsure as to how to interpret the character of Savinien. If the story is read in light of Freud, the belief in ghosts derives from subconscious fears. Monica Germanà's position that the "ghost's paradoxical 'absence presence' allows ghost stories to investigate, question and challenge the boundaries of female consciousness, stuck between two coexisting, albeit apparently opposite, positions: alienation from/and entrapment within the female body" (Germanà 2010: 139). The body with its facets – the textual body, the ghost, the female body and the fragmented one – as well as an ontological dilemma are key ideas in *So I am Glad*, which suggests different readings: Savinien's transgressive presence in Jennifer's life is both a trigger and possibly a projection of Jennifer's subconsciousness. Savinien's non-defined existence and his paradoxical presence can, according to Germanà, undermine "the ontological foundations of the real" as reflected in the insecurity of how to perceive this ghostly appearance (Germanà 2010: 138). It also leads the reader to question Jennifer's narrative authority. While the aspect of the exploration of her female Scottish identity will be discussed briefly below, the centrality of the body is important to emphasise. It is obvious that one can speak of a "mind/body alienation" in Jennifer's character (Germanà 2010: 157), which complicates the protagonist's life and which is particularly obvious in the sadomasochistic scenes. Her behaviour thus indicates a deranged relationship with her body (Germanà 2010: 157). Monica Germanà further

elucidates that Jennifer is in a state between existentialist problems and nihilism which causes numbness, apathy and indifference towards herself and her former lover (Germanà 2010: 157).

Savinien, however, is not just a mere tool or screen for Jennifer's projections, but his personal liminality itself is remarkable. While his character traits seem stable, his existence remains rather unspecified and fluid. It is important for the development of his character to overcome his dependency on the person who once supplied him with drugs and who repeatedly returns to their house to destroy their garden. This garden is an instrument to rediscover himself; it is 'poetry' without words, pomp that reminds his neighbours of French Renaissance garden architecture, and it is also a means of expressing himself. The destruction of the same indicates a symbolic attack of Savinien's personal integrity and his haunted soul – haunted by his duty as a ghost and his real-life oppressor, the dealer. Liminal spaces such as his garden, Paris as a conservation of his memories, the National Library and the courtyard behind the latter are places of reflection and interrogation, places of discovery and memory. This dialogue with identity, this undefined existence, between being a ghost, a projection or a reincarnation, a drug-addict, the former duellist or lover indicates this character's fluidity which contrasts with Jennifer's stagnancy. It is Savinien's strength and fluid character which contrasts with Jennifer's static life and which inspires her to take the "risk" of opening to Savinien, of accepting uncertainty and vulnerability. At the same time, it is Savinien's ambivalent character which attracts Jennifer, which gives her an air of familiarity and comfort which is important for her to open up to him. Not only is he a sensitive poet, but also a brutal duellist (*SIAG* 129), with his own record of sin.

Glenda Norquay argues that Savinien's liminality implies that he exists between life and death, that he does and does not occupy physical space and thus blurs the boundaries between his and Jennifer's body (Norquay 148). She states that

In many ways the body seems to represent the most essential model of selfhood – one that can be identified in biological terms if nothing else – but even that apparently fixed definition raises questions about demarcations of internal and external selves, the relationship between mental and physical senses, the dynamics of emotional and physical pain. (Norquay 147)

The boundaries of the body and the experience of pain as defining identity is a major issue in Kennedy's novels. Jennifer formulates an imaginative love-letter to Savinien, a letter she never writes, expressing those feelings she later confesses to him (*SIAG* 233). Her letter reveals the ambivalent process she undergoes: the pain of having to let go, open up, and the joy of loving and being loved:

I love you and I miss you. Those two verbs are so close together, I can't feel them apart. But if I must feel at all, why this? You are the person who makes me mind the empty spaces I have and the empty rooms. You are the only human being with that much power over my life. Do you think this is something I like? I do not want to be completed, I do not want to be opened up or let free, or to live in any way more richly than I do now. I do not, I do not, I do not and then I do. Your fault. Do you know I miss you all the time. All of it. (*SIAG* 204)

Norquay argues that "The unique dynamic of their exchange functions as symbolic intensification of all powerful human relationships in which, as Jennifer notes 'I love you' (the affirmation of presence and completion) is inextricably linked to 'I miss you' (p. 203), the recognition of absence and separateness." (Norquay 149). By dissolving and transgressing previously defined limits, the boundaries of physical and emotional proximity, Jennifer admits the presence of Savinien in her life with his help. She is able to feel the warmth and pain associated with love, she manages to let him go, when he, the ghostly figure, needs to leave in the end and decides to take a more active part in her own life.

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Similar to *Paradise*, the momentum of voice and of writing play a vital role in the novel, reflecting Jennifer's personal situation in the course of the narration. It is a gradual development Jennifer undergoes. Soon after Savinien's arrival in the beginning of the novel, she and her flatmate Arthur take care of the stranger, helping him selflessly through a phase of withdrawal, which is noteworthy as she develops feelings of responsibility for her patient. At the same time, this is the phase in which both get to know each other and Jennifer learns to question her emotional limits. It is a fondness and fascination which ties her to him and it is this fondness which enables her to help him. In the following weeks, she takes the responsibility for Savinien and his health, nurses him, and stays by his bedside. Slowly they start confiding in each other, sharing secret thoughts and memories of their traumatic past. By doing this, Jennifer exposes herself and her psyche to a stranger (*SIAG* 212), building up a bond

of trust, making herself vulnerable. The excerpt of Jennifer's 'letter' to him illustrates this process clearly. Savinien is the reason that she starts reconsidering her values and self-inflicted boundaries. He causes this internal struggle of being too used to her emotional shield and of not being vulnerable, as well as her desire to experience emotion. Within the spectrum of six sentences, she reveals this wish: "If I must feel" implies her primary reluctance to expose herself to him, but "then I do" expresses that it is in fact a voluntary act, that she gives in to the desire of true emotional proximity. She realises and faces her empty spaces, her emotional and personal limits, all in relation to and because of Savinien, who is the first and only person to create a benign intimate relationship to her. His person matters; his existence influences her life. The further the novel progresses, the more does she accept and embrace this. She welcomes Savinien's development as well, when he blooms and derives joy from his return to France: "Another part of him was opened now, so there must be all the more for me." (*SIAG* 260) In the very moment she realises her passion for her lover and her emotional change, Savinien 'dies' again in Sannois, leaving Jennifer behind, devastated, alone, vulnerable but no longer numb.

You'll have read, I suppose, the opening of this book, about all that calmness I no longer have. [...] What do I have instead of the calm. A voice. I remember everything of one man's voice, not a part of it fades. (*SIAG* 280)

Her narration on the very last page thus ends where it started, forming a frame around her story. The calmness and ignorance which was ascribed to Jennifer in the beginning of her novel have changed. While having been numb, isolated and aimless before Savinien's arrival, Jennifer is left behind, upset but with a notion of wanting to take an active part in her own life. While having pushed away uncomfortable memories, she now faces her loss, keeping the unclouded memory of her only true love with her. On being asked by her flatmate how she intended to proceed from now on all by herself, she replies "I suppose I'll get a life. I don't know." (*SIAG* 280) This is an active step towards a self-determined and no longer passively numb life. In my opinion, this development demonstrates, in a basic way, how Jennifer has come to an understanding of herself, of her value and the value of interpersonal relationships. This conception of relationships resonates with the John Macmurray's theory of constructing a self in relation to others:

We know existence by participating in existence. This participation is action. When we expend energy to realize an intention we meet a resistance which both supports and limits us, and know that we exist and that the Other exists, and that our existence depends upon the existence of the Other. (Macmurray 17)

The issue of voice has to be read in accordance with the relation of Macmurray's 'you and I'. Voice is closely connected with being heard, being acknowledged, with a self and with being one with this self. In the beginning of the novel, the reader is introduced to Jennifer as a person having a voice, giving it to others. She is a vocal artist, taking up several personas every day, lending them her voice to give them life. She dubs films, reads advertisements and news texts for the radio:

My job. I said I would tell you about it, so here you are. I talk for a living. Don't act, don't move, don't sing, only talk. I am a professional enunciator. Really. Someone has to do it. Radio prayers and poems, British voices for American faces, neutral voices for criminal faces – terroristically digitised – jolly encouragements to purchase who cares and what, of course, calm accounts of current chaos, who cares where. I've tried a little of almost everything in the vocal line because this is all I can do. (*SIAG* 37)

Jennifer places "something invisible into the air" (*SIAG* 38), her voice is omnipresent, while she, as an individual stays invisible in her tiny recording box room, hiding behind the role she has to perform for a limited period of time. Everything is possible in this situation:

[I] thought of the night that carried my voice. Potentially I was going with it everywhere, through walls and under buildings, into all the little corners of my city and several more beyond. Very few people were actually listening of course – other back-shifty workers, the taxi-cruising, night-watching types, professional seducers and policemen, the lone insomniacs. (*SIAG* 61)

Her voice has the power to transgress walls and boundaries, to reach a wide range of people, her voice is heard. But it is not her individual personality speaking, which is heard, but it is the role through which she communicates a particular and planned message. She talks for a living but never receives a reply – it is a one-way communication. She also does not express personal beliefs, she 'lends' her voice to another character or text. However, this changes towards the end when she has 'gained a voice'. She has allowed a person to break this anonymity, to form a bond between him and her. Therefore, she hears and is heard in the end. She has 'gained' her own autonomous voice and the voice of Savinien by building this strong emotional bond. In other words, it is her individual self, which is heard and which is strengthened in the course of the narration, symbolised through this medium. Also,

this voice does not vanish into the ether, but it stays with her – it is the memory of an individual who helped her accept that not everything is controllable and projectable, and that it is liberating to accept the incomprehensibility of life. This is the ‘you and I’-relation represented via voice. Savinien, on the other hand, does not struggle with his identification process.

Kennedy’s narrative technique supports the gist of her novels. Glenda Norquay states that “The dislocations in the narrative, always defamiliarising for the reader, are increasingly directed towards reflections on the writing process itself, creating a self-reflexivity shared by other contemporary British novelists.” (Norquay 142) Jennifer, the first-person narrator and protagonist of *So I am Glad*, begins her story with a lie, partly at least, which she admits on the last page. Writing is communicating and can be manipulative and falsifying.

But I am quite happy to tell you that what appears to be peace and calmness is, in fact, empty space – or, to be more exact, a pause. I am not calm, I am unspontaneous. When something happens to me, I don’t know how to feel. [...] As I write this, I can see extremely clearly that nothing terribly bad has ever happened to me. I can’t recall a single moment of damage that could have turned me out to be who I am today. I can dig down as deep as there is to dig inside and there truly is nothing there, not a squeak. For no good reason, no reason at all, I am empty. (*SIAG* 5-7)

Firstly, she is, of course, no longer ‘calm’ or ‘unspontaneous’ at the time of writing, but emotionally troubled, as she is narrating this in retrospect. Therefore, it is particularly important to read this novel attentively as Jennifer is a highly unreliable narrator. Secondly, and this is an aspect only the reader can identify later due to Jennifer’s mental instability, her statement is either a suppression or a crumbling façade as the reader understands quickly that her psychological insecurity is rooted in traumatic childhood experiences. Her narration refutes her own statement and reveals severe experiences of shock and neglect. Therefore, the reader has to be particularly critical as they cannot take the narrator at face value.

Narrating and writing are acts of reconstructing and deconstructing memories and experiences. It is the narrator who has the power to deceive the reader and play with their expectations. Writing is a self-reflexive process here, as Jennifer is a developing writer or narrator within a piece of literary text. And writing is part of a strategy of coping and overcoming. The main difference to Hannah Luckraft’s

narration is that *So I am Glad* is less an emotional exorcism, but rather a cure. While in *Paradise*, it is not entirely clear whether Hannah is writing or just having an internal conversation with herself, Jennifer Wilson addresses her readers directly. Her audience is implicit in the text and therefore important to consider in the analysis. Writing is a process which is actively reflected and commented upon. In the beginning, Jennifer writes: “I hate secrets. No, that’s a lie, and here I was hoping to tell you the truth. Start Again. I hate to be on the blind side of a secret. That’s more like it.” (*SIAG* 22) This appears like a work-in-progress. Later on, she mentions dates and schedule points, thus claiming factuality: “I only hope that if I’ve managed nothing else properly, I put this down right.” (*SIAG* 272) Jennifer offers the reader selective insights aiming at evoking credibility for her story. At the same time, it is an evolving process of writing and rewriting, a reconstruction of memory fragments, thoughts and reflections. The question remains whether Jennifer aims to deceive herself, represses particular thoughts and wants to believe the reconstruction of her own story, when falsifying respective parts of her past. Not only does she try to make the reader believe that her past was harmonious, she relativises these occurrences:

Naturally, I am sorry for my past. [...] It most likely wasn’t my fault. Not anyone’s fault, in fact, just some of the stuff that families do – certainly not the worst I’ve heard about. Except that it happened to me and so is, evidently, the worst that I have known. But the after-effects have been minimal. (*SIAG* 72)

As a matter of fact, the reader can absolutely understand the mechanisms at this stage, but has to wait to be offered more bits and pieces of Jennifer’s anecdotes to reconstruct a possible meaning. At some point, Jennifer openly states that she takes the narrative liberty to change happenings: “Now I am going to cheat.” (*SIAG* 137) While a personal deception might be one objective of this way of reconstruction of narration, the author’s power to create a text and therefore to have the control over the content of her narration, is another decisive factor. Although, of course, we have to be careful, as Jennifer is an author, but only fictional character within another novel.

Just like Hannah Luckraft, Jennifer forces the reader to become the voyeur of her transgressive behaviour, to take part. This is especially notable in the SM scenes. She even asks the reader whether they have already tried sadomasochistic games (*SIAG* 90). She needs a witness, but not simply to be seen and heard, but also, in

addition to that, a witness of her memories. She requires someone to prove that she has not dreamed all of this, even if the proceedings described in *So I am Glad* have gothic and unbelievable qualities. Jennifer struggles in this time of loss for her. Savinien is no longer present in her life and his image, “the touch, the scent, the taste” (SIAG 263) fade:

You know, you must know, that when I finish writing this there will be so little of him here with me I can't think what to do. For almost a year I've had my own doubled life within the present. [...] In only weeks, I found that I could not hold the image of his face in my mind with any clarity – apparently a common problem, very normal among the bereaved. My will has no power to bring him back, even in thought. [...] He walks through me, atom by atom, but he never stays. (SIAG 263)

While she cannot conserve the transient sensory perceptions, she can conserve the memories and she can be assured that she has the connection to his selfhood (SIAG 280) by gaining his voice. In fact, “that whole *writing a book* thing” (SIAG 129, italicisation in the original), can be read as a strategy to overcome the pain, to conserve the most precious experience which forms the key to a shift in her personal attitude towards her position in life. It helps her overcome her loss and this is the main objective. She concludes by saying: “‘I suppose I'll get a life. I don't know.’ [...] I will miss this and I will miss Savinien and I will be glad.” (SIAG 280). While a development cannot be asserted, yet, there is a slightly positive outlook, a development having taken place in the protagonist, triggered by the love to Savinien. In summary, writing has a therapeutic function for her. In contrast to Hannah's narration, Jennifer's text serves an emotional stabilisation. Writing seems to offer a possibility to become aware of and deceive herself.

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Jennifer Wilson and Hannah Luckraft are both, as previously stated, deviant characters whose lives are strongly influenced by liminal situations. Kennedy's characters break with the polarisation and the limiting binary construction of inclusion and exclusion, marginal and dominant. The sense of a fragmentation of the self does not stop before the doors of suburban families and the security of middle-class life. It is an omnipresent phenomenon which can be found in all layers of society. What is of interest in Kennedy's novels is how the characters deal with these psychic dispositions, the challenges and difficult interpersonal relationships. Douglas Gifford states that a significant re-orientation is taking place in contemporary

Scottish literature, particularly in Kennedy's works. Writers such as A. L. Kennedy explore

[...] ways of using recognisably Scottish perspective in viewing the world outside, while simultaneously reasserting the validity of Scottish fictional and literary tradition as source of material for contemporary creativity. Not least is its commitment to re-examining the identity and place of women in gender, in relationships, in society. (Gifford 1997: 596)

He continues by saying that these authors

[...] move away from reductive social realism towards the new and non-essentialist use of the magical and the mythic as an imaginatively playful way of exploring possibilities and implying reformative agendas. (Gifford 1997: 597)

Even though it is certainly necessary to read Kennedy's novels as Scottish texts, I suggest that the phenomena addressed therein are not restricted to a Scottish experience. Kennedy's characters travel Europe; they travel the world, which often functions as a decisive factor in their personal situation. Hannah Luckraft experiences shocking moments on the 'freak train' through Canada on her way to her rehabilitation clinic. Jennifer falls in love with a 17th century French nobleman. In other words, while Kennedy's works do reflect upon the 'Scottish condition', they are very much concerned with internal personality conflicts. This duality is reflected upon in dialogues of the characters.

Whether Savinien is the actual reincarnation of the French nobleman or whether he is just the projection of Jennifer's mind remains open. It can, however, be hypothesised that the dialogue of the two outsiders can be seen as an implicit reflection on contemporary Scottish society. I read these passages in accordance with Kirsty Macdonald who expresses that "[the] novel succeeds in defamiliarising the conventional literary depiction of urban Scotland, via its refraction through the fantastic lens." (Macdonald 2012: 100) In other words, Kennedy's approach focuses on the effects of contemporary life on an individual's psyche. The chivalric values Savinien embodies are the perspective through which he perceives Scotland of the 1990s. His comments on human relations, on the ethics of the Scottish society can also be applied to Jennifer's character: "You are defenceless and your world is breaking in half. In all honesty, I believe your world has broken, it has split itself apart. There is such savagery and darkness and then such ridiculous openness."

(*SIAG* 228) Savinien criticises the loss of friendly intimacy and security, of trust and privacy in the modern world. Jennifer's criticism, however, reflects a general notion which has been expressed in the recent three decades by cultural critics.

As far as I can understand, my entire country spent generations immersed in more and more passionate versions of its own past, balancing preoccupations with less and less organised activity or even interest in the here and now. Far more recently the whole island of which my country forms a part was swallowed wholesale by the promise of a ravenously brilliant future. For a tiny while, in its transition from past to future, the population balanced, hundreds of thousands of opened minds all alive and possible in the given day. I have the impression that a few years may have passed during which each solitary citizen would be able to at least attempt to know and care about where and how they could be. [...] Our regional station was very often unconcerned if it did no more than play 'A Hundred Pipers' over its Saltire testcard for hours at a time and, perhaps as a result, I grew to believe myself the resident of a country within but not indistinguishable from Britain. (*SIAG* 187pp.)

Jennifer takes up the notion of Scotland's alleged 'eternal backwardness' and its pride in its cultural history. At the same time its equalisation with and incorporation into Britain is highlighted here, emphasising Scotland's subordination to the larger unit and the necessity to question Scottish identity or, respectively, a concept of how Scots perceive Scotland in Britain and the world ("where and how they could be"). Jennifer, whose attitude has been shaped by media, stereotypical cultural motifs in particular when she refers to bagpipes and Scottish traditions, clearly distinguishes Scotland from Britain. This can be read as an appeal for a more conscious reflection of Scottishness within Britain, for reconsidering culture aside from stereotypes. Transgressions, positions and liminal personae in this novel are not specifically Scottish ones, but the motifs used are relevant in the context of the novel. Monica Germanà states that Kennedy's writing raises "questions about contemporary paradigms of origin and identity construction, while [her] critical acclaim in Scotland and abroad, ironically perhaps, challenges the marginal predicament of Scottish women's writing, which rapidly moves towards the centre." (Germanà 2012: 162). At the same time, the ghost and the uncanny as part of the gothic tradition are decisive for the message of the text. Nicholas Royle states that "The 'uncanny' comes from Scotland, from that 'auld country' that has so often been represented as 'beyond the borders'" (Royle 2003: 12). In her discussion of the uncanny in Scottish literature, Germanà states elsewhere that this phenomenon of Scotland being 'other' to itself (Germanà 2010: 136) still shines through in contemporary Scottish fiction. "The collective psyche of Scotland, a nation possessed by the ghosts of its repressed

traumas, is eminently affected by a profound, endemic guilt feeling. [...] Scotland's is a numbed culture, Kennedy seems to suggest, disaffected and self-enclosed at the same time." (Germanà 2010: 158) This is, of course, a dangerous and rather limiting simplification. Germanà concludes that Scottish culture in general is numbed as Kennedy's fiction suggests. But she neglects that Kennedy's character Jennifer undergoes a significant personal development which leaves her full with emotion and despair in the end. Thus this generalising conclusion does not appear valid to me. Glenda Norquay offers a more insightful approach to understanding Kennedy's texts. She does not neglect the cultural context, but rather emphasises the significance of more abstract themes relevant to the message of the novels. "So, while Kennedy maintains an interest in the power relations in systems of difference generated by biological characteristics, her concern is more evidently with the ways in which the structuring of human subjectivity through love and pain, loss and presence, need and separation, shapes relations between men and women, between the self and the social." (Norquay 144)

Transgression and liminality shape the course of both texts. On the one hand, it is clear that physical and ethical limits are violated for reasons of experiencing power and recreating order. It is obvious that the transgressors have to face their own instability with regard to particular limits they are crossing, such as Jennifer's general insecurity with functioning in a social community, as well as her understanding of interpersonal relationships. They test and explore their personal limits in the course of the two novels, identifying where their own limits are and the counterpart's limits begin. Jennifer's sexual behaviour initially serves as a valve for her oppressed memories and emotions evoked by her childhood traumata and in this respect, it can be read as an outbreak of suppressed feelings of violence and trauma due to sexual abuse – if read in the Freudian sense (Tew 125). It is an attempt to live in a self-determined way, as her past experiences restrict her scope of actions.

The course of the narration with its redefinition of boundaries and the resulting differences in the perception of identity also implies that personal identity is in flux, and there is no stable, definite answer to the question of identity. In my opinion, Jennifer manages to become aware of the limitations of her self, as well as gaining a developing consciousness of her own abilities as a functioning member of a

small social group. She has to face these problems and experience herself in relation to her counterpart Savinien, to be able to experience her personality to become a more coherent and less sociopathic person. She needs the 'you' to define herself. Kirsty Macdonald summarises that the loss of Savinien "paradoxically leads to the possibility of transformation, as she concludes, 'I will be glad' and indeed proves to be, as the present tense of the novel's title suggests." (Macdonald 101) The encounter with her lover enables her to liberate herself, to gain a certain degree of self-awareness and self-determination, of breaking the limitations of her unconscious and self-inflicted restrictions. Macdonald speaks of a 'second birth'. The second birth is similar to what is intended in a rite of passage. Jennifer undergoes the classical development from her numb existence, crossing over to a liminal period which is the encounter with another liminal character, Savinien, transgressing the second threshold, performing the full development of the ritual. Kennedy's texts deal with the complexities of human relationships; relationships to other humans and also to oneself. These complexities can be decoded by looking at the ritualistic structure of social interaction.

Aside from the carnivalesque elements, it is particularly the use of gothic tropes, of mystic places and fantastic aspects that connects *So I am Glad* with Strachan's *Negative Space*. The use of supernatural phenomena opens up spaces of debate on the limits of personal existence and to which extent social demands define gender roles. Another similarity between these two novels is that sexually transgressive behaviour is used as an unsuccessful attempt to overcome a particular restraint. Both characters realise that placing their characters in relation to a liminal setting or entity proves to be the key for a personal change. The use of permanent liminality in Kennedy's *Paradise* is different from what can be found in Kay's *Trumpet*. In both novels, the characters in focus perpetually perform rituals of belonging. While Hannah Luckraft is caught in a cycle of stagnation with no hope for a way out of her situation, Joss Moody's repeated performance stabilises his masculinity.

In what follows, I aim to show that, as I have already touched upon in the previous chapter, restrictive gender norms can have a destructive effect on an

individual who does not conform to the definitions of what is traditionally considered male or female. A rather radical demonstration of masculinity in *The Wasp Factory* opens a space for questioning and rethinking the legitimacy and effects of traditional gender ideals.

3. Constructions of Masculinity in Iain Banks' *The Wasp Factory* (1984) and Jackie Kay's *Trumpet* (1998)

The stereotypical Scottish 'hard man' with his working-class über-masculinity has been a frequent issue of analysis in the literature of the past few decades. In view of the significant impact of gender studies on the general understanding of gender roles which criticises the rigid binary of masculinity on the one hand and femininity on the other, questioning the legitimacy of the strict separation of the same, it is necessary to shed some critical light on the phenomenon of gender roles in literature, probing the sacrosanctity of this phenomenon. This chapter focuses on the difficult constructions of gender and identity in Iain Banks' novel *The Wasp Factory* (1984) and Jackie Kay's *Trumpet* (1998). The first is about Frank Cauldhame who attempts to overcome a myth of castration with ultra violent, allegedly masculine and soldieresque behaviour; the second novel is about a transgender trumpet player who has lived his life as a man, but is discovered on his death bed to have a biologically female physiognomy, which causes a public scandal.

Joss Moody's identity in Jackie Kay's *Trumpet* can be read with the help of Turner and Szokolczai's concept 'permanent liminality' as he perpetually reinforces his masculine identity by permanently quoting masculine attributes. He lives his life in a permanent in-between state. It is his son Colman who undergoes a rite of passage in Arnold van Gennep's sense. Colman enters the liminal stage on discovering his father's biological gender and undergoes a process of renegotiating his value system. In the end, he overcomes his previously defined norms and respects his father's choice. His development follows a tripartite structure. Colman's change of thinking towards a more tolerant perspective shows that it is necessary to reconsider traditional gender norms in order to understand and accept other forms of human coexistence. I am convinced that a significant change and a radical rethinking of his values is triggered by this liminal situation. Liminality in Banks' novel is not easy to categorise. Frank's identity in Banks' *The Wasp Factory* is not permanently liminal, even though he hyperbolically and repeatedly quotes what he considers masculine attributes. We have to understand Frank's in-between status as liminal in

Turner's traditional sense: the focus is on the liminal phase. It is the discovery of his biological gender which causes a major crisis in his life and which ends this liminal phase in the way he lived it. This caesura destroys his carefully constructed order that is the over-exaggeration of stereotypical masculine behaviour. This forces him to renegotiate who he or she is. I am convinced that the revelation of his previous liminal existence radically undermines the legitimacy of the traditional, normative definition of masculinity.

Frank's obvious castration complex requires working with Sigmund Freud's theory of a child's development. This discussion is also relevant in the context of feminist criticism. Furthermore, gender and feminist theories are a vital background for the discussion of liminal gender phenomena in order to illuminate the facets of the characters' gender identities. These theories point out that social power discourses are prevalent in the discussion of gender identities. In this context, terms such as performativity or drag will play an important role in the discussion of both novels. Social power discourses are also revealed in the use of language. I demonstrate that medical and legal language works in binary categories, lacks appropriate terminology and thus denounces other forms of existence as inappropriate. I am convinced that both novels offer powerful arguments for a reconsideration of a traditional notion of masculinity. Therefore, liminality does indeed have a subversive quality in both novels and functions as a catalyst for a significant change in several cases in the novels.

In the following, I argue that *The Wasp Factory* is an attempt to fix identity, and *Trumpet* is about understanding identity while both seem to be coming from the same premise: the novels are about characters who were born biologically female and live lives as males. The former is a text about 'fixing' or constructing a supposedly inadequate masculine identity. The latter deals with how the public and Joss' friends attempt to understand the underlying motivations of his transgender life. The various characters in both novels use a normative, binary model of gender.

My hypothesis is that the revelation of a formerly undiscovered non-conformist social existence exposes a liminal life. This liminality is the prerequisite for the texts to undermine and deconstruct traditional views of gender. Liminality, be

it a liminal environment or somebody's identity, serves as a fertile soil to reorganise acknowledged values due to its quality of being in-between. In Banks' novel, this happens in the very end on discovering Frank's biological gender which then marks the protagonist as a liminal person, being both male and female. It further destabilises the notion of absolute masculinity, closure, control as well as the binary system of gender in order to point towards a need for a more diversified and heterogeneous way of life. At the same time I question whether an acceptance of a dual identity actually takes place on the level of the text. The conflict is negotiated via what I consider to be Turner's concept of liminality. It is a phase of questioning, of reconsidering and of critical reflection.

In Kay's novel, the central figure's death precedes the beginning of the narration. Joss's life as a transgender male has a deeply liminal quality. Significant in this context is that it is not Joss who negotiates his identity, but his environment which is forced to confront their prejudices which are based on an unreflecting, patriarchal perspective of gender roles, and have to face his way of life which is less socially accepted. Joss's son Colman undergoes a major development, dialogically accepting the duality of his father's self. It is the process of negotiation about Joss's liminal identity which is in focus. I also suppose that while Turner's isolated idea of liminality seems to apply best in both novels, Colman undergoes the three stages of the ritual and develops in the end. It is significant that liminality, be it liminality of a place or person, is a locus of reflection and reconsideration to elaborate on strategies of defining identity. It evokes the need to reconsider an old process of thought and to develop, in the realm of the beyond, a new understanding of identity which bears multifaceted characteristics in mind. This leans itself to Turner's concept.

The two novels thus differ in their approach to dealing with gender performance and identity construction insofar as Kay's novel manages to show, in small, a process of re-evaluation a certain group of people has to undergo by giving those people a voice, who unconsciously repeat the social discourse on gender identity which is strongly patriarchal and restrictive. While *Trumpet* is an investigation of other possibilities of living with a plea for a more diverse and tolerant understanding of gender, *The Wasp Factory* is a narrative exposure of

unparalleled violence, of the restrictions and subordinations of traditional masculinity which originate in patriarchal dominance. The novel and its message are just as violent as the 'hard man'-strength is represented to be. A destruction of masculinity takes place in the novel, not only suggesting the need for a reconsideration of gender roles, but with a rather violent and traumatizing ending for those characters who need to redefine themselves.

In her work *Gender Trouble* (1990), Judith Butler radically questions the categories of sex and gender. While feminists have previously differentiated the two terms by stating that gender be the socially constructed and determined version of sex, one is not born a woman, but made one; Butler then asks whether sex could not also be understood as a social construction of power discourses. This has implications for her understanding of agency and the existence of an individual's notion of their sex/gender. Gender, Butler states, is the repetitive performance of a set of acts, thoughts, and desires which are socially constituted (Butler 1990: 140). This outward influence then effects the internal production of substance. So, "if that reality is fabricated as an interior essence, that very interiority is an effect and function of a decidedly public and social discourse" (Butler 1990: 136). Thus there can be no ontological status aside from performative acts which define its reality. This repetitive performance is necessary to construct gender, which is not stable or a 'locus of agency', but gender itself is repetitively and continuously instituted through this set of acts. Therefore, identity is a constructed, performative one. In her 1993 monograph, *Bodies That Matter*, she clarifies certain aspects of her thoughts previously developed and frequently misunderstood in *Gender Trouble*. Butler explains that gender is not a daily choice, an act of dressing up as a member of a particular performance. It is an often painfully repetitive act which develops and constructs this identity over time. In fact it is not the individual, the subject, who chooses, but it is the performance which constitutes the subject – therefore it is an external power discourse which governs the individual (Butler 1993: x). Thus, Butler does not work with a humanist model of identity and agency in which the subject is conscious and able to choose, but it is power discourses which constitute the subject who acts. It is the act of citing power which creates subjectivity. Therefore, if gender is nothing but an imitation and citation of discourses, Butler continues, there should

be no true or false gender. Nevertheless, all those “who fail to do their gender right” are punished for their violation of gender norms (Butler 1990: 149). Drag or cross-dressing, for instance, can be understood as such an irregular phenomenon of gender performance. Transvestism mocks the traditionally acknowledged gender binarity by imitating it and thus revealing its processes. Elisabeth Grosz approaches gender issues by looking at bodily fluids (Grosz 1994: 207). While female bodily fluids from tears to menstrual blood are commonly associated with disgust, contamination and weakness, male bodily fluids are less stigmatized. This, of course, ties in with Julia Kristeva’s notion of the ‘abject’. The abject is what disturbs order (Kristeva 1982: 4), what transgresses and excludes (Kristeva 1982: 17). Kristeva argues that bodily fluids are abject, but have different qualities. While tears and sperm are not associated with pollution and disgust, menstrual blood and defecation have a dirtying quality:

Neither tears nor sperm, for instance, although they belong to borders of the body, have any polluting value. Excrement and its equivalents (decay, infection, disease, corpse, etc.) stand for the danger to identity that comes from without [...]. Menstrual blood, on the contrary, stands for the danger issuing from within the identity (social or sexual); it threatens the relationship between the sexes within a social aggregate and, through internalization, the identity of each sex in the face of sexual difference. (Kristeva 1982: 71)

Elizabeth Grosz takes up on this point and argues that

The representation of female sexuality as an uncontrollable flow, as seepage associated with what is unclean, coupled with the idea of female sexuality as a vessel, a container, a home empty or lacking in itself but fillable from the outside, has enabled men to associate women with infection, with disease, with the idea of festering putrefaction, no longer contained simply in female genitals but at any of all points of the female body. (Grosz 1994: 206)

Thus, in addition to being polluting, female bodily fluids, at least those connected with sexuality, are not controllable. For Grosz it is this weakness, this inability to be the controller over one’s own body, which differentiates the male from the female. And it is the fact of control, associated with men, which is one of the main reference points the protagonist in Iain Banks’ novel, *Frank L. Cauldhame*, adheres to in stabilising his masculinity. However, Grosz criticises in Kristeva’s argument that menstrual blood is seen as a danger for both sexes:

I cannot understand how Kristeva can claim that menstrual blood represents a danger to both sexes in a way that semen does not. She links excrement and menstrual blood through the figure of the (phallic) mother, so presumably sperm is attributed to the father. Is it that paternity is less threatening, less dangerous, less vulnerable, than maternity? Or rather, is it

less dangerous and threatening for men? The grounds of Kristeva's analysis remained obscure and not entirely convincing. (Kristeva 1994: 207).

Comparing the performances of masculinity in the two novels, another concept appears useful. The term *drag*, with which Garber works, suggests itself as a possible differentiation between the two novels. Garber argues that drag is “the theoretical and deconstructive social practice that analyzes these structures from within, by putting in question the ‘naturalness’ of gender roles through the discourse of clothing and body parts.” (Garber 1992: 151) Clothes, particularly those which are traditionally attributed to one particular gender, are often deliberately mixed or appear self-contradictory. This is used in order to point out that “the artificiality of the ‘feminine’ (or the ‘feminine piece’) is overtly acknowledged and brought to consciousness” (Garber 1992: 152). According to Garber, drag has a subversive quality and “involves an exploitation of the opposition between construction and essence. [...] Drag institutionalises the destabilizing gesture” (Garber 1992: 152). In other words, drag does question that gender roles are naturally given and self-evident, however, it makes use of stereotypical gender attributes and exaggerates them to achieve an intensifying effect. This is why I conclude that, while drag could apply to Frank/Frances in *The Wasp Factory* due to its hyperbolised performance, it certainly does not apply to Joss' life in *Trumpet* who quietly passes as male his entire life.

In the following, I argue that Frank's masculinity is constructed with the help of myths and traditional gender conceptions described in Freud's study on sexuality, only to be torn down at the end of the novel in order to expose their failure and violence. *The Wasp Factory* destroys traditional views of gender roles, leaving the protagonist in utter desperation and gender confusion, being left on his own having to re-evaluate his identity. I argue that his gender is actually performative in the sense of Judith Butler, quoting those symbols of masculinity which he considers to be scientifically and psychologically authorised by Freud. Therefore, I hypothesise that he builds up patterns of masculine violence, which acquire an extremely brutal and merciless quality. In addition to that, he constructs a self-cult to justify this desperate attempt to ‘fix’ what he considers a wounded, namely his dismembered masculinity, with a certain supernatural, spiritual authority. His lack is so grievous

that it seems insurmountable without god-like power. This careful construction is torn into pieces in the moment of revelation that Frank was born as a girl and the myth around his castration is only a sadistic experiment of his father's. It is in this moment, the very turning-point which disrupts the novel, that the liminality of Frank's character is revealed – he is both Frank and Frances, born as a female and lived with a girl's body, but performed his life as a boy. At the same time, it contains the main points of criticism voiced or shown indirectly in the novel. It does not only criticise the traditional binary model of gender roles, it also exposes the ideals connected with masculinity as well as the act of adhering to them in an unreflecting way. What is more, the overarching control of patriarchy and its power to influence another person's life is deeply questioned. The end of the novel leaves the protagonist struggling with his fractured self. The urgent difficulty to redefine himself seems to confuse him and the question arises, how can he define identity, if his previous performance prescribes him to be male? I read this as a feeling of utter terror and confusion, so that it is not predictable whether there will be a positive outcome for Frank/Frances.

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Iain Banks' 1984 novel, *The Wasp Factory*, is the story of an adolescent, Frank L. Cauldhame, living an isolated life on his own little island with his father. Frank is presented as a castrated boy and only revealed to be born as a girl in the very end of the novel. The novel deals with a strong castration complex – a boy, trying to live up to being a man, and to reduce the perceptibility of his/her lack of the penis, by being overly masculine.

In his study on sexuality, Sigmund Freud identifies the significance of the child's discovery of the penis for their personal development. His position is that every child is characterised by the penis – either by the existence of the same, or by the lack thereof. As soon as the child without a penis discovers her lack, she develops, according to Freud, a strong inferiority complex, a complex arising from the feeling of being deprived of the boy's genital, a feeling of being castrated (Freud 1972: 100). This leaves the child with a narcissistic wound (Freud 1972: 261), a feeling of inadequacy which then results in her urgent desire to become a man, or, as

this is not biologically possible, to at least behave like one. She is driven by a strong sense of penis envy, which determines her actions and thoughts. This is, in a very brief introduction, the core of Sigmund Freud's castration complex. Luce Irigaray critically, and even almost mockingly, comments on this theory in *Speculum* by stating that, in fact, the little girl never exists for Freud. She exists as a child with a non-penis (Irigaray 1985: 48-49). Her answer to this study strongly criticises Freud's theory as being influenced by "'phallic' power" (Irigaray 1985: 16). In Freud's study, femininity is nothing more than anti-masculinity. She comments:

Therefore, the feminine must be deciphered as inter-dict: within the signs of between them, between the realized meaning, between the lines ... and as a function of the (re)productive necessities of an intentionally phallic currency, which, for lack of the collaboration of a (potentially female) other, can immediately be assumed to need *its* other, a sort of inverted or negative alter ego – 'black' too, like a photographic negative. (Irigaray 1985: 22, italicisation in the original)

Thus, woman is man's 'other', his 'photographic negative', against which man can define himself and his phallic power. She proceeds by commenting that penis envy is thus the girl's feeling of humiliation, the perception of an essential lack which causes jealousy. Irigaray argues that the underlying thought of the castration complex emphasises that the woman has nothing (where the penis should be) and thus *is* nothing:

Woman's castration is defined as her having nothing you can see, as her *having* nothing. In her having nothing penile, in seeing that she has No Thing. Nothing *like* man. That is to say, *no sex/organ* that can be seen in a *form* capable of founding its reality, reproducing its truth. *Nothing to be seen is equivalent to having no thing. No being and no truth.* (Irigaray 1985: 48, italicisation in the original)

The notion of the castration complex implies an instrumental function for the man, as the penis envy appeases the man's horror of experiencing castration: Irigaray states that "the 'penis-envy' attributed to women soothes the anguish man feels" (Irigaray 1985: 51). This concept is important for the discussion of Banks' novel, as the protagonist's actions are majorly motivated by his feeling of 'lack'. As a consequence, the boy inscribes the phallus he lacks in all his actions.

In fact, it is insightful to look at Judith Butler's and other feminists' theories of gender roles, which suggest that one's gender is carefully constructed by repetitive acts quoting gender symbols. This is what Frank does in a hyperbolised way to compensate what he lacks and to define as well as justify his own 'authentic'

masculine identity. As a matter of fact, his hyper-violence can be seen as a version of an ultra-quote. The protagonist's identity is carefully constructed by the protagonist who takes, due to his personal situation, a deceptive narrative perspective. *The Wasp Factory* is narrated by an adolescent, a young first person narrator, Frank L. Cauldhame, who gives the reader insights into his everyday life and intimate memories of his murderous deeds of past days. The reader has to keep in mind that Frank is the first-person narrator who tells his story in retrospect and thus after the discovery of his feminine side. Therefore, we have to consider that his brutal actions might also have been re-emphasised in view of his gender confusion in order to fortify his legitimate masculinity. In the course of the narration, he permanently reflects upon his gendered identity, upon his 'lack' and finally uncovers to the reader that he was born as a girl, but brought up by his father as a boy, having taken hormones all his life. His overly violent behaviour criticises and raises questions of the legitimacy of traditionally acknowledged forms of behaviour which have been determined as inherently masculine. One can hypothesise for the first part of this discussion that Frank uses transgressive behaviour in the form of ultra violence to prove or reinstate his masculinity to overcome his feeling of inferiority. Additionally, this is only possible due to the setting, his upbringing in the isolation of his home island, which is the locus of his father's field studies on him and the fertile soil for the practice of Frank's macabre imaginations. What is more, being brought up in isolation leaves him under the main influence of his father, whose personality has Dr Frankenstein-esque qualities.

Frank's identity is performative. Therefore, I aim to shed light, firstly, on how Frank carefully constructs his identity according to an outdated norm of violent hard-man masculinity, secondly, that this is motivated by his feeling of inferiority due to his penis envy and, thirdly, that it is actually not appropriate to describe his actions as being motivated by an assumed essential masculinity. To restrict this, I will discuss the issue of whether or to which degree Frank acts in a self-determined way at a later point in this chapter. It is the turning-point at the end of the novel, which contains the main aspect of criticism. I further argue in the first part that Frank, the adolescent without a birth certificate, constructs his masculine identity by quoting military-esque hyper masculine symbols and by constructing a cult around his own person.

He relies on Freud's model of the psyche and the sex-binary, but it will be more helpful to refer to feminist theory to explain the split in this character. Ultimately I aim to show, in the second part, that this construction is but a mere farce and that, in the moment of the turning point of the revelation of his biological sex, the fracture opens the view to a critical reading. *The Wasp Factory* implies that a strict binary gender model is not appropriate, that patriarchal sanction and control has a destructive effect from which the individual has to liberate himself in order to redefine their identity. It also problematises gender construction and shows, in its liminal function, that moving away from a binary to a more diverse model of gender identity is needed.

One main influence on Frank's actions is the overarching shadow of the castration myth his father invented for his son's life as an experiment. It is the very feeling of being branded by a disability which shapes the psyche of young Frank and drives him to extremist behaviour. This feeling of lack is accompanied by a constant potential of aggression resulting from his self-inadequacy. This is supported by another major lack: the absence of a birth-certificate and thus the juridical proof of his existence and gender. Being kept in isolation on an island being home-schooled by his father, he retreats into his own, self-created world of cult and playful warfare against nature with all its living inhabitants. This utter isolation and restricted external influence makes him the ideal object of literary study showing an extreme manifestation of one particular behavioural phenomenon: his way of dealing with his internal conflict, with being both a self and an 'other'. Frank explains: "Not going to school, and having to pretend I didn't live on the island all the time, has meant that I didn't grow up with anybody of my own age (except Eric, of course, but even he was away for a long time)" (*WF* 62). He then continues:

It didn't help that I had to call my father 'uncle' and Eric and Paul 'cousins'; this was my father's idea of trying to fool the policeman about my parentage in case Diggs did any asking around and discovered that I didn't exist officially. My story was that I was the orphaned son of my father's long-lost younger brother, and only staying on occasional extended holidays on the island while I was passed from relative to relative and my future was decided. (*WF* 90)

He does not exist officially; his existence cannot be proven by a legal document. Therefore, Frank suffers under a doubled influence of instability, he is neither really male nor female; not legally existent, but then again very alive. This, however, is the

unsettling setting of Frank's childhood and adolescence, he is socially isolated by his father with intent and his identity is carefully constructed just as the myth of his castration is. Frank's story is a carefully constructed and complex version of Freud's theory of the castration complex from which all little girls allegedly suffer. He goes through the same stages as the castrated child in Freud's studies, discovers his lack, develops a strong sense of penis envy and tries to live up to his failed masculinity by embodying the stereotypes of traditionalist hard-man masculinity to overcome his inferiority complex and to compensate the lack of the empowering penis. He is told from the early stages of his development, the years of his early conscience, that he had an 'accident' which has left him with a scar. Frank has to live with this notion of incompleteness which is similar to the wound Freud's castrated child perceives. The family dog, Saul, a white bulldog, is said to have attacked young Frank in the garden – which is the course of action his father staged to convince Frank's environment: On hearing a loud scream, his father and the housekeeper run to rescue him on which the lady almost faints as "she saw the mess between [his] legs" (WF 138), which is similar to the wound the 'castrated' Freudian child perceives. It is the utter frustration arising from the thought that he would never be a real man that makes him develop compensatory strategies.

[I] felt more keenly than at any other time my injury – that thing which I knew would keep me in my adolescent state for ever, would never let me grow up and be a real man, able to make my own way in the world. (WF 183)

This makes him act like a man, however in an overtly extreme form to counterweigh his insurmountable lack. However, Frank adheres to the belief in essential gender identity to which he constantly refers to reemphasise his 'actual' being, the essence of his self.

We are brothers, after all, [Eric and Frank] even if only half so, and we are both men, even if I am only half so. [...] Both sexes can do one thing specially well; woman can give birth and men can kill. We – I consider myself an honorary man – are the harder sex. We strike out, push through, thrust and take. The fact that it is only an analogue of all this sexual terminology I am capable of does not discourage me. I can feel it in my bones, in my *uncastrated* genes. (WF 154pp, my emphasis)

Frank is told that he is a boy, he is made believe and actually also is 'made' a boy – via a myth and with the addition of male hormones. In fact, this is a script his father has imposed upon him which Frank accepts without questioning its equivocal core.

Then again, he is brought up brainwashed and isolated without any real-life model of a woman in the family, thus without having a stable counter-model with which to compare and contrast his masculinity. He refers to his ‘uncastrated genes’ as a justification of his essentially male identity – he might be characterised by his lack, however, he ‘knows’ that he is a ‘real’ man.

Since this trauma of castration determines his everyday life, Frank develops means of overcoming this: a strategy of performing a sort of hyper-masculinity, exaggerating gender stereotypes in order not to leave any doubt of his supposed essential identity. Frank thus develops a persona characterised by reducing all female attributes in his character. His actions are violent beyond imagination while he stays emotionless both during the act of committing his killings and tortures, as well as in the moments when he calls them into mind. As casual as talking about last night’s dinner, Frank claims his murders to be due to a natural urge within him. It is what he refers to his essential masculinity, which drives him to commit these gruesome murders. “I could feel it in my guts, in my bones; I *had* to.” (WF 112) Before his adolescence, Frank kills his brother, a son of a family friend, and his cousin – murders which he downplays and justifies with the natural phase of development of a boy committing little crimes in his early teens:

Two years after I killed Blyth I murdered my young brother Paul, for quite different and more fundamental reasons than I’d disposed of Blyth, and then a year after that I did for my young cousin Esmeralda, more or less on a whim. That’s my score to date. Three. I haven’t killed anybody for years, and don’t intend to ever again. It was just a phase I was going through. (WF 49)

He killed Blyth by hiding a poisonous snake in the little boy’s wooden leg, Paul by making him detonate an old World War Two aircraft bomb, and Esmeralda by tying her to a large kite with which she was carried away into the storm of the sea. In fact, each murder on its own carries the inscription of his desire for authentic masculinity.

Blyth was lying on his stomach, hands under his cheek, the stump of his left leg drawn up in the flowers and the grass, sticking out from his shorts like some monstrous erection. [...] I shook the can, and felt the snake fall into the leg. (WF 46)

Blyth, just like Frank, is disabled. Differently to the older boy’s ‘disability’, Blyth’s masculinity is not severed; he does not suffer from penis envy. His disability still makes him a real boy. Paul’s death is inseparably connected to Frank’s fascination

with war and weapons. After making the little boy believe the bomb was a bell which can be rung with a stick (*WF* 86), Frank watches his brother being torn apart:

He had hit it once and I had taken my hand out from under my chin preparatory to ducking when Paul, the bomb and its little halo-pool and everything else for about ten metres around suddenly vanished inside a climbing column of sand and steam and flying rock, lit just once from inside, in that blindingly brief first moment, by the high explosive detonating. [...] So nowadays I can say it was a German bomb of five hundred kilograms. (*WF* 88 pp.)

Not only the ‘play’ with weapons of war, his fascination with causing death and the joy of explosion are remarkable here. It is particularly Frank’s way of describing the bomb’s ejaculating explosion, an erection of sand, steam and rock climbing up which is striking and indicative of his obsession with erect masculinity. Taking a life is an act of power over an innocent person and this is a particular demonstration of Frank’s desire for masculinity. “Looking at me, you’d never guess I’d killed three people. *It isn’t fair*”, Frank states in the beginning (*WF* 20, my emphasis). A statement which is a mixture of pride as well as a feeling of unfairness that he acts more like a man than any other man who is not castrated, but will never enjoy the same status – neither in looks, nor feeling. Frank’s life seems to be subconsciously controlled by this lack, by the constantly present question of what else he could be doing to make him a man. Esmeralda’s death is a slightly different case. It is an action of ‘ultimate control’ (*WF* 116). Frank takes his cousin Esmeralda on a trip to the sea and hands her the gigantic kite he built especially for his third murder.

The kite just kept snapping and flapping and flapping and snapping and it hauled the girl off the earth and into the air, winch and all. [...] She was screaming and wagging her legs for all she was worth, but the cruel loops of nylon had her about the wrists, the kite was in the jaws of the wind, and she was already well out of reach even if I had wanted to catch her. (*WF* 118).

He indulges in the “romantic vision” (*WF* 122) of Esmeralda floating into space and is proud of the cunningness of his last murder. These passages demonstrate several issues which are significant in the analysis of *The Wasp Factory*. Firstly, he makes use of nature’s forces to kill a female child. He is aware of the destructive powers of nature and the wind and therefore uses these in combination with his own handicraft to fortify his own power to act out his deed. He thus demonstrates his ‘equality in power’ with nature, to be able to manipulate wind for his own purpose. His respect for and fear of nature is inseparably connected to his aversion to women. Not only are nature and femininity traditionally associated with one another, Frank’s repulsion

also arises from his inability to control either, to reduce the lack of masculinity and to suppress the feminine traits within his character.

My greatest enemies are Women and the Sea. These things I hate. Women because they are weak and stupid and live in the shadow of men and are nothing compared to them, and the Sea because it has always frustrated me, destroying what I have built, washing away what I have left, wiping clean the marks I have made. And I'm not all that sure the Wind is blameless, either. The Sea is a sort of mythological enemy, and I make what you might call sacrifices to it in my soul, fearing it a little, respecting it as you're supposed to, but in many ways treating it as an equal. It does things to the world, and so do I; we should both be feared. (*WF* 50)

He systematically discriminates against women and against his own femininity, which is particularly ironic as it is actually Frances who narrates the story. At the same time, Frank defines himself in contrast to the image of this 'other', against women. However, this other is also threatening: allowing himself to sympathise with femininity means admitting his weak point, namely to be partly female due to his lack. Frank incorporates those ideals which are ascribed to masculinity and potentiates them to make up to the manliness he expects from himself. Freud would describe this as an act of compensation to make up for the traumatising lack of masculinity. He himself is aware of his actions, even partly of the underlying motivations to behave in this particular way:

At least I admit that it's all to boost my ego, restore my pride and give me pleasure, not to save the country or uphold justice or honour the dead. [...] It gave me power, it made me part of what I own and where I am. It makes me feel good. (*WF* 78)

His behaviour is supported by his outward appearance – a manly attire and behaviour. Dress and particular habits function as further symbols which he frequently repeats. Frank considers his choice of a dress-code and performance of specific stereotypically male habits to create and support his masculinity. Frank dresses with care, almost meticulously. He understands them as visible signs of his 'real' gender, as 'proofs' of the authenticity of his essential masculinity and yet another factor of masculine symbolism, which is quoted. Nevertheless, Frank is not a real cross-dresser in the sense of a transvestite, even though he was born as a girl, as he adapts to what he considers to be his biological gender and is not aware that his natural gender is not male. Frank's favoured choice is that of practical military attire:

There I put on my socks; green for that day. Then a khaki shirt with pockets. In the winter I'd have a vest underneath and a green army jumper over the shirt, but not in the summer. My green cord trousers came next, followed by my fawn Kickers boots, labels removed as from

everything I wear because I refuse to be a walking advertisement for anybody. My combat jacket, knife, bags, catapult and other equipment I took down to the kitchen with me. (*WF* 52)

His clothing aids his daily duties, when going to the 'battle field', his life in the dunes that is. At the same time, it stands for a type of man, who is ready to fight, go to his physical extremes, and, if necessary, is ready to kill. The image he intends to awake is not only to be equipped with enough pockets for his utensils and with conveniently warm and weather-proof garments. It is also a declaration of being ready to fight those who seem to intend to harm him and his careful construction of gender. Furthermore, it is particularly noticeable that Frank adopts vulgar male forms of behaviour, repeatedly performing them in special situations: Frank tends to hold and scratch his genitalia quietly and pensively. Whenever he is lost in thoughts or feels a sudden moment of despair, he repeats this habit: "I nodded to myself, scratching my crotch quietly" (*WF* 204), or "I scratched my crotch in exasperation, wondering what was the best thing to do [sic]" (*WF* 216). While he might have adopted these habits from characters in films and TV series, Frank appears to have acquired them to give proof of this authenticity and to make his impression of vulgar masculinity believable. At the same time, though, his overtly masculine behaviour is also an indicator of his castration complex; the awareness of his lack.

It is Frank's assumption that gendered clothing and behavioural patterns influence a person's development. This is why he considers his brother Eric's mental illness to originate in a confusion of gender identity. To his mind, Eric's choice to dress in girls' clothes (*WF* 82) and his father's neglect to stop him behave like a little boy form the basis for Eric's overtly sensitive character. While Frank appears to be a parody of the stereotypical Scottish hard man, Eric's feminine side, according to his brother, makes him tend towards insanity. The older brother's life goes off the rails after a traumatising experience during a caring shift in hospital. "They [relatives] thought that my father was a bad parent because he dressed Eric in girl's clothes and let him run wild" (*WF* 82). In Frank's perspective, Eric had always been a bit "too sensitive" (*WF* 181) to be a boy until he experienced his trauma during his years as a student.

Eric was inconsolable, desperate with grief because he had made the thing Blyth had used to destroy our beloved pets. He always was a bit sentimental, always the sensitive one, the bright one; until his nasty experience everybody was sure he would go far. (*WF* 43)

Young Eric is constantly feminised by his brother, softened, and presented as less of a man than the younger one considers himself. Eric, in Frank's opinion, must have fallen victim to his sensitive side, the female one, which is why he has lost his sanity (*WF* 195). Thus, Frank draws a parallel between femininity and a tendency for weakness and madness. He considers Frank insane while he perceives himself as well as his behaviour perfectly normal as he conforms to traditional gender models. Eric therefore is a boy with a strong caring side to his character, a trait which his brother considers feminine. Frank, in contrast to him, seems to fulfil the 'requirements' of a 'real' boy, but turns out to be a girl without Eric's ability to be sensitive. His extremist behaviour is, in his perception of masculinity, tolerated by the patriarchal system.

I concur with Berthold Schoene-Harwood who speaks of a parody of gender stereotypes which Frank represents, formed by media and by values passed on from one generation to the next (Schoene-Harwood 2000: 104). Without having had a female constant in his life, neither a mother figure nor any other female who was in a regular and healthy contact with the family, Frank grows up without an idea of traditional femininity. His image of men and women is mainly branded by media and his father's influence.

Women, I know from watching hundreds – maybe thousands – of films and television programmes, cannot withstand really major things happening to them; they get raped, or their loved one dies, and they go to pieces, go crazy and commit suicide, or just pine away until they die. [...] there must be a few strong women, women with more man in their character than most, and I suspect that Eric was a victim of a self with just a little too much of the woman in it. That sensitivity, that desire not to hurt people, that delicate, mindful brilliance – these things were his partly because he thought too much like a woman. [...] My father must take the blame in part at least because of that nonsense in Eric's early years, letting him dress as he wanted and giving him the choice of dresses and trousers. (*WF* 195)

His worldview is shaped by media which postulates and conserves a certain patriarchal model of gender norms and stereotypes. Femininity is associated with weakness, instability, dependence, subjection and sensitivity. Masculinity, in consequence, is defined by strength and hardness. Frank constantly negotiates his own masculinity in dialogue with himself and often in comparison with his brother's.

Consequently, Frank adopts this perspective in an unreflecting way, maintaining a binary position towards gender despite observing the need to differentiate. His brother, obviously highly intelligent and more sensitive, does not represent the idealised Scottish hard man. Nevertheless, Frank accepts him as a boy. His answer to the question, “What makes somebody a man?”, would be the reference to the obligation to fulfil the external requirements expected from a man. For Frank, masculinity is diametrically opposed to femininity; it implies the absence of emotion and the disposition to commit to violent and patriarchal exercise of power. For the protagonist, this strict adherence to this value system is intended to reduce his vulnerability. Frank spends a lot of time and effort on the construction and stabilisation of his masculine identity and leads himself to believe he has a stable sense of who he is, despite his complex. Several times in the novel, Frank emphasises the ‘truth’ about who he *is*.

I know who I am and I know my limitations. I restrict my horizons for my own good reasons; fear – oh, yes, I admit it – and a need for reassurance and safety in a world which just so happened to treat me very cruelly at an age before I had any real chance of affecting it. (*WF* 180)

Reassurance of his masculinity and safety are supposed to be guaranteed by his violent actions. In addition to quoting socially acknowledged attributes associated with man, Frank develops his own cult, which could also be read as a personal self-cult with a place of self-worship, transgressive rituals and reliquary shrines. Frank stylizes himself as a god-like creator that is to be feared in the way nature is feared. This is an act of self-aggrandizement and a glorification of masculinity. While Frank perceives himself as the creator of places, such as fortresses of sand and wood, nature is uncontrollable; man cannot gain power over it. This, nature’s irrepressible force, is his limit – even despite his totem poles (*WF* 1). Even though Frank’s self-cult is never ridiculed, he as the narrator takes himself very seriously, the descriptions of his actions appear preposterously distorted. However, the question arises: what is the intention of this parody? It exposes and denounces him and his distorted values system and is thus a biting sharp criticism of the hard-man model of masculinity particularly due to its shocking force in the end. In his late childhood, he starts directing his aggression against other living creatures in nature. Not only does he bomb and set fire to rabbit holes, as well as hunt small animals with his

catapult, he also decapitates those he did not kill before to stick them on poles in order to construct his kingdom of self-cult. This serves the purpose to make himself believe in his own essential masculinity, to convince all his doubters and to give his actions an unquestionable, spiritual and supernatural legitimization. He is both shaman and believer in his personal cult. Not only his totem poles, with which he is introduced in the novel, but also the eponymous ‘Wasp Factory’ in particular ordain him with a feeling of superiority, omniscience and power. His personal cult, for Frank, means having power over nature, animals, and humans; it functions as a medium of self-creation by conserving and constructing his memory into his own history. It serves to give him the legitimacy and power of a divine creature, a divine *male* creature. Frank writes his own landscape, renaming places within his territory according to his successes in ‘war’, such as ‘Snake Park’ (WF 48), where Blyth was murdered with the help of a venomous snake. He worships the places where he committed murders and thus worships his own power. He has occupied several places of worship. One is a former World War Two bunker by the beach which he uses as an occultist place, circled with totem poles like a fortress – poles carrying the skulls of those animals he killed for this reason (WF 57). However, most significant is the murder machine he constructed, the ‘Wasp Factory’, which is used to predict the future, to communicate on a supernatural level and to gain self-reassurance. It is a cunning system of giving wasps the ‘choice’ of twelve cruel deaths in twelve corridors built into a broken clock. The clock, of course, is a telling *vanitas symbol* itself. This Factory is part of an altar, on which Frank keeps relicts of his deeds, old photographs, resembling images of saints, and murderous instruments (WF 157). Every time before consulting the factory, sending a wasp through the sadistic procedure of watching her die in acid or fire that is, he speaks his own little, egocentric catechisms which worship him and his deeds. While performing his cultic rituals he describes: “I held my crotch, closed my eyes and repeated my secret catechisms.” (WF 157) Quoting this stereotypically masculine habit is one which frequently occurs whenever Frank is lost in thoughts or has to rely on his masculinity.

The catechisms also tell the truth about who I am, what I want and what I feel, and it can be unsettling to hear yourself described as you have thought of yourself in your most honest

abject moods, just as it is humbling to hear what you have thought about in your most powerful and unrealistic moments. (WF 157)

Frank frequently reflects upon issues of essentialism; essential masculinity versus femininity. To define his personal identity as male and decidedly not female, he needs a constant process of renegotiating notions of gender roles with his own behaviour. Frank gains stability by adapting to commonly acknowledged gender models, particularly masculine dress and behavioural patterns. Here, he worships himself, what he has supposedly achieved and made of himself. However, Frank frequently refers to his “essential” identity, his “uncastrated” genes determining his masculinity. The fact that it seems highly insightful to view his gender through the position of performative gender theory becomes clear when his biological birth is revealed. As a matter of fact though, Frank’s careful construction of his masculinity is revealed to be an unintended masquerade in the sense of Judith Butler. Initially, he was simply the object of one of his father’s experiments, which he uncovers on breaking into the secrecy of the old man’s study. This is the key moment of Frank’s narration as it contains the critical message and triggers the need to reconsider his value system due to the fact that the foundations of his identity and ideals are shaken. It is also a fundamental disruption of the protagonist’s life, as his carefully constructed identity is deprived of a justifiable basis. All he believed in and believed to be suddenly breaks away. It is an urge for a redefinition, a renegotiation of his personal gender. This leads to the question of the function of Frank’s liminal status – both as an unwitting transgender adolescent, as well as an individual living an isolated life excluded from society.

This turning point at the very end of the novel illustrates the importance and the presence of the liminal in Banks’ novel. It emphasises the critical perspective on society which sets these harmful and restricting gender norms. These then influence the development of a self-understanding understanding in a negative way. The fractured identities in *The Wasp Factory* illustrate and result from the conflict of this particular post-war gender norm. However, I also aim to show that the turning point of this novel reveals the outdated quality of this norm which poses the question of their legitimacy. It is the moment of revelation, in the act of uncovering Frank’s natural gender, that we realise the potential of liminality and the depth of the split of

his character. It is in this moment that the full potential of the message unfolds. While in the course of the narration, a relentless image of masculinity is constructed, an image of brutality, lack of emotional ability and ruthless tendency towards being restrictive, this entire construct of the idealised man collapses and the underlying hypocrisy is exposed as anachronistic. Frank uses the moment of his father's inattentiveness to break into his father's study, which had been kept securely locked and guarded over the past few years. What the boy finds disturbs him and his self-understanding fundamentally:

A specimen-jar standing on top of the bureau, which was placed just to the side of the door and hidden from the hall outside by the door when it was open. In the jar was a clear liquid – alcohol, I assumed. In the alcohol was a tiny, torn set of male genitalia. [...] I forgot all about Eric, about my father, about everything except me, and my loss. (*WF* 228)

He later, on interrogating his father, finds out that this is only a waxen imitation of a little boy's penis created by his father to uphold the myth, in case of Frank's breaking into the study. Hormones indicate that Frank has been drugged by his father all his life. "Was an experiment, sall. Juss an experiment... [sic]" (*WF* 231), is his drunk father's only and emotionless reply to the confrontation with his son's finding out the truth. In fact, this is a harsh criticism of patriarchal masculinity in this context. Mr Cauldhame is presented as a modern Dr. Frankenstein, working and experimenting in his mysterious and monstrous study to create a new being. It is an act of reigning over another person's life – or even more importantly: a female person's life, influencing nature and allowing oneself to exercise total power and control over another individual.

In the moment of this discovery, Frank's identity can be understood as liminal, he is both one and the other. Born as a girl, Frank has performed his life as a boy. He is in-between the two states of a gendered being: he is both boy and girl. For a teenager, this means utter confusion, the loss of stability, of a sense of a self, which adolescents aim to test and discover. He feels like having to leave the limitation of his isolated island, a liminal place indeed, where other concepts of time and space exist for Frank. At the same time, this sudden insecurity and indifference to the standards and norms of the outside world make a flight impossible for him: "I don't know what I'm going to do. I can't stay here, and I'm frightened of everywhere

else.” (WF 182) Moreover, this moment of disruption, triggering this phase of being in-between, reveals the arbitrariness of stereotypical gender norms and shows that Frank’s extremist masculinity is exposed as ridiculous, contemptible, and horrific.

Frank’s masculinity is instantly and symbolically reverted. The carefully constructed masculinity Frank frantically adheres to, is proven to be but a cunning and macabre experiment symbolised by the waxen imitation of a castrated penis in a jar. This implies criticism of the inappropriateness of masculine ideals with their constitutive violence and also patriarchy which dominates nature, women and everything under its influence. Like Dr. Frankenstein, Mr Cauldhame has moulded and manipulated his son. What is more, this moment shows how patriarchal dominance, the father remote-controlling his daughter/son’s life, has a terribly destructive quality. Not only does it grievously disrupt his daughter’s life, it also leads to the death of three other human and uncountable other little lives. Frank states, “my father’s truth has murdered what I was“ (WF 242). It is, however, not quite clear whether this means murdering the girl Frank was, or the performed boyish identity that Frank has inhabited. When, in the end, Frank’s sense of self is significantly disrupted, the fundamentals of his identity are irreparably shaken, it becomes clear that he has always had a notion of being both one and an ‘other’, of not being decidedly one identity. In an earlier stage of the novel, he admits that his personality is less coherent than he intended: “Sometimes the thoughts and feelings I had didn’t really agree with each other, so I decided I must be lots of different people inside my brain.” (WF 76-77) There is a notion of a non-unified, non-homogenous, non-essential identity existent, which is given an explanation in the moment of revelation. Frank’s carefully constructed identity is not simply called into question, it is bereaved of its legitimization, its foundation, and therefore confronts Frank with the need of having to redefine who he or she is. However, it is not a notion of a hybrid identity, which is postulated – neither in the course of the novel, nor in the very end with its disruptive turn. Frank/Frances still thinks in binary categories which make a redefinition difficult: “Poor Eric came home to see his brother, only to find (Zap! Pow! Dams burst! Bombs go off! Wasps fry: *ttssss!*) he’s got a sister.” (WF 244) Frank’s major problem in this new situation is that he has ritualistically performed masculine role expectations, almost even celebrated them: Frank lived a

life as an ultra-masculine boy, a soldier, shaman, murderer, tactician, an inventor and a sadistic sovereign over his island. Having repressed his ‘other’, the danger whose presence he always felt, having projected all his fears, hatred, aggression onto femininity, it is almost impossible to take the diametrically opposite position – as he still thinks in binary categories: Frank only knows the categories of either being a brother or a sister. However, he is also aware that one door closed for him, that he is not what he thought to be and realises that his binary understanding of gender is proven to be useless to define his identity. “I thought one door had snicked shut behind me years ago [being able to become a real man]; in fact I was still crawling about the face. *Now* the door closes, and my journey begins.” (WF 244)

If gender reality or truth is constituted only via the continuous performance of socially determined rules, not an act of an independently thinking mind, and if Frank has lived all his life as a boy, how is he suddenly to perform like a girl and is this possible? This question is not answered, but is left open. Left to be found out on this journey of discovery, in a state of being between the old model of two gender types.

But I *am* still me; I *am* the same person, with the same memories and the same deeds done, the same (small) achievements, the same (appalling) crimes to *my* name. (WF 242, italicisation in the original)

“I *am* still me”, Frank concludes in his state of utter confusion. When his/her binary gender model is rendered inadequate to explain who he/she is, several questions arise: What causes this sense of consistency Frank refers to? Is it merely his/her physical existence which conducted these deeds? Or is it a consistent self within this entity, which is yet to define? This fracture disrupting the protagonist’s consistency of identity implies his/her inner conflict arising from the limiting forces of patriarchal order which suppress divergences from the norm. Thus, the fracture symbolises the violent and manipulative quality of patriarchy, criticising and exposing it as promoting inequality, uniformity and dominance of a particular group identity, the hard, white male. At the same time, it voices criticism of a society’s value system, which is marked by patriarchal norms and which is ignorant as well as destructive of its citizens’ individuality and multiplicity. *The Wasp Factory* forces the reader to question and reconsider the validity of gender binaries, of acknowledged values of patriarchy as the driving force of society.

This in-between space or phase in which Frank finds himself/herself is an interruption of acknowledged values which originate in a patriarchal past, and a present which seems to be the continuum of this history. This space forces the protagonist to pause and reflect on his/her identity but leaves him/her confused. The novel also demonstrates that an essential notion of gender is invalid; it is the performativity of gender which is in focus.

An issue which leads to a meta-level is the connection between the sense of a loss of the self with national identity. The fracture of the individual self and its need to re-evaluate their identity mirrors the need for a national reconsideration of identity. Iain Banks's character Frank Cauldhame definitely fits into the list of hard men that Alice Ferrebe describes:

This inextricable relationship between national identity and masculinity has been well theorised [...], and the contemporary Scottish canon represents a productive case in this point. The failing, flailing hard men in the fictions of Alasdair Gray, James Kelman and Irvine Welsh have been convincingly diagnosed as symptomatic of a pervasive sense of national loss following the unsuccessful referendum of 1979. (Ferrebe 275)

While the strict, traditional construction masculinity is exposed as inappropriate and a farce in the example of Frank Cauldhame's violent behaviour, Jackie Kay's novel suggests a different approach to dealing with gender identity. While security of identity on the basis of a gender definition is destroyed in *The Wasp Factory*, *Trumpet* offers a more fluid and creative approach to the same issue. It will be shown in the following, that it is necessary to widen one's perspective on how we perceive and define gender identity. The construction of masculinity which is discussed in the later novel subverts the traditionally acknowledged norms of what is 'right' and 'wrong', 'masculine' and 'feminine'.

Jackie Kay's *Trumpet* (1998)

What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular and communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. (Bhabha 2)

Jackie Kay's novel *Trumpet* is about Joss Moody, a famous trumpet player living in Scotland. After he passes away, the death certificate reveals that he has lived as a man despite being born as a woman. He and his wife, Millicent, have kept this truth a secret until his death, causing an enormous nationwide shock and outcry of indignation on discovery. Joss' life is reconstructed in episodes by those in his environment: family members, band colleagues, a tabloid journalist sensationalising Joss's story, as well as a funeral director and a registrar. What happens is that all of them reconstruct Joss's identity a second time, trying to figure out who he was, what his motivations were and how this influences the impact Joss's music and talent had on the audience. Joss Moody's fictitious biography can be read as being inspired by the American Jazz musician, Billy Tipton, who had lived a life as a man, being born a woman. Tipton even convinced his wife and lovers that he suffered from the consequences of a severe accident which prohibited him to have sexual intercourse with women. (see Garber 176)

I hypothesise that this novel exposes the hypocrisy and social power-discourse of today's society and how, being allegedly tolerant towards diverse ways of life, it discriminates against those who fail to fit in the system, in this case the 'norm' of heterosexuality and the binary notion of gender. At the same time, it illustrates the son's internal struggle and dialogue with his father's life-style which develops towards an acceptance of Joss' identity and gender. The subversive potential of the novel's message unfolds in the moment of Joss's death, thus is immediately present and problematised from the beginning of the narration onwards. The liminality of Joss' life is revealed on his death bed: he passes as male while physically staying female; so he is both, but not in the strict sense. It is interesting that his son is the one who undergoes the development while being confronted with the shock of this discovery, with the in-between-life his parents have kept from him.

The involvement with Joss' identity, being transgender, is the provocation as well as the presupposition for Colman's change of perspective.

I aim to illuminate the particular facets of *Trumpet*, which represent the different approaches to the confrontation with an exceptional life. Beginning with issues of form, I will proceed to external perspectives and reconstructions by external persons without personal connection to the Moody family. This will be followed by an examination of the family's approach to the sensationalised revelation and Joss' final word which does not actually answer the question about his motivations. Liminality involves the temporary interruption of normal order. While Joss seems to live his life permanently performing acts of reemphasising his identity, which would make him a permanently liminal character, it is Colman who goes through stages of change. Colman's development serves to illustrate the critical message.

The novel's form itself supports the notion that it addresses society's way of dealing with an anomalous life-construction. It is divided into several sections whose titles occur several times and remind the reader of a tabloid journal: There are, among others, 'House and Home', 'People', 'Style', 'Good Hotels', 'Cover Story', 'Interview', 'Interiors', and 'Music'. While the first is only associated with Millie Moody's perspective, 'People' gives insight to particular relevant persons in the aftermath of Joss' death. 'Investigation', 'Style' or 'Good Hotels' give introspection into the thoughts of Sophie Stones, the tabloid reporter who aims at a major coup trying to publish a sensationalist version of Joss Moody's memoirs or show the interaction between her and Colman Moody, Joss' son, and his development. This episodic, repetitive structure, the fractures and musical themes illustrate and illuminate the respective perspectives which are relevant in the discussion. The form, resembling a trivial, sensationalist, tabloid investigation of a famous person's life, locates the topic in the context of a social group representing the larger group of society. This functions as a fruitful setting symbolising the unsubstantiated basis of society's aversion against non-heterosexual ways of living. The only chapter which allows Joss himself to voice his position posthumously is the last one, a letter to his son Colman, explaining the significance of his father's biography and charisma for the family.

The importance of a focus on this liminal identity is that there are two types of identity constructions demonstrated or implied. On the one hand, there is Joss' own identity and gender construction which is at least partly determined by the socio-political discourse which is the underlying matter of investigation. On the other, there is the external attempt to reconstruct and to retrace this in order to understand the musician's motivations. It is particularly noteworthy that 'proof' of the reality of Joss' gender is sought with the help of legal and medical examination. The problem, however, is that the working vocabulary of both fields does not include an in-between category of gender.

When doctor Krishnamurty visits the Moodys' house to certify Joss' death, she starts filling in the so-called 'obvious' facts, without previous examination: time of death, and "Sex: Male", indicating the commonly acknowledged understanding of a binary model of genders. It is noteworthy to observe the process she undergoes when examining the body and which relating categories of thought are available. On uncovering Joss' secondary sexual organs, the doctor first considers them to be male breasts, "[at] least not women's breasts" (*T* 43). Only on discovering the lack of a penis does Dr. Krishnamurty feel certain enough to identify a particular gender.

She got her red pen out from her doctor's bag. What she thought of as her emergency red pen. She crossed 'male' out and wrote 'female' in her rather bad doctor's handwriting. She looked at the word 'female' and thought it wasn't quite clear enough. She crossed that out, tutting to herself, and printed 'female' in large childish letters. Then she put the medical certificate in the envelope, wondering what the registrar would make of it, sealed the envelope and closed the door on the dead woman. (*T* 44)

As if regular handwriting does not suffice to prove the word change on the certificate, she rewrites the term twice and in capital letters to make the 'fact' unmistakably sure in order to avoid misunderstandings with regard to this gender. Evidently, there are two underlying explanations. On the one hand, the doctor herself uses a biological understanding of genders which causes this irritation and confusion; and on the other hand, it is a vocabulary issue as the medical terminology only offers two different terms valid in this context. In other words, the medical examination and the characterisation of the dead body are limited by linguistic restrictions. Dr. Krishnamurty perceives every deceased person's body as more than just a corpse. To her it is the individual, whose soul is slowly departing. Just like her lack of

vocabulary to categorise Joss' gender, the doctor has developed a sense for the dead body's aura: "Not emptiness. Not nothing. But something." (*T* 43) This is a precondition to think outside the box. Nevertheless, the doctor lacks the necessary modes of explanation to grasp the depth of Joss's identity.

The death certificate confuses the registrar, Mr Sharif, whose sense of order, tidiness and aesthetics is upset by the violent use of the red pen having crossed out the deceased's gender. Mr Sharif has also developed a strong working ethos to treat his clients with special appreciation, celebrating the official quality of the legal document as a proof of one's identity. The choice of names bears a particular significance as names tell stories – those of their references if taken from literature, and those of their bearers who develop individual characteristics:

You couldn't come from Bangladesh and not realize the significance of names, what they told you, the occupation they gave you. Sharif would not be a registrar today were it not for his name. [...] But Mohammad Nassar Sharif had never in his life seen a medical certificate where male was crossed out and female entered in red. On the grounds of pure aesthetics, Mohammad found the last minute change hurtful. The use of the red pen seemed unnecessarily violent. (*T* 77)

Sharif identifies the duality of Joss' character in his own way of characterising it. To him, it is the aesthetics of the order which is destroyed by the ambivalence of the document and he realises that his counterpart and her husband have led an unusual life, but without demonstrating it.

The woman sitting quietly in Mr Sharif's office had come on time with all the correct documents, with even more documents than she actually needed. She had a birth certificate for the deceased bearing the name Josephine Moore. [...] A marriage certificate for the deceased bearing the name Joss Moody. [...] Nassar Sharif could not make head nor tail of all this information. It was as if she had brought to him the certificates and papers of two completely different people – a woman and a man. If it hadn't been for the fact that the sealed medical certificate contained that violent red pen, he would indeed have assumed he was dealing with two people, not one. Mr Sharif showed the woman the medical certificate. 'You were aware of the last minute change that the doctor has added here?' he asked, pointing to the large 'female'. The woman in front of him clearly was not. She asked Mr Sharif if he could be registered as a man. She said, rather enigmatically, it appeared to Mohammad, that this would have been important for her husband, to be registered in death as he was in life. (*T* 79)

His sophisticated perspective reaches his limits on being confronted with this wish. He cannot understand the extent of this category change, but, out of curiosity, wants to ask the lady whether she had found her partner attractive, replying that "he could not lie on a death certificate", an official, legal document (*T* 80). The legal

vocabulary available is hardly sufficient to grasp the width of identity issues. Mr Sharif's way of thinking is clearly influenced by the restrictive quality of the same. Why would ticking 'male' have been a lie, if Joss had lived the majority of his life as a man? Who defines what is right or wrong in this context. The legal issues involved demonstrate the restrictive, hegemonic and suppressive power of language which is one-dimensional and out-dated. Even the harmless character of Mr Sharif underlies this power discourse.

Thamar Klein argues in her essay that medical and legal language rely on a binary sex/gender relationship which constitutes and is part of a power discourse restricting the individual's legal position. As a consequence of this, she states that transgender identities are not catered for by administrative processes, due to a lack of adequate vocabulary and the restrictive mindset which is connected to this (Klein 2012: 25). Later on, Klein emphasises that it is appropriate and even strictly necessary to bear in mind the "socio-political power relations inherent in (medical) infrastructure" (Klein 2012: 14). This means that medical language is embedded in a particular cultural background and implies a hierarchy of those setting the norms towards those who are affected. In a way, it is a normal process that these power relations become naturalised so that society internalised them without necessarily questioning them. Susan Stryker summarises this phenomenon by emphasising that

Medical practitioners and institutions have the social power to determine what is considered sick or healthy, normal or pathological, sane or insane – and thus, often, to transform potentially neutral forms of human difference into unjust and oppressive social hierarchies. (Stryker 2008: 36)

In the aftermath of Joss' death, the stigmatization of a way of life which does not fit into the norm, takes place on the exemplary model of a famous (but of course fictitious) character. While the so-called intellectual elite, the doctor and the registrar, is piqued by and reacts curiously to Joss' unusual sexual identity, they mark this identity as 'weird'. Tabloid mass media use this label to sensationalise this life outside the norm into a perverse, freakish one. By searching for binary absolutes, both the doctor and the registrar show their singlemindedness and their inability to reconsider their position when being confronted with the case of a non-conformist person. While both of them recognise the inadequacy of the categories available,

they underlie the power discourse which prescribes what is right or wrong, so that they do not ‘lie’ on an official document. Thus, both of them further the discourse of power and uphold the notion of what is ‘normal or pathological’. The difficulty concerning this issue arises from the fact that traditional medico-legal terminology seems to be rendered inappropriate as soon as an individual diverges from the heterosexual norm. Tamar Klein argues that medical as well as legal terminology and infrastructure reflect socio-political power relations (Klein 2012: 14) – a mechanism which is still prevalent in the late twentieth century when *Trumpet* was published. It is a means to uphold binary gender structures in order to apply a certain degree of control and thus power over people’s most intimate sections of life. “Indeed, inequality and power divides are habitually incorporated into such classification systems because they serve specific cultural and political purposes”, states Klein (Klein 2012: 16).

The third, only externally involved person, who is relevant in this context, is the funeral director, Albert Holding. He is presented as having seen a lot of death and decay in his life and it is repeatedly said that: “He rarely gasps. Nothing ever shocks.” (*T* 106). Nonetheless, he is astonished as he prepares Joss’ body as it fundamentally disrupts all his beliefs in gender. Holding has seen corpses that sat up, burped or opened their eyes – grotesque deformations of bodies mirroring exaggerations of the deceased persons’ qualities in life. It is the experience, or rather impression of “a man turn into a woman before his very eyes” (*T* 111) that shocks him and makes him reconsider what he has thought of men and women all his life. The comically bizarre way in which the funeral director examines Joss’s corpse suggests a parodist take on the Freudian notion of a woman’s primary sexual organs being nothing more than the inversion or reduction of a man’s:

When he did notice after a few moments that there was no visible penis, he actually found himself rummaging in the pubic hair just to check that there wasn’t a very, very small one hiding somewhere. The whole absence made Albert Holding feel terribly anxious, as if he had done something wrong. As if he was not doing his job properly. (*T* 109)

This situation involves both an administrative and possibly legal perspective on the situation, as well as an allusion to how a gender label can determine a person’s outward appearance:

He didn't mean to but he happened to glance quickly at the face. It gave him quite a turn. The face had transformed. It looked more round, more womanly. It was without a question a woman's face. How anybody could have ever thought that face male was beyond Albert Holding. (T 110)

After discovering Joss' primary and secondary sexual organs as being female, his entire perception of Joss' gender changes. Just as this shift in appearance takes place, he changes his use of language. He invites Colman Moody to the funeral parlour to double check the corpse's identity:

'What I mean to say,' Holding said, coughing into his fist, 'is that your father is not a man at all, but a woman. In other words *he* does not possess male body parts, but instead the person lying through next door that I am given to understand is your father is actually a woman. *She* is in possession of the female body parts.' (T 114, my emphasis)

Particularly noteworthy is the shift in pronouns here – indicating gender confusion due to the fact that, for Holding, gender identity used to be dependent on sexual organs. The legal power discourse connected to this issue and alluded to above, implies a possible rejection of regular burial for the corpse due to a 'wrong' death certificate (T 113). As casually as this worry is voiced, it implies the violent quality of discrimination against non-heterosexuals, if even the last honour of a dignified funeral is declined. At the same time, though, Albert Holding refers to the persuasive disguise Joss must have worn all his life and thus opens the sphere of discussion up for the notion of the performativity of gender identities: "All his working life he [Holding] has assumed that what made man a man and woman a woman was the differing sexual organs. Yet today, he had a *woman* who persuaded him, even dead, that *he* was a man, once *he* had his clothes on." (T 115, my emphasis) By starting to question his own perspective on gender roles, Holding realises that the binary understanding of the same is inappropriate and that gender can, in fact, be understood as performance.

A construction of an idealised masculinity is used in the novel. In contrast to Frank's ideal of violent hard-man masculinity in *The Wasp Factory*, which has a self-destructive as well as externally destructive quality, Joss's idealised performance is mainly underlined by tailored gentleman's attire. It is a carefully chosen, bespoke outward appearance which reflects Joss' meticulous construction of his identity. Marjorie Garber speaks of "a rhetoric of *clothing, naming and performance*" which is used in cross-dressing, (Garber 134, emphasis in the original). Ritualised 'phrases',

symbols and habits are used to support the performance of a newly created identity. This rhetoric is also what Joss chooses as his means of visual communication. On meeting her future husband for the first time, Millicent recognises Joss as an outstanding figure. He was well dressed and had “a slow deliberate walk, like he’s practiced it.” (T 15) He has the air of someone old-fashioned and proper, a classic gentleman. Joss, determined to become what he considers an ideal man, performs particular habits to support the authenticity thereof. A set of movements and habits is underlined by his traditionally masculine attire. His suits, measured and tailored, express a form of masculinity, which represents power, order, and authority. Joss and Millie’s son, Coleman, describes their appearances as extraordinary and almost ‘glamorous’ (T 47). As a matter of fact, clothes are a means of communication and performance, as well as being a disguise for another, subliminal identity underneath. Joss is, in fact, performing a repetitive ritual of passing, performing a rite of passage which transforms him. His identity is permanently liminal.

Sophie Stones, the tabloid reporter, is ignorant of this internal tension and simply sensationalises this issue. By attempting to unveil Joss’s past as a girl, she plainly reduces his cross-dressing to a bi-polar perversion. She notes to herself on formulating the trumpet player’s biography in her head: “Find out the exact cup size. *Chapter One – Even though it turned out that my dad had a 32C cup, he still wrapped bandages round his chest in the curtained secrecy of his bedroom*” (T 127, italicisation in the original). Ridiculing and perverting Joss’s masculinity, the journalist does not grasp the width of a plural, multi-faceted identity. Joss constantly lives on the margins between the traditional gender definitions. He is both one and the other, more probably, representing an ‘other’ category.

Parallel to *The Wasp Factory*, *Trumpet* also plays with the myth of castration. Bandages are a recurring motif in the novel; bandages wrapped around the torso as if hiding a wound, bandages becoming part of the skin, and bandages flattening Joss’s breasts to hide these female, secondary sexual organs. In contrast to the castration myth in Banks’ novel, the revelation of the illusory quality of the same does not have a destructive effect, as Frank suffers from a certain form of deracination, while Joss, as the focus of the later novel, does not have to comment on or live with the

revelation of his ‘femininity’. Carole Jones comments on this difference in her essay. She explains that Joss is not branded and traumatized by a castration process in the Freudian sense and thus does not suffer under the psychological burden of being incomplete. On the contrary, Jones speaks of an excess – an excess of biological femininity by focusing on Joss’ breasts (Jones 2009: 113). Breasts have to be hidden in bandages; and breasts are the attributes which make the funeral director doubt the masculinity of his client’s body. Only Colman, the overly masculine young man, focuses on his father’s penis, and thus at first denies his father the justification of being male (*T* 62). Thus, what differentiates the novels with regard to the castration myth is their approach towards dealing with sexual ‘otherness’. While Frank is seemingly incomplete, suffering under his ‘wound’ and the lack of his primary sexual organ, Joss has ‘too many’ sexual attributes. He has additional secondary sexual organs which endow him with a second layer of identity characteristics. To illustrate this further, it is vital to have a closer look on the use and perception of Joss’ bandages. As a matter of fact, the focus on the breasts, instead of on the penis, is often connected with the emphasis on wrapping them tightly with bandages. This implies several ways of interpretation: on the one hand, as mentioned above, it alludes to the Freudian wound of castration, of a ‘lack’ which leaves the female body scarred for life. On the other hand, it does not only hide a potential scar, but also the trumpet player’s biological sex. Joss, aided by his wife Millie, applies bandages like a ‘second skin’ around his torso, to reveal the existence of female breasts. The act of wrapping bandages around Joss’ torso is another ritual he carries out in the morning to stabilise the performance. Thus, both are involved in the process of covering his biological constitution. Millie remembers:

I wrapped two cream bandages around his breasts every morning, early. I wrapped them round and round, tight. I didn’t think about anything except doing it well. Doing it well meant wrapping tight. The tighter I wrapped, the flatter his breasts. That was all he was concerned about. [...] He was always more comfortable once he was dressed. More secure somehow. [...] His breasts weren’t very big. They flattened easily. Nobody except me ever knew he had them. I never touched them except when I was wrapping the bandages round and around them. (*T* 238-239)

Joss feels more himself, as soon as his role is appropriately prepared, when nothing can interfere with his performance. Even though some critics doubt the erotic quality of cross-dressing, see for example Robert Stoller’s elaboration on this in his

monograph *Sex and Gender* (Stoller 1968: 195), it seems inappropriate to neglect the importance of ‘male’ clothing for Joss, without having a fetishist quality. Marjorie Garber would speak of Joss being a “‘straight’ transsexual” (Garber 1992: 69), as Joss, who is biologically female and interested in women, identifies himself as a man. The bandages become part of Joss, proving the multiple layers of his personality. It is an identity which has both male and female attributes, which is neither primarily one nor the other. While Dr. Krishnamurty feels like “she was removing skin, each wrapping of bandage that she peeled off felt unmistakably like a layer of skin” (*T* 43) and thus removes a part of Joss’ personality, Albert Holding perceives them as the “bandages of an Egyptian mummy” (*T* 110). While both attributes represent an underlying secret, a new facet of Joss’ life, Holding’s term appears to conserve something else hiding underneath the bandage, while Krishnamurty’s description alludes more to a process of horrendously damaging a body by peeling off his skin. This could be an indication of Joss’ external perception. In the course of the narration, a process of questioning and uncovering Joss’ personality facets takes place. While it appears like a disgraceful act of intruding into Joss’ privacy in the beginning, the funeral director realises the plurality of the trumpet player’s life.

In fact, the Russian matryoshka doll, which the family keep in their living room, discovered by the cleaner, is a peculiarly fitting item in this context, as it represents multiple layers, multiple personalities within one über-entity: “The thing she [Mrs Moody] was fussy about was all her ornaments. Ornaments from all around the world in that house. Huge Russian dolls, those ones that hide inside each other. Mrs Moody showed her [the cleaner] one one day. It took up ten minutes to get to the baby hiding in there.” (*T* 173) Joss is simultaneously male and female – but at the same time neither one nor the other in the conventional sense. He easily crosses the boundaries of traditional gender conceptions and thus takes occupies a ‘third’ category, which is a term Marjorie Garber uses in *Vested Interests* (1992). Garber states that this “‘third’ is that which questions the binary thinking and introduces crisis – a crisis which is symptomatized by *both* the overestimation *and* the underestimation of cross-dressing. [...] The ‘third’ is a mode of articulation, a way of describing a space of possibility. Three puts in question the idea of one: of identity,

self-sufficiency, self-knowledge.” (Garber 1992: 11; emphasis in the original) This third term causes a ‘category crisis’, a problem of definition and a “borderline that becomes permeable” (Garber 1992: 16). This ‘third’ term is an in-between space, breaking up the binary and putting it into question. It expresses an alternative form of living as well as an alternative way of expressing one’s sexuality. Joss, therefore, occupies a space which opens up between the normative dualism, which is not yet accepted as ‘normal’ in the novel, which results in this sensationalist outcry. Moreover, the trumpet player is the embodiment of questioning the idea of unity. Being both and neither male and female, in addition to having an African and a white European parent, being biracial, is important to reconsider and question established values. His transsexuality reinscribes this multifaceted quality of his personality and deconstructs the normative binary of gender categories as a cultural effect of his cross-dressing. This is why the liminal character of Joss has a subversive quality undermining prevalent power structures which aim at regulating individual desire. However, as he is deviant from the norm, he evokes an appalled and disgusted reaction among those who have to face their stereotypes. It is a way of ‘mocking’ the strict gender distinction with normative regulations of what constitutes masculinity and femininity by using a seemingly overtly masculine appearance. Only on his deathbed does the public learn about his female body while he has lived a seemingly stereotypical life as a married man. To re-emphasise this fact, the full subversive potential of his ‘other’-identity is thus only released after Joss’ death.

The sensationalist attention, the public shock and the scandalization of Joss’ life as a transsexual is an indicator of the intolerance among the majority of a society. It is what Judith Butler summarises by saying that “we regularly punish those who fail to do their gender right.” (Butler 1990: 140) In the same chapter in *Gender Trouble*, Butler explains:

If the inner truth of gender is a fabrication and if a true gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies, then it seems that genders can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity. (Butler 1990: 136)

While the public does not grasp the ‘otherness’ of the trumpet player’s identity, Joss performs a masculine role continuously and deliberately. The ritualistic way of

dressing up, the celebration of shaving, the practiced walk and his protective behaviour all add up to a performance of a male life. At the same time, his transvestite life mocks essentialism. Butler summarises this by stating that “*In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself – as well as its contingency.*” (Butler 1990: 137, italicisation in the original).

The choice of names has a particular relevance in Kay’s novel. Joss Moody’s name is self-modified, and also the ritual of christening the married couple’s adoptive child is an emotional endeavour. Joss Moody, born as Josephine Moore, chooses a name which reemphasises his multiple and deviant identity. As a transsexual, biracial person, child of a Scottish mother and an African immigrant (*T* 274), Josephine modifies her given name in accordance with Jazz musician traditions. ‘Josephine’ is shortened to Joss linguistically indicating the in-between, liminal status; Moore is turned into Moody, indicating a particular state of emotionality, ambiance and also ambivalence. When it comes to naming their child, Joss desires to give the boy an artistic Jazz musician’s name.

Joss and I nearly divorced when it came to naming Colman. Joss wanted Miles; I wanted Campbell. Joss wanted Louis; I wanted Alastair. Joss wanted a jazz or a blues name. What about Jelly Roll, I laughed. Or Howling Wolf, Bird, Muggsy, Fats, Leadbelly. I was bent over double. Pee Wee. Joss slapped me across my face. ‘That’s enough,’ he said. ‘White people always laugh at black names.’ (*T* 5)

Apart from the fact that a subtle everyday-racist undertone, of which Mille does not seem to be overly aware, resonates in her statement, Millie does not understand Joss’ motivations for his choices for their son’s name. While she mocks the seemingly ‘exotic’ blues names, she also ridicules the most important aspect of her husband’s life, his music which is part of his character. Alice Ferrebe highlights the significance of names in Kay’s novels by stating that they demonstrate the difficulty of liberating oneself from the language which brands and thus also restricts the individual (Ferrebe 280). Names are indeed a central motif in *Trumpet*, however, where a name can be limiting it can also offer the possibility of self-expression. For Joss, a name is part of one’s identity construction. Choosing a jazz name, would have meant committing to jazz culture, connecting the son with his father. One’s name is a reference to one’s origin. Since there are no blood relations between father and adopted son, a jazz name would have represented one bond between the two, in

contrast to the explicitly white British names. Renaming the adopted baby meant welcoming him to the family, leaving the name behind which represented white dominance, choosing an Irish one – a compromise, possibly to symbolise the connection with a country formerly suppressed by the British. Colman explains:

Before I became Colman Moody, I was William Dunsmore. If I'd stayed William Dunsmore all my life I'd been a completely different man. Definitely. I mean a William Dunsmore's smile would be different from a Colman Moody's smile. All my facial expressions would have been different. I bet even my walk would have been heavier if I'd been William Dunsmore. Heavy-footed. Maybe a bit lopsided. (*T* 57)

The choice of verbs hints at a conception of identity connected with naming: before Colman *became*, he *was* – two distinct entities. For Colman, a name also has a determining function, changing the quality of a person's character traits. The lopsidedness hints at the antiquated, dominant white English supremacy that the name William designates. Colman's temporary desire to change his name after the wave of sensationalist shame (*T* 138), is a desire to cut his family roots. All males in the family have changed their names: Joss's father on becoming a servant in Scotland, Joss on becoming a man, Colman on being adopted (*T* 276).

Memory is a factor which contributes significantly to the construction of a person's identity: individual and cultural memory; a person in the context of a social fabric. The processes of memorising, be it oral or written, personal or external, is a (re)constructive process, which is also possibly falsifying the actual event. Succeeding Joss Moody's death, a wave of public attention, mainly tabloid reports, has washed over the Moody family, delighting in the anomaly of a famous person's life, sensationalising the 'perversion'. Sophie Stones is one of the tabloid reporters seeking to strike a major coup with her biography on Joss Moody's life. She is a character that contrasts significantly with the object of her studies.

Most remarkable about Sophie Stones is that she constantly speaks about and to herself not only in the first, but also in the third person. While disdaining and perverting Joss' multiply layered identity, it seems, in fact, to be the journalist herself, who is the one with the schizoid personality. In the subchapter 'Money Pages', Sophie is the first person narrator reflecting upon her strategies of success in an interior monologue: "It occurs to me that Sophie here is starting to find Colman

more puzzling than Joss Moody.” (T 129) A bit further on, she proves to be coldblooded and greedy by egoistically taking what she needs to profit. Her justification for this: “Disgusting, I know. But Sophie deserves it more than anybody.” (T 129) This passage illustrates how Sophie switches between the perspectives and between her multiple selves. There are (at least) two Sophies, two characters that appear depending on the context and need. These short extracts suggest the existence of a reckless tabloid journalist persona, which is needed to succeed. However, it is not congruent with the private Sophie-persona, who presents herself as a permanently neglected child. The fact that she switches the narrative perspective in mid-sentence, hints at two sharply differentiated personas within her. What resonates in this context is a pathological egocentricity, an overly pronounced focus on her own profit, which seems to result in her inferiority complex – or rather, a sister complex. In a particularly embittered and cynical way, Sophie speaks of her older sister Sarah. By doing so, she shows the same pathological focus on the older sibling as she perceives it in her parents’ behaviour. She is utterly fixated on surpassing Sarah in order to receive their parents’ love she apparently lacked in their childhood:

My parents will have to stop saying, ‘Sarah this and Sarah that,’ to everything. This time is going to be *it*. I can feel it in my bones. Something lucky is going to happen. (Will they love me? Is success lovable?) It will completely change my life, place me in another league. I can see myself suddenly very rich in Italian clothes, my hair thick as my sister’s and swept to the side. (T 129, italicisation in the original)

It is remarkable that her exaggerated jealousy of her sister and the supposed neglect by her parents is not her primary objective, but has developed into a sense of megalomania. It is actually a celebrity status, comparable to the one Joss enjoyed all his life, she is striving for. She experiences Sarah’s success and her physical appearance as an exceedingly dominant shadow out of which she has not yet managed to manoeuvre herself (“Glad at least that I’m size ten – still not as slim as Sarah”, T 232). Her pathological behaviour indicates this. There is the massively ambitious Sophie ever striving towards success in her job as a journalist, and on the other hand, there is the complex-ridden younger sister fighting her hidden self and past. It is this behaviour which represents her hunger for success and desire to subordinate those with weak spots, which forms one side of her split self. It seems

that she focuses on the scandals of sex, infidelity and perversion, on sensationalist media representations to make herself stand out, to feel superior and to be the one in power, the one humiliating others for a change. “There’s nothing more fascinating than gossip. My sister Sarah says gossip doesn’t utilize the intellect.” (T 125) What is more, Sophie is not simply interested in catchy newspaper headlines, but in more private information and thus contributes significantly to the intrusive sensationalism: “The nineties are obsessed with sex, infidelity, scandal, sleaze, perverts. The nineties love the private life. The private life that turns suddenly and horrifically public. The sly life that hides pure filth and sin. The life of respectability that shakes with hypocrisy.” (T 169) Sophie profits, financially and personally, from the focus on others’ weaknesses which are exposed in public. She delights in denouncing others which distracts the attention from the abysses of her own personality. At the same time, it implies the radicalisation and destructive polarisation of cultural rules. This normative understanding of what is appropriate and what is defined as appalling, is carried to the extremes to appeal to the public interest. Of course, this is an allusion to the life of the Moody couple. Sophie Stones’ Hyde-personality even ‘blackmails’ the widow in mourning, unsuccessfully inviting her to an interview, intending to manipulate and scandalise Mr Moody’s life if the cooperation is denied (T 152).

As important as clothing is for Joss, it has the same significance for the young journalist. Clothes are a part of her disguise; an item of almost theatrical attire helping her to perform a particular role which helps her achieve a present objective. In contrast to the trumpet player, this use of requisites does not serve her to succeed in a continuous performance of her own self, it is rather a costume, which she wears when needed. Thus neither one, nor the other role is an authentic concept of herself, but a temporary instrument. In fact, it makes her seem even less stable than she claims to be as the following passage indicates.

Shopping is one of my favourite activities. I call it ‘Savagery’. I can be spotted in the changing rooms of classy boutiques with feathers around my mouth and blood on my face. Shopping is a blood sport. ‘Tally ho!’ Every woman out for herself. [...] Always look out for what’s new, what’s really totally stunning and different. Fishnet stockings. Sophie Stones doesn’t just hunt down one look. If I fancy some glitzy glitter, I will get some glitzy glitter. If I want a Power Suit, I’ll get a Power Suit. [...] I don’t shop for pleasure – sometimes it feels like I shop to save my life. A wardrobe thick and dense, black skirts with slits, gold mesh halterneck tops, and trousers and jackets and black lace tops, is a wardrobe of the woman I’d like to be. I know I’m not her yet; but the clothes can lie. (T 232-3)

What Stones comically describes as savagery suggests, an obsessive desire for attention and appreciation. It all serves the purpose to become a new person, which seems to be a gradual process of transformation. This passage is an example of what is not meant with Butler's performative identity. Performance, according to Butler, is not about disguise, about deciding each morning which role one wants to inhabit that day, as the young journalist does. It is about the continuous and repeated behaviour of acting out, 'quoting' particular patterns of behaviour, items of clothing that create a consistent (self-)image. Her choice of clothing does not help her become a particular type of woman, or an individual. Her clothes only hide an incomplete person underneath – deceiving the outward impression. Thus, the image she evokes of herself is that of insecurity and instability unsuccessfully veneered with a biting obtrusive as well as cold career-personality.

Sophie Stones' project is writing a book on the life of Joss Moody. She aims to do so in the perspective of Colman Moody – which makes her Colman's ghost writer. The major advantage of this genre is that the story would be a personal one, emotional and confessional, thus appealing to the public who apparently enjoy the intrusion into the privacy of a nuclear family constellation. Moreover, writing a story for and in the name of another person, means having control over this person's life, shaping the public image of the same. It is a powerful, god-like profession in her perspective, and she claims to be in possession of the right to manipulate the text in her sense. On the one hand, she falsifies statements voiced in interviews in the way which suits her intention. When speaking to Josephine's childhood friend, May Hart, now an aged woman, remembers with joy the extraordinariness of her best friend. This sentimental thought brings tears to her eyes. Stones, however, notes into her diary: "May Hart was so upset at the deception of her old schoolfriend that she burst into tears" (T 252). On the other hand power and the thirst for success are her motivations:

I can't *wait* to get this book out. It is my book really. Joss Moody will have been dead for at least a year by the time the book comes out. Colman Moody and his ghost writer, Sophie Stones, will be so close we'll be interesting. Even my sister Sarah will be riveted. I am Colman Moody's ghost writer. His psyche. I like the idea of finding his voice. His subconscious. (T 170)

Firstly, she is obsessed with the desire to participate in a bit of the Moody family's glory. Fame is her objective. Secondly, it is her deep-rooted wish to outshine her sister; and thirdly, and most importantly, she realises her chance to abuse the power she imagines to have over a confused individual. The self-image she presents above is constructed due to a delusion of grandeur combined with the intrusive and harming wish to remote-control Colman. Further on in the novel, an undeterminable narrator who cannot, as in the other passages, be aligned to a particular person, summarises this fittingly: "Many ghost writers believe they are the real authority on their subject and not the ghost themselves. They tend to get irritable if their subject disagrees with them." (*T* 262) By claiming the authority over their ghost's and their subject's lives, the writer aims to influence the outward appearance and perception of two individuals by shaping the public opinion of the same, which can denounce, falsify, or ameliorate the actual occurrences. While writing personal memories and experiences is always a construction process (Gymnich 2003: 32), the act of writing someone else's story involves an additional, external and subjective construction process.

Memory, music and identity are closely interwoven – and supported by the novel's form. Like a jazz piece, the text is made up of repetitive patterns, of flashbacks and sudden changes. The novel is framed by one particular place, Torr, where the narration begins and ends. Torr is the place of the Moody's holiday home, a cottage in the solitude of a little village on the west coast of Scotland. Both the location and the music are liminal settings. While Torr is an isolated place conserving the past, providing shelter from the public, Jazz is a musical genre which evokes a different approach to time. It conserves time, is suggestive, uses repetitive patterns of memories. Millie Moody uses the cottage as her refuge from the press, the sensationalist wave of indignation with which she is confronted. The cottage is a place which conserves the past, a place in-between – in and out of time. It is a temporal retreat which used to slow down the pace of the Moody's everyday life. The village is mostly presented as exposed to the rough forces of nature that dominate the environment which is beyond human control:

I [Millie] first brought Joss to Torr in the middle of the winter. 1956. Our tyres skidded in the black ice on the road up there. When we finally arrived Torr was thick in snow and Joss was

for turning back. The cottage seemed as if it possessed a memory of its own, one of those memories that remembers the distant past better than the recent. (*T* 7)

The weather is wild and rough, misty and foggy, and the roads almost impassable due to thick snow on the streets. The place is cut off of urban life and also the dynamics of fame, which makes it an appropriate place to hide from tabloid media and unwanted influences. It is a place shrouded in the mist of the sea which hides secrets and lies (*T* 82) In addition to being spatially in-between, it is a temporal conservator. Millie remembers that the cottage keeps memories of times past alive within its walls – and thus also connects the generations. It has the function to keep memories alive and also generations of a particular family. Thus, in the very end, it is the location of reconciliation and reunification of a family which almost broke apart.

It is remarkable that Joss Moody never narrates his own life: there is no self-portrayal in the short passage in which his voice is heard. It is in fact his oeuvre and the memories he has evoked which speak for him and which reconstruct the memory of a deceased, famous person. Jazz is his medium through which Joss lives on. It is also a musical genre with particular implications triggering key notions for the text. Jazz and Blues, the music of suffering and the loss of home, remind the listener of the fate and marginalisation of American slaves. It is associative, playful and also lugubrious. When performing with his trumpet, Joss becomes the embodiment of Jazz: “So when he takes off he is the whole century galloping to its close. The wide moors. The big mouth. Scotland. Africa. Slavery. Freedom. He is a girl. A man. Everything, nothing. He is sickness, health. The sun. The moon. Black, white.” (*T* 136) The musician and his music, melody, history and its allusions melt into one. “All jazz men are fantasies of themselves, reinventing the Counts and Dukes and Armstrongs, imitating them. Music was the one way of keeping the past alive, his father said. There’s more future in the past than there is in the future, he said. Black people and music. [...] The stories in the music. All blues are stories. Our stories, his father said, our history” (*T* 190). The multilayered quality of Joss’ character is not only restricted to his sexual orientation and the colour of his skin. In his son’s memory, worshipping his father, Joss becomes history, representing the marginalised fate of those who were not white English, but those whose origins were more widespread. For his son, he is the icon of a movement of musicians, being in-between

Scotland and the continent Africa, between being purely male and female, between the past and the present, pointing towards the future. Colman Moody undergoes a striking process of development from an appalled and shocked reaction towards acceptance of Joss' plurality and unconventional lifestyle in the end. Joss is able to fuse time, space, history and race into one, into his own personality, with the help of his "magic trumpet" (T 49). It is Joss's instrument, his time machine, and his voice. It helps him tell stories; stories of times past, stories of remembrance, stories of inequality. It conserves memories.

My father was a black man when I was a little boy. He was a famous black man who had a beautiful face and a high laugh. My father played the trumpet. He was so good at it that the whole world loved the sound of his trumpet. He played his trumpet so brilliantly that people listening would suddenly remember things they thought they had forgotten. His trumpet told stories, he used to say. Old, old stories. That was all, he would never say what the stories were exactly. You tell me, was what he said. As a treat sometimes, he would ask for ingredients to his story. Everyone present had to give one. Whatever you could think up. A butterfly. A chest. A little girl looking through a key hole. Hair. A baby ape. An old woman in a house by the sea. And then he would make up a song on his trumpet, a song that would tell the story of all these things together, and sometimes it was possible for each person to recognize the music of the butterfly, the wooden house, of the little girl. My father was a trumpet player. Internationally known. (T 214)

It is impossible to explain and define Joss' identity for certain, neither his gender, nor his motivations to live the life in this particular way. As a matter of fact, though, answering these is not important at all as the questions themselves are not sufficient to understand who Joss was. Colman's father 'was a black man' when he was little, but in fact, he is defined as a trumpet player.

In his only paragraph, Joss focuses on his own father's story, thus on his origins, but ends with an appeal to his son:

I know you would come looking for stuff. I've left it all for you, my letters, photographs, records, documents, certificates. It is all here. Mine and your own. I sat down here this morning all set to destroy all of this. Burn the lot. I stopped myself. If I do that I'd literally be burning myself. I couldn't do that to myself, to my music. But most of all, I couldn't do it to you. I thought of myself, who could make sense of all this? Then I thought of you. I am leaving myself to you. Everything I have got. All the letters I have kept hidden. [...] It is quite simple: all of this is my past, this is the sum of my parts; you are my future. I will be your son now in a strange way. You will be my father telling or not telling my story. [...] You will keep me or lose me. You will hate me or love me. You will change me or hold me dear. [...] I'm being silly: remember what you like. I've told you everything. (T 277)

This self-exposure to his son is a major step Joss takes. He gives himself and the way he will be remembered into his son's hands. Colman is the one with the

responsibility over Joss' life and reputation. In this respect, the son becomes his father's guardian – bearing the weight of protecting his memory, carrying the past into the future. This is not a matter of biology and blood relations, this father-son constellation, just as in Joss and his father, is a matter of feeling a connection, independent of one's gender, appearance or birth. Burning the evidence of his former life would have meant partly destroying material of proof and thus keeping up the performance. They are, however, artefacts of developmental stages, of thoughts, feelings and hard work. Burning letters, photographs and musical pieces equals, to Joss, burning himself and all he is. Therefore, one can conclude that it is not about the way someone was born, but what they leave behind, the memories they create. In Joss' particular case, it is clear that he is in fact only definable as a musician. He is his oeuvre. He is jazz, and he is what he created. He is the sum of all the parts he leaves behind – as artefacts and as memories. This is a strong plea for a departure from a person's valuation on the basis of their biological features, towards focussing on one's achievements independent of a person's gender or sexual orientation. As, however, this is always a factor, the text pleads, through the character of Joss Moody, for a more fluid, more reflected understanding of gender and the ethical aspects involved. Joss is given the penultimate word in the novel; the last 'word' is a gesture of acceptance and reconciliation.

Jackie Kay's novel *Trumpet* is a plea for a reconsideration of normative definitions of gender towards a more fluid understanding thereof. While Joss lives a life off the mainstream, performing a gender role which is neither wholly male nor female, his environment mostly fails to grasp the implications of the trumpet player's life-long successful performance. His role challenges his environment to confront their prejudices and one-dimensional sets of categories. In contrast to Frank Cauldhame in Iain Banks' *The Wasp Factory*, Joss Moody's performative identity is not remote-controlled. The liminal quality and the resulting subversive potential of Joss' life are rooted in his deviant status as a 'third category' gender representative. Not only does he force his closest circle of friends to reconsider their values, this fact also holds a mirror up to society who scandalise Joss after his death. A change of thinking can be observed in his son Colman, who undergoes a significant development from utter disgust and feeling of being betrayed, to acceptance and

respect. The violent quality of the public, as well as the personal reactions portrayed in the novel, demonstrate the prevalent power discourse which aims at regulating citizens' private spheres. This implies that a binary notion of gender is inadequate for an understanding of Joss's character. In addition to that, the text also suggests that Joss is not only the sum of his deeds as a part of his performance, but his oeuvre in itself is more important than his gender identity. It is also a plea not only for this fluidity, but to value a character by what they leave behind. It is then up to their descendents to keep up the memory which ends up being the only thing that matters. In the end, even his son, Colman, accepts the inexplicability and remembers him as the father he was to him. One could say that Joss is like Jazz; he is the sum of stories, that is, memories told with his trumpet, and the memories he leaves behind.

Both *The Wasp Factory* and *1982, Janine*, discussed in my first chapter, were published in 1984 and both address the repressive quality of masculine gender ideals. While Gray's novel also strongly deals with socio-economic issues, Banks' novel hyperbolically focuses on power with regard to gender. More than 20 years before Kay, these novels highlight the necessity to rethink the traditional concept of masculinity. What all of these have in common is that the transgression of a binary gender concept reveals the possibility for alternative gender categories. This thus requires a change of thinking which is triggered by and negotiated via the confrontation with the liminal quality of particular gender identities.

4. Liminal Spaces in Zoë Strachan's *Negative Space* (2003) and *Ever Fallen in Love* (2011)

Wide open northern spaces, virtual spaces and physical spaces. Zoë Strachan deals with the complexity of the lives of two individuals. Both of them undergo very different processes to a better self-understanding. In both texts, her debut novel *Negative Space* (2003) and her 2011 novel *Ever Fallen in Love*, the individual conflicts of the protagonists are mirrored in particularly charged spaces. Thus, spatial and temporal liminality are the most prominent forms of liminality which occur in both novels and can be read with Thomassen's theoretical specification of the term. He specifies his understanding of spatial liminality by stating that in contemporary globalised societies, traditional spatial and temporal boundaries are dissolved. This lack of boundaries has a significant influence on societies and interpersonal relationships. The north is either mythically or historically significant, affecting the protagonists in a way that triggers an inner motion. In this chapter, I aim to demonstrate how particular liminal spaces help the protagonists, Stella and Richard, deal with their traumatic experiences. The particular spaces in focus are the northern, artistic and virtual space. I assume that these spaces serve to refocus and regain control over a situation or over their lives and to discover a new perspective onto who they are. Within the concept of the north, it is particularly Orkney and the artists' cottage in *Negative Space* which have a liminal quality. Both are connected with personal and socio-historical memories. By drawing a connection with the historical context and the physical surroundings, Stella, the protagonist and first person narrator in *Negative Space*, manages to overcome the emotional isolation she feels and becomes part of a larger unit. The liminal surroundings of Orkney and the cottage place her own suffering in an overall context of human loss and failure, which is an emotional support for her.

As a second major liminal phenomenon, the space of art, the physical space on canvas, plays a major part in the novel. The production of art, painting and photography, is used to appropriate an object by capturing it on canvas, by distorting or recreating it and by conserving a particular memory. The space on canvas has a

liminal quality as it captures and conserves a moment in time, a memory, and represents a subject on screen who becomes the object of study. The form of the novel is closely connected to the production of art, including photography and writing. Flashbacks and sharpening focal points structure the text, so that they acquire a metafictional quality. Art and photography serve as a guiding metaphor of the novel, particularly the act of focusing and spacing. Strachan's novel *Ever Fallen in Love* shows significant parallels to *Negative Space*. Both novels use the north as a meaningful setting with the particular use of ancient highland cottages. While *Negative Space* mainly deals with Scottish settlements and history on Orkney, the later novel broaches the issue of the Highland Clearances as a disturbing memory in Scottish history. The cottages conserve personal as well as social memory, but also offer shelter from the protagonist's past. What is more, both texts deal with the production of various forms of art as a compensatory means of being in control. Computer games and virtual space are relevant motifs in *Ever Fallen in Love*. Virtual reality serves as a new platform to create an alternative identity and to acquire a dominant position within a social group where there might be none in real life. The virtual space offers the possibility to create another self, like a second chance which enables gamers to reinvent themselves. It is also a means to realise fantasies of power. While, of course, power relations are also present in virtual worlds, such as the misogynistic, sexualised depiction of women therein, human power relations exist, but the game offers a new platform to redefine one's own position.

The use of virtual space in the novel represents a very recent idea of a liminal space. It is a space which does and does not exist, it is and is not a location and people do and do not really live in it. It is a space with no physical existence apart from the one on the computer screen. It is a highly theoretical place which offers the gamer entrance to a different world while never physically leaving the other. It is neither here nor there, it is in-between. I hypothesise that the spaces – art and virtual reality – are powerful liminal ones which offer the individual the possibility to temporarily step out of their reality and to start reflecting on their personal identity. They are spaces in which the rules of everyday life do not apply in the same way as they do in the physical world and thus aid the liminars, the protagonists, perform the necessary process of development. In this context the question arises whether the use

of Virtual Reality in the novel has a liminoid quality. Turner defines this new term as a side phenomenon of the classical anthropological term, describing liminality as consumption in hedonistic western societies. In addition to spatial liminality, Stella undergoes a rite of passage in the course of the narration in the original sense that Arnold van Gennep defined. Similar to Jennifer in *So I am Glad*, Stella undergoes all three stages in order to become a more self-determined, emancipated individual and part of the community.

Additional theoretical terms are necessary to understand the nature of the particular forms of spatial liminality in both novels discussed in this chapter. As the title suggests, art plays a major role in the first novel. The term negative space itself is a technical term and needs clarification from different perspectives. This is why some theoretical approaches from the field of History of Art are introduced. The protagonist in *Ever Fallen in Love* invents computer games. Thus an excursion into the field of philosophy and sociology dealing with Virtual Reality and human interaction is necessary for the discussion.

Both texts deal with the effects of particularly charged spaces on the individual. Engaging with liminal spaces triggers a process of change in the protagonists which help them overcome their personal limits which previously inhibited them from being an active part of a social group. *Ever Fallen in Love* opens a new perspective of liminal spaces by dealing with a second layer of reality. This adds a different quality of space by offering the possibility of creating a life which exists parallel to the one in reality. The limits and norms that are revealed by transgressions have different qualities. Heteronormativity and the power discourse connected is an important aspect in both novels. Moreover, both deal with self-constructed boundaries which serve as shields which isolate the protagonists from their environment. Similar to the protagonists in the previously discussed novels, Stella does not experience her sexually transgressive behaviour as a solution to her personal struggles. *Negative Space* illustrates liberation from Stella's self-imposed immaturity and thus demonstrates an act of emancipation from her personal experience of social boundaries. The confrontation with liminality catalyses and reflects her personal change. Richard, in the second novel, lets go of the ghosts of his

past which had caused him to isolate himself. He faces his feeling of guilt which helps him overcome his powerlessness and thus surmount this state of isolation. By transgressing their self-induced limits that restrict their social interactions, both protagonists manage to create stability and new structures in their lives. I will conclude that transgression does indeed lead to a new definition of order that supports rather than inhibits the main characters' lives.

Negative Space is a novel about a young woman, the first person narrator, who mourns the sudden death of her younger brother Simon. It is a trip to Orkney as a guest in an all-female artists' retreat which triggers the decisive change in her self-perception from a traumatised, aimless young woman who is detached from herself, towards an independently acting person. Stella, the protagonist, waits until the very end of her narration until she reveals her name – tellingly underlining the act of self-recognition. It is a novel about journeys – the physical journey to the north, as well as the protagonist's personal development. *Negative Space* also shows nomadic qualities, both in form and content of the novel. Busses transport her to the sites of significant changes in her life, ships symbolise, as memento mori, the transitoriness of existence. At the same time, Stella is a character who resists categories and “heteronormative definition, just as Strachan herself wishes to transcend social labels”, McCulloch states in her essay ‘Cross that bridge’ (McCulloch 2008: 305). In their early childhood, Simon and Stella are given necklaces with a St. Christopher pendant, in order to protect their journeys in life; St. Christopher being the patron saint of the travellers. Stella undergoes a journey from living a life in stagnation to living one in independence and self-determination, being ready to deal with her grief. Fiona McCulloch further states that Strachan utilizes the north as an explorative, purifying place for the young heroine (McCulloch 2008: 307). I strongly agree with her in this case, however, I will explain that it is not only about broadening her horizon while exploring her newly emerging understanding of her self. The choice of the place itself is telling. It establishes a connection between significant chapters of Scottish history, incisive events which lastingly influenced the country. The place of her all-female retreat is a significant trigger for her individual development. It is set in the north, on Orkney, which is described as a mystical, liminal place, isolated from the pressures of society and gender norms. The liminal quality of this place is

significant for three reasons. Firstly, it reveals the starry sky which is mostly invisible in the lights of her metropolitan neighbourhood in Glasgow. Stars, as we will see, have both a mystical quality as well as a navigational function. The view of the stars and the northern lights, the connection with stellar guidance, helps Stella set her sail for a new path. Secondly, it is important for Stella to recognise the negative space surrounding her – and particularly to realise that the setting makes her the subject in focus. From an artistic point of view, her environment in Glasgow is the wrong negative space for Stella. It has a disturbing, isolating quality, which fails to place the young women in the ideal context to stand out as an individual – at least in her perception. By changing the negative space of her life, she manages to perceive herself as the subject of her own existence to become a powerful image of her own portrait. Thirdly, Orkney, with its wide open spaces, helps her refocus and take small steps towards self-determination. It is a place in which the experience of life and death are prominent features which shape Stella's daily life on the island. It is a place which conserves its historical and cultural memories, but also inspires the protagonist to process her personal experiences and memories which are intertwined with the special atmosphere of the place. Relicts of rituals of burial and transgression are present in many places on the island. By simultaneously performing and taking part in a symbolic ritual of burial, a rite of separation that is, by setting up Simon's tombstone, she liberates herself by letting go of her all-consuming grief. The liminality of the place changes her perception of time and space. Orkney leads her to the origins of her family and is the site of pagan myths as well as violent historic events. It is isolated from the stress and hectic of urban life – a retreat, which opens Stella's eyes. The width of the countryside is magical and frightening; the northern lights are a symbol of transgression symbolising the deceased wandering over from life to death. Also, it is a plea for a redefinition of her personal identity as a person, not a woman. *Negative Space* pleads for an understanding of humans in which these limiting categories are not important to define the individual.

Negative Space deals with the process of Stella's development towards self-recognition and self-acceptance. I am convinced that this process is accelerated by a shift of focus, introduced via photography and art: recognising herself and her needs, not her restrictive environment, as well as recreating her own negative space. This

process is triggered by a change of setting, an act of distancing herself from her former urban environment with its restricted view and negative habits. A journey to the cleansing northern landscape is the point of change which requires a personal realignment. The width of the Orkney landscape does, similarly to Alex's photography exhibition, place Stella in a clean and calm surrounding which helps her focus on herself, the subject of her own work of art. Due to not being limited and forced by everyday influences of work and social expectations, she is forced to focus on herself and start to dialogue with her own self. I further hypothesise that it is when being confronted with relicts of ancient history on Orkney, the relicts of journeys, failure, death, and new hope, as well as her family's origins that she starts reconnecting with herself and placing herself in a new context.

Negative space is a term which, as the architect Rudolf Arnheim explains, is used in the field of painting and photography as a means of attributing value to a third space on a two-dimensional screen (Arnheim 28). Even more precisely, the photographers Thomas Harrop and Michael Fulks add the artistic relevance of the positive-negative composition:

Generally, it [the positive space] is the space occupied by your subject. Conversely, negative space is the space that is not your subject. [...] The negative space is defined by the edges of the positive space and the frame or border [...]. It is important to note that the negative space also defines our subject. (Harrop and Fulks 187-188)

Working actively with negative space means, using it as an instrument to support and emphasise the complexity of the subject, as "Negative space is not just the absence of something. It has weight and mass, and plays an important role in defining our subject" (Harrop and Fulks 189). In fact, the attribution of quality and meaning is a process which can be provoked in the viewer's imagination, as Eric Valind adds:

Space can be positive and negative. As an artist you don't need to fill every bit of space in your frame. In fact, leaving an area black – negative space – can be an impactful compositional tool. Negative space invited viewers to engage and fill that space with their mind. (Valind 45)

Kerry Daly adds a different quality of negative space as a valid twist of understanding: from a sociological perspective, life is shaped by many forces everyday – by negative spaces. While one is accustomed to perceive positive forms, such as the individual human being, one tends to forget, Daly explains, that it is the

sum of material concerns, health matters and emotions, moral values or spirituality, as well as temporal and spatial concerns which influence how individuals live their lives (Daly 771). In other words, the negative space which surrounds a subject matters due to its shaping function. My understanding of the term with regard to the first novel is that the personal environment and circumstances can be read as the protagonist's negative space. As a consequence, if this space is wrongly chosen, if it does not put the subject of the painting in the correct light, it has a detrimental effect on the same, or, in other words, on the painting's positive space. Negative space therefore is an emotionally charged and subjectively experienced space. It has two specific meanings in the context of the novel. On the one hand, it describes the artistic phenomenon in Alex's photography or paintings on canvas, and on the other hand, it deals with the protagonist's life and circumstances. A change of setting and social environment, a change of Stella's negative space, rearranges the subject in the focus of perception. I assume that, by changing the circumstances of her life, Stella manages to put herself in focus in order to perceive her needs and desires.

As a young, poorly paid, lower class woman, she lives in a shared flat in Glasgow. Her only friend, Alex, a photographer, lives in Edinburgh and the relationship with her family, her mother's new husband and her step-sisters, is non-existent. Her brother Simon is Stella's only close relative, a true friend, her main support and reference point. Naturally, his early death causes a total collapse of Stella's life as Simon was the centre of her existence, the only person whom she consulted and trusted. As a consequence, in addition to the trauma of having lost her closest relative, Stella does not seem to function on her own, having lost her sense of focus and orientation to an extent that she appears detached from her environment and even herself. Being unable to distance herself from her former perspective while in Glasgow and thus is unable to heal. As a consequence of this situation, she experiences an estrangement from herself and her lie. She is not the subject of her own portrait, to speak in artistic terms. This is why I am convinced that she chooses escape routes, transgresses limits. However her transgressive behaviour fails to give her stability due to the fact that they do not solve the real problem with which Stella is struggling. She lacks a sense of direction as well as the connection with her former life. She has lost all she has loved and lacks the capability to lead a self-determined

life. She has to reconnect with herself, perceive herself as the centre of her life before she can move on. Art has two main functions in Stella's life. On the one hand it is a medium to reflect upon her relationship with her brother and depicts her fractured self. On the other hand, it has a critical aspect as it reflects upon objectifying an individual. It is the exhibition of her best friend's photography that triggers a change.

The initial situation is one of dependence and personal dissolution which she attempts to escape with alcohol and sexual excess. Firstly, I want to focus on the processes of her self-estrangement and guilt before moving on to the possibilities and potentials the production of art offers. Stella is not aware of her position as the subject of her own life, the centre of her own painting, being dependent on her brother. Stella's fate and her happiness are inseparably connected with her brother's in the beginning, which leads her to the conclusion that her existence has become meaningless and she does not possess the right to live as her younger brother died before her. Berthold Schoene states that Stella "assumes an entirely ancillary sense of self" in her brother's presence (Schoene 2008: 85). Firstly, she punishes herself for not suffering the same fate, for still being alive; and secondly, the loss of her brother in this symbiotic relationship bereaves her of the stability in her life. Therefore she does not only lose the most important person in her life, but at the same time a major part of her own existence of that time. This causes suicidal thoughts (*NS 120*) and one attempt to end her life (*NS 28*) until she realises that

It has seemed to make sense before, that I should suffer the same thing as Simon. Now I admitted to myself that it had been just a sham. There was no way to assuage my guilt, to feel what he had felt. I was beginning to realize just what it amounted to, me being alive in his absence. (*NS 60*)

This illustrates that she feels guilty because of not having been with Simon when he died (*NS 34*) and, at the same time, for not sharing his pain. Having lost her direction, a meaning and a clear purpose in life with the loss of her brother, she is thrown into a process of self-estrangement and disintegration.

In attempts to free herself from the pain and to find a way out of her personal tragedy, Stella makes use of several means of escape and repression which worsen her situation. Neither excessive drinking, nor rapidly changing sexual partners or cutting herself (*NS 26*) can relieve her pain or repair her fractured self, so that she

concludes that “it’s slowly becoming clear that something’s not quite right in my head any more” (NS 120), which is yet another act of self-mortification. Her escape routes of choice culminate in the extreme until she realises that she is estranged from the person she was before Simon’s death. The fact that she could not help her brother, that his death was completely out of her control, makes Stella even more vulnerable. These attempts to deal with her trauma culminate in a sadomasochistic scene in which she ties and maltreats her sexual partner whose nose she breaks in the course of the action (NS 115-118). It is a desperate attempt to be in control of a situation. However, it is a loss of control in which she violently harms her counterpart.

Who is this person that I’ve become, I wonder, distancing myself and looking at her, hunched over, head in hands, pain in the centre of her chest. [...] Jesus fuck, what is happening to her? (NS 123)

Stella realises that she lacks identification with her own self. She experiences herself as split, one part conducting Stella’s actions, the other one perceiving so that she struggles to recognize herself: “In a second of confusion, I spotted a girl who looked kind of familiar out of the corner of my eye, then realized it was only my own reflection in the full length mirror on the side wall.” (NS 36) At the same time, as much as she does not fill the positive space of her own life, she is not the actor in her own film:

I thought back to earlier in the day, a long time ago now. I remembered myself walking down the road as if it had been a scene in a film, could visualize myself as if from outside. [...] The girl I saw appeared in a hurry to get somewhere, I didn’t know where. (NS 37)

In her own perception, Stella is not “the girl” she envisions, she is not the subject of her own life. This feeling of a fractured self shows in the conviction that this split must be physically visible, showing two different Stellas in the mirror.

I stagger uncoordinated into the kitchen to look in the mirror because I’m disintegrating and I need to know what it looks like on the outside. Predictably it’s not even me in the mirror, it’s someone I don’t know, her, looking back at me, all black mascara smears over wet face. [...] She’s not going to calm down, she’s not going to get better. This will not pass, this is it. She’s broken. (NS 124)

Her instrument to regain control in her life fails to repair the estrangement with herself. This is why she is in need of a different approach. Art offers itself as a change of perspective. It can be read as a means to liberate herself from this

emotional imprisonment, as different modes of excessive and transgressive behaviour are unsuccessful. The production of art means being in control of the subject in focus. It is a tool for self-expression and self-assuring. In a conversation with her brother a few years before his death, Simon tells Stella that painting and drawing is a means of gaining control for him: “See, drawing things, just looking at things and thinking about them then putting them down on paper makes me feel in control. It gives me control over something, and there’s not an awful lot anyone has control over in their life these days.” (NS 185) For Simon, art equals control and also life in the present. He, who died under unpredictable circumstances, his death unpreventable, managed to order and be in control of a major part of his life. Stella, on the other hand, is not an active producer of art, but passively involved as a life model. Therefore, she does not have the power to create a work of art, but is the one portrayed and thus not the one in full control. However, the products have a reflexive quality for Stella, which is where their potential value for the young woman lies: they assure her of her presence. Even though she seems to be psychologically disintegrating, she still exists and is reassured of this fact when seeing herself on the art students’ paintings: “I tried to think that perhaps seeing the drawings would be a good thing, reassuring evidence of my continuing existence.” (NS 63) What is more, and this is another aspect of art for Stella, it helps her protect the memories of her brother. Simon’s drawings and sketches help her reflect upon the strong relationship between them: “If every picture is worth a thousand words, I wonder what these pictures say. If they speak about me, about Simon, the relationship between us. On the surface there’s only a representation of a body on a piece of paper, behind them there is so much more.” (NS 181) An act of reprocessing can arise from these paintings, conserving and reviving Simon’s memory. They are the only material witnesses of a strong bond between two siblings.

On the other hand, art also implies the possibility of being objectified. While she is the subject of Simon’s paintings and drawings, as he indirectly narrates a story by drawing, she is objectified by the students for whom she poses in art school: “That’s it, the model. They often talk to me through the tutor, awkward about addressing a naked person inside the naked body. Mind you, it could be worse, I remember a girl just grabbing my leg and manhandling it into place. I gawped like a

goldfish with shock [...]” (NS 170). Thus, for the students, she is an object, not an individual. The naked body hides the personality underneath. At the same time, this personal and emotional distance between student and model, the relationship of artist and object, is a necessary means to secure Stella’s privacy.

The pose I went into next didn’t hide the big lovebite at the top of my right arm, the kind of thing I used to get embarrassed about. Before I used to erase as many of these little human details as I could, as if they somehow made me vulnerable, exposed me more than being naked did. (NS 67)

By hiding those attributes which reveal a normal life outside class, she tries to secure this idealised image, which reduces her to a female body. This is a means of seeking shelter in anonymity and the reduction to an object, not an individual. Being objectified and exposed to the public gaze implies a criticism and presents a parallel to her female existence. As a matter of fact, many people claim to know or be able to interpret Stella’s personality. Many acquaintances or students make their own images of the young woman: interpretations, fragments of thoughts, quick judgements. Stella, however, is incapable of defining herself. When observing her environment, she realises that: “I could feel them looking at me, piecing me together, girl whose brother dies, deciding how I must feel, constructing me in their minds.” (NS 105) It is a fundamental issue that she feels fractured, but her environment combines impressions they have of her to conclude how she must feel. Being drawn has a partly disconcerting and even violent quality to it:

But then I’m used to pictures that don’t look like me, people distorting me to suit themselves. Leaving gaps in their sketches for inconvenient parts they don’t want to draw, hands and feet and face. I thought of a portrait by one of the fourth years, a Medusa head almost, with its writhing greeny brown hair. It seemed full of characteristics I didn’t recognize in myself, a kind of cruel sneer round the mouth which I didn’t know I was capable of, but when I looked at the eyes it was like looking into a mirror. And all these people out there who possessed pictures of me, sketches and studies, drawings and paintings. I didn’t believe that they had stolen pieces of my soul, because if that was true how many fragments would I be in, what would be left of me? (NS 108)

The students ‘distort’ her to suit their purpose, they reduce her to particular body parts, leave out members or estrange them grotesquely. The object of study is imaginatively torn apart, fragmented, to study what is necessary.

Only Simon’s work has a reflexive potential for Stella. While the students’ images of her seem alien to her, her brother has captured the young woman more

precisely. When tidying Simon's room, Stella takes all of his drawings off the walls and keeps them in a folio: "It was funny, sitting on the floor in the middle of an empty-looking room, not sure who I was, surrounded by images of myself, peeling them off the walls and putting them all together in another folio. At least I'd be able to remind myself of who I had been." (NS 151) This indicates a distinct split from the person she was before her brother's death. She has fallen into fragments of her former self, not being able to continue her previous life as she lacks a reference point of where to start. It is clear that art, in Stella's experience, has an ambivalent quality. While it helps her conserve Simon's memory and reflect upon her former self, the existence of the portraits does not secure her self-image, but emphasises that everyone makes their own image of Stella, only she fails to recognise and define her self-image.

Alex's photography is the key to a passage on the islands: Alex and Stella are invited to go on an all-female artist's retreat to Orkney over Easter. I will shed light on two aspects about this trip which are particularly important for Stella's personal development. Time and location play a significant role in the novel. I am convinced that both the northern landscape and Easter, the time of rebirth and seasonal awakening, help Stella refocus and recalibrate on the route to self-discovery. Even more importantly, it is the liminal and mythical quality of the island which Stella experiences and which strengthens her for a new start. The north is presented as a mystical place, filled with stories of hope and failure, of life and death. Peter Davidson addresses issues of mythical attributions, geographical concerns and literary treatments of the concept of northern spheres in his work *The Idea of North*. "The place of north as a place of purification, an escape from the limitations of civilisation, has echoes in early writers." (Davidson 2005: 21) The north is often portrayed as ambivalent, being connected with pagan supernatural attributes on the one hand and scientific exactness, on the other hand. The magnetic north is the reference point for a compass, the Northern Star for a seafarer's navigation by night.

Everyone carries their own idea of north within them. The phrase 'true north' is itself a piece of geographer's precision, the difference between the northernmost point on the globe and the slight declination marked by the magnetic north to which the compass needle tends. [...] 'True north' goes beyond the idea of the prodigious (or malign) north and suggests that, for

each individual, there exists somewhere the place that is the absolute of the north, the north in essence, northness in concentration and purity. (Davidson 2005: 11)

The north is clearly a space of remoteness, of extremes and wonders for Davidson, but the idea of north is always defined by an individual's perception. Thus, it is also an imaginative space. Orkney is such a liminal place in this novel. The remoteness of the artists' holiday home, which is surrounded by wide open spaces, isolates the group of women from other Orcadians and visitors. There are hardly any landmarks or trees in sight so that the individual is exposed to the width of the sky and landscape (*NS* 227). While the weather is rough, it is also "sharp and clean and fresh" (*NS* 245). Orkney is attributed a cleansing quality. The solitude and space force the young woman to adapt to a new surrounding which is the opposite of her former urban life. She has to accommodate to this new environment, which appears frightening at first.

It took us ages to walk back, and we didn't realize how dark it would be on the way home, even when moonlight shone through the clouds. The road began to turn into an obstacle course and we realized how stupid we'd been not to bring a torch – we kept tripping over stones and standing in cowpats, at least we hoped that's what it was when our feet sank into something squishy. [...] At one point we saw car headlights coming over the hill in the distance and nearly shat ourselves, because we were already a bit spooked and it looked so weird we both thought for a second it was a UFO. (*NS* 211)

"Stella's self-awakening increases as she becomes more intimately aware of the Orkney landscape which, initially striking her as little more than an obstacle course, begins impacting on her as a profoundly spiritual force. Notably, only by resisting easy access does the land jolt Stella into taking any notice of it", Berthold Schoene explains (Schoene 2008: 85). Due to the difficult accessibility, both geographically as well as aesthetically, Stella is forced to accommodate to a new setting, move out of her comfort zone and is provoked to change her perspective in order to live in her new environment. The perception and daily life strategies she was used to in Glasgow are inadequate in this rural environment and thus strike her as frightening and alien, as she is unused to them ("bring a torch"). At the same time, recognising the need for a torch, some light, expresses the desire to see, to observe and to learn. The torch reappears in the aurora borealis which the young women happen to see in the sky:

It made it all seem a bit more worthwhile when we saw the aurora borealis in the sky far away behind us. [...] It was beautiful, eerie and beautiful, just faintly glowing, trembling

softly against the dark horizon. I'd never seen anything like it before. The stars were so bright as well. (NS 212)

This passage contains two key aspects which are indicative for the novel. Firstly, witnessing the spectacular northern lights brings to mind the pagan belief that this phenomenon welcomes the newly deceased and guides them to heaven. Fiona McCulloch states that

Upon witnessing the aurora borealis, she has metaphorically crossed a bridge between her old self and a new outlook, just as the Inuit believed that 'The way to heaven leads over a narrow bridge which spans an enormous abyss. The spirits that were already in heaven light torches to guide the feet of the new arrivals. These torches are called the northern lights'. (McCulloch 2008: 312)

The aurora borealis is a threshold phenomenon; a passage from here to there, from earth to the beyond. It is the most illustrative representation of an act of separation, a departure. This scene is one of the key moments which help Stella indirectly start the healing process of mourning. While Simon's spiritual journey is guided by the northern lights, Stella can perceive this departure, being caught between frightened fascination and admiration. In the mythological sense, the northern lights are a connecting element between life and death and thus mark the transition in Stella's life. Secondly, Stella finally perceives the stars which are not visible in the city. Her name itself is, of course, also an allusion. More importantly though, stars are means of navigation, particularly nautical navigation on the open sea, used to determine a particular location when no land was in sight and guide the way to a particular destination. Being able to see the stars means being able find one's way. Stella herself observes that,

There was a difference between now and back then, whether caused by time or space or distance or what. I looked up at the hundreds of thousands of bright twinkling icy stars and felt as though somewhere deep inside me there might be space for something still, something calm and peaceful. (NS 214-15)

While navigation within the city in her everyday environment had become impossible for her, Stella is able to renegotiate her way, to redefine her journey towards a purposeful, hopeful future. This change of 'time or space or distance' implies a different perception of time in an unknown, rural place. The clocks are ticking differently in this female artists' community.

The second major quality of this mystical place, Orkney, is its immediate awareness of its local history. It is a history of early settlement and also of strategic positioning during the Great War. Orkney, as it is portrayed in this novel, can be read as having a particularly liminal quality due to its history of settlement and war. There is a tension between items of recreational nature space and decay, the relicts of settlement with its hopeful stories and the traces of tragic fates: Orkney is a place with an ambivalent beauty, whose cleanness is interrupted by sharp contrasts. Scapa Flow is the most striking example of this contrast and the communal conservation of historical awareness.

The low green hills of the mainland slope down onto a narrow sandy beach, and in turn the sand tails off into calm inviting turquoise water, the shade intensifying to darker blue as it gets deeper, sparkling in the sunlight. And there it is, another one, a massive rusting hull, broken and tilting, red and brown and ruined. [...] Seven warships and four destroyers from the German fleet are still down there. Monstrous decaying giants, lurking under Scapa Flow, that had looked so lovely in the sunshine just a little while ago. (NS 245pp.)

It is a violent contrast between the decaying, rusting ship with its brown and red hull next to peaceful blue and green landscape. The shipwrecks have been lying there since 1919, decaying, but mostly untouched. They are witnesses of the Great War. They are also war memorials or warning signs as they are ever-present. As memento mori they remind the viewer of death, war and the deep political fracture within the European continent. The act of scuttling war ships implies the self-induced destruction of military equipment in order not to strengthen the enemy, which enforces the act of further hardening the fronts between two opposing parties. At the same time, it is the ultimate military action and tragedy for a country's fleet. Furthermore, the remains of the First World War on Orkney remind the visitor of the deep wound the United Kingdom suffered after 1918 with the slow decline of the empire. Scapa Flow as a location carries the burden of conserving the history of this site while maintaining the natural beauty of its surroundings. As a consequence, Stella starts connecting her life with the settlers' stories as well as the environment. By regarding herself in relation with this history-charged place, she learns to cope with her emotional struggle and realises that her tragedy is not an isolated experience. Stella witnesses the destructive quality of recent and ancient history on Orkney and realises that throughout history, men and women have struggled, fought and hoped for a better life. While both, the tragedies of ancient settlement history as

well as the horror of the Great War, has a shocking and touching effect on the young woman, she starts connecting with the place due to the shared experience of loss and personal tragedy. The young women also visit relicts of neolithic communities, as well as “Norse houses” and “something Pictish” (NS 221). Cultic places on Orkney, such as the Ring of Brodgar, are the epitomes of liminal locations: the present and the hereafter, mortal life and divinity, they all are enclosed in the stone circle. The young urban visitors thus are forced to engage with these relicts, to engage with the history of the place and their own position therein. Both the neolithic henge as well as Norse settlements have a telling function in the novel. Settlers who move homes undertake a hazardous journey in order to find a new and possibly better life in a different place. Stella undergoes a similar journey which is connected to almost unbearable emotional labours. However, she takes the Picts’ and Vikings’ stories as inspiration for her own development. In fact, she realises that she is not the only person journeying, suffering under difficult circumstances. Just like the ancient settlers, she has to sharpen her focus to realise the possibilities lying ahead. “It was because I was more relaxed here, and because the remarkable setting of dark water and huge sky and ancient settlements seemed to throw things into perspective”, Stella realises (NS 238). In fact, “To me, the whole island seemed full of stories of survival against the odds, of dragging something lasting and worthwhile out of the most difficult environment.” (NS 241). By witnessing her ancestors’ fates, Stella finds hope even in her difficult state of mind. Furthermore, the fact that the date of their stay in Orkney around Easter coincides with their visit to the Ring of Brodgar, makes Fiona McCulloch draw a connection to Stella’s growing self-awareness and even emancipation:

Journeying to Orkney during Easter serves as a reminder that it was originally a pagan festival, erased by Christianity. This pagan festival is linked with a feminine not a masculine deity, namely the goddess of the dawn, Eostre (Aurora) who was associated with the spring. Strachan resurrects this feminine cultural absence or negative space as a palimpsest informing her own particular political vision of post-devolution citizenship. (McCulloch 2008: 311)

In other words, Stella’s witnessing the aurora borealis is the key moment of awakening and starting to ‘throw things into perspective’. Her engagement with the island’s prehistoric sites as well as the settlers’ private histories makes her reconsider her own place in the world as not as lost as she thought she was. In fact, Stella’s

surname, 'Flett', being Orcadian, as McCulloch identifies (McCulloch 2008: 312), emphasises the young woman's ability to connect her fate with that of her ancestors. But even if Easter is thought in a Christian sense, which McCulloch leaves out here, it can be seen as indicating Stella's resurgence: gathering courage for a new life after a time of passivity and depression. Not only is it a personal awakening, it is also the presupposition for the emancipation from social pressures and self-awareness:

I'd thought before we came to Orkney that it might be odd, spending so much time in an all-female company, but I realized I quite liked it. Until now, doing this stuff with Alex, I had felt less rather than more female being here. Less of a woman, more of a person. There seemed to be a release in it, in an odd sort of way, which pleased me. (NS 257)

This recognition is the first step towards solving the limiting quality of gender labels. She feels like a person, a human being, without having to accommodate to norms imposed on females. Gradually gaining self-awareness and strength makes her undergo a gradual change from passivity, starting with recognising it ("she [Alex] kept going forwards and I stood still", NS 288), towards determining her own actions, urgently desiring a change:

I could imagine my future drifting away before me in the same way, beyond my grasp, and wondered if this was what it was going to be like. It was as if there was nothing anchoring me any more, without Simon, and the feeling of detachment scared the shit out of me. [...] I had an overwhelming desire to do something, to change things, so for want of something better I went up to the mirror, grabbed a hunk of hair up near the roots and chopped at it, sawing through it with the blunt little blades until it came off in my hand. (NS 251-252)

Even though this is a radical act of despair, Stella consciously decides to satisfy her need for a change without self-harm as she did before in Glasgow. With Alex's help who finishes the haircut, she undergoes a physical development, symbolising a new start: "Gradually I began to relax, and almost enjoy the sensation, the metamorphosis" (NS 257). In other words, a fundamental change takes place, from one state of being to a completely differently shaped one. Becoming aware of the need to change is the presupposition to changing her mindset. Stella realises that memorising a deceased person in a ritualistic way can support the process of healing. She begins to observe the ceremony and death as markers of transition:

I'm awed by the power of other people's loss, these beautifully carved slabs, the incredible tombs we've seen here, how much time and effort some people have expended in recognizing death. [...] I can understand, in fact I share, this urge to leave a more permanent mark on the world to commemorate someone passing through it. (NS 232-3)

She recognises that she is not the only person mourning and that loss can be dealt with by starting with a ritual of transition. Stella realises her need for such a ritual to move on in life. A ritual of burial is the epitome of liminality. Her conscious decision to perform her own, private funeral for her brother therefore is a cornerstone in the development of her character.

I remembered what Jill had told me about theories surrounding the rituals that took place at stone circles like this, that they might have focused on the control of who was allowed to see what was going on within the circle. Although hundreds of people could fit inside, it was apparently more likely that most of them stood outside the enclosure, their view screened by the stones themselves to preserve the sanctity of the ceremony, and of those who mediated in it. It took me a little while, as I gently etched away at the stone, to realise that in this instance I was both the individual performing the ritual and the person doing the seeing; giving this event its meaning, and making any truth it contained all my own. (*NS* 288-289)

This is significant for several reasons. First of all, Stella has made the conscious decision to make use of a ritual of transition. By performing it, she has the power and the control over the proceedings; she is the one in charge for the first time in the novel. Both, the method and the style of her ritual are choices she makes to fit her and her brother's relationship. She puts up a tiny tombstone for Simon and buries his favourite St. Christopher necklace underneath. St. Christopher, the patron saint of the sea farers and voyagers, had guided his way since his childhood; burying this item symbolically ends his journey on earth. At the same time, Stella shows that she intends to be strong enough to travel without this guidance. It is a symbolic end of her lack of orientation and implies relieving herself off the pain she feels in order to start the process of healing. It marks a progress in her personal development. Secondly, on leaving a permanent mark for Simon, she decides to keep the ceremony to herself, preserving the sanctity of her own ritual just like people in the stone circles did. She does not even share this experience with her best friend (*NS* 290). Thirdly, and most importantly, Stella decides to perform a ritual of transition, a liminal ceremony marking the departure from her former self simultaneously to saying good-bye to her beloved brother. This private funeral is, in fact, the second ceremony of transition after a huge bonfire, encouraged by Alex, during which she burns her brother's belongings. Before her journey to Orkney and after the symbolic act of burning material belongings, Stella "was aware that something was changing, only I didn't yet understand what" (*NS* 104). At that point, it was Alex's impulse to burn Simon's clothes and she also took charge of the situation. In contrast to the fire

at the beach, Stella's quiet burial happens on her own initiative in a situation in which she is ready to perform it. The location, Orkney, is relevant, as it connects her brother with the origins of their family. The fact that she performs and simultaneously takes part in the ritual indicates a double transition. It is a ritual of passing for the deceased brother, and at the same time it is a symbolic step towards the future for the young woman who is left behind. She trespasses the boundary of life and death while she experiences a transition from a dependent woman to a self-determined individual. For the longest part of the novel, Stella remains anonymous as her name is, symbolically, only revealed in the very end of the novel after this significant change has taken place (NS 294). However, it is also clear that it is a slow and gradual process of self-identification she undergoes. This process is underlined by the fact that the journey is a guiding theme in the novel. The journey from Glasgow to Orkney to London in the very end of the novel, symbolically burying St. Christopher to express her self-determined way, the internal journey mirrored in her physical journey through Scotland. It is a voyage of self-discovery.

There are three main aspects which are most important in the study of *Negative Space*. First of all, Stella distances herself from normative categories of gender, race and sexuality, starting to define herself as an individual. In the artists' retreat, society's norms, religious or economic background as well as sexual orientation are irrelevant as it is the work and its product which counts. On learning to accept herself and her needs as a person without considering others' expectations or norms, Stella manages to recognise her path which she follows without the influence of others. By moving beyond the limits of social norms, she bridges those gaps which have formerly prevented her from being independent. By accepting her deviances, she overcomes the phallogentric and heteronormative power structures which have previously influenced her heteronomous life. Stella embraces her diversity at the end of the novel as it is the key to a new start of life. The discovery of her love for lesbian Asian-English journalism student, Iram, helps her find a new perspective and courage to move on. This is why Stella's character can be read as nomadic. According to Rosi Braidotti, a nomad's identity is "made of transitions, successive shifts, and coordinated changes, without and against an essential unity." (Braidotti 22) It is an identity which is formed in post-modern times. A nomad blurs boundaries

“without burning bridges” (Braidotti 4). This form of identity is not restricted to a person physically travelling, but describes an individual who moves between the social categories of age, class, gender, sexuality or race (Braidotti 4). Therefore, Braidotti continues, “Nomadic consciousness is a form of political resistance to hegemonic and exclusionary views of subjectivity.” (Braidotti 23)

Secondly, Stella’s manages to transgress the limits of her former self, letting go of the restrictions society has imposed on her and that she accepted. She finds new hope in the blossoming love for Iram, whom Stella meets on Orkney. Embracing her homo- or bisexuality and thus letting go of the oppressing heteronormative relationship idea, Stella takes a step towards individual fulfilment. Stella develops a cosmopolitan perspective which Berthold Schoene defines as having to be “understood as integral to the author’s capability to open up and yield to the structuring of the world as she or he finds it, however bewildering, turbulent or self-contradictory” (Schoene 2009: 16). In his work on cosmopolitanism, Schoene discusses his hypothesis that the contemporary novel is beginning to transform itself by moving away from imagining the nation towards dealing with global issues and the world as a community (Schoene 2009: 12). To a certain extent, *Negative Space* alludes to the need to rethink national approaches to identity as this is too narrow in a globalised world. Thus, as the third major achievement of this novel, it also represents a political journey, renegotiating the individual’s fluid or hybrid identity in addition to keeping in mind the overall political development. It is about becoming aware of the need to bury the British nostalgia of the Empire by making visible the ever present memento mori of the First World War on Orkney. Reminding oneself of the losses and tragedies of the Great War, the decline of the British Empire appears in sight. The novel critically hints at the claim of superiority of the south over the other regions of the UK as well as the colonies. At the same time, Stella experiences a sense of home when journeying to Orkney. It is neither a feeling of wanting to settle, nor a desire to express a particular national belonging, but a strong sense of connection to an individual history set in a particular environment. Stella starts identifying with herself by reconnecting to her family history whose origins can be found on the island.

Written in the immediate post-devolution phase and published in 2003, *Negative Space* subtly deals with socio-political issues. Stella has to renegotiate her personal identity and define it anew, which is a process also visible in the context of post-devolution Scottish literature. Fiona McCulloch speaks of an “unwritten potential of a more balanced post-devolution future” (McCulloch 2008: 315) as a remedy for dislocation felt after the significant socio-political changes in Scotland and the UK. It is important to consider that the notion of identity can be imagined as fluid, rejecting normative ideals. These newly perceived negative spaces carry the potential for a significant change, for breaking up old conventions and norms for a change which is mirrored in the novel. Thus, the text is relevant, as it picks up the issue of emancipation and coming-of-age. Stella undergoes a process of development which involves working on the feeling of loss, without forgetting, carrying the change within her, but moving on. Also it emphasises the importance of actively learning more about one’s past with regard to family and national history, as well as accepting the deviances. It is a plea for a rejection of heteronormative value systems towards a diversification and individual assessment of a person. As the novel is narrated in retrospect with memories returning by the matured, first-person narrator Stella, *Negative Space* offers a successful model of individual self-realisation. Despite the initial situation being difficult and emotionally disturbing, Stella manages to change her self-perception radically, to redefine her goals in life and to reconsider her priorities. It can be concluded that the liminal setting in the north serves as a catalyst for this development. She herself carries out and experiences several rituals of passage, most significantly perhaps the ritual of separation when performing her own version of a funeral for Simon. In this case, it is not only the deceased person who passes and who is accompanied in passing from life to death, it is also the performer of the ritual who undergoes a vital change. Her surroundings on Orkney are full of signs of rites of passage, of liminal places, such as the memento mori who conserve a particular moment of history in the relicts of the actions connected with this moment in time.

Richard, the protagonist of the later novel, deals with liminal spaces which are charged with a different quality. While being located in the midst of the

loneliness of the highlands and while working on a virtual space, Richard does not manage to escape the ghosts of his past and decides to face these in the end.

Zoë Strachan's *Ever Fallen in Love* (2011)

Zoë Strachan's third novel *Ever Fallen in Love* deals with the issues of control and loss. It is about the loss of home, one's innocence and one's former life, about the attempt to regain control and the experience of the north. Temporal and virtual liminality play a major role in the course of the narration. While the former intertwines events of Scottish history with the protagonist's life, interweaving the past with his personal experiences of death, escape and loss, the text suggests that liminal virtual space offers the protagonist possibility to gain control. However, it will become clear that this is not the primary function it fulfils.

Ever Fallen in Love shows noteworthy parallels to *Negative Space* with regard to their power and use of memento mori. While Strachan's debut novel deals with Stella's negotiation and the exploration of the facets of her self, and thus being in control of her personal development, the protagonist of the later novel attempts to construct his life anew after a series of unfortunate events. Both novels reflect upon particular occasions in Scottish history in their respective effect on the protagonists who struggle with their existences. Both manage to connect with a shared, national history, placing themselves in a larger historical and social context.

While Stella in *Negative Space* manages to find a way of defining a notion of her personality which is stable and suits her, the protagonist of the more recent novel develops new routes of escape and suppression. *Ever Fallen in Love* is the story of Richard, a computer games developer, who is haunted by the memories of his unrequited love for his university friend, Luke, and a strong feeling of guilt for some of his past deeds. It is divided into two strands of action: memories of his first year at university with flashbacks into Richard's past on the one hand, and the progressing story of Richard's present day life in the highlands on the other. Both layers of time are tightly interwoven like a fabric; the story of his youth representing the warp with the chapters all numbered '0', the story of his aged self the weft, narrated in chapters 1 to 24. This tightly interwoven fabric of Richard's life indicates that he cannot just forget or escape his past. It is a part of his life and character with which he has to deal. The story of young Richard takes place in a university town by the sea,

probably St. Andrews even if the name is never explicitly mentioned, where he meets the working-class boy Luke who deals with drugs and with whom he falls in love. In the course of their first year, during which Luke seduces many girls, a wealthy English classmate, Lucy, who was previously raped by both boys simultaneously, dies by drowning under the influence of drugs. As a consequence, both boys have to leave this university and Richard starts a course on computer games programming at Dundee University.

The present day plot is set in a Highland village ten years after the tragic incident at university, where Richard lives in order to work on his games. When his sister Stephie and her friend Loren arrive for a visit, Richard is forced to deal with the traumatic experiences of his past and the hurtful experience of his unreciprocated love for his friend. The text makes use of the issues of hegemony and power. It critically alludes to the consequences of the highland Clearances for the Scottish population and suggesting an attempted reversal of power structures on the other hand. The text makes use of particular spaces and places, a distinctly liminal setting which fortifies the notion of Richard's internal discourse. They are charged, historical spaces that reflect a significant change in British history. The most important settings are the village in the highlands, an ancient university town as well as the virtual trenches of Somme. Importantly, Richard escapes into a virtual world, in which he is able to create a second, neutral identity. The issue of the northern space is a real space and a place of suffering. So is the Somme as a symbolic place for the destruction of humanity during the Great War. Virtual reality, however, is a space which Richard can define anew. In theory, it is not charged, does not have a connotation, as it is a blank slate. These liminal spaces are spaces which force Richard to engage with history – particularly his own history. They trigger a development in his character. In the second part, I explore the chances and difficulties of virtual reality and space in this novel, its function to experiment with power and to recreate one's identity. As a final point, I will briefly deal with the gothic aspects and their respective socially critical functions. All of the above have a distinctly liminal quality in the novel, addressing historical and geographical issues, virtual as well as ethical liminality.

I hypothesise that Richard has two main desires: firstly, erasing or changing the memories of his past and secondly, being in control of the proceedings of his life. By escaping to a remote place, starting a life as a hermit, he attempts to suppress and recreate his memories, but is forced to confront them. Virtual reality offers him the chance to redefine himself, create a new persona virtually and become a person he failed to be in real life: a powerful and influential one in control of the situation. This implies playfully undergoing rites of proving himself to be strong and influential, of defining himself as a successful human being. He is the creator of a new world and imagines the reality therein. However, I assume that this second layer of reality helps to reflect upon his life rather than solving the essential issues on the 'real' layer of reality. I assume that Richard's attempts to change his situation by changing his environment and the locations which evoke particular memories.

Space and place are central themes in *Ever Fallen in Love*. Tim Cresswell formulates the difference between space and place as I understand it in the context of the novels very clearly: "Space is a more abstract concept than place. When we speak of space we tend to think of outer-space or the spaces of geometry. Spaces have areas and volumes. Places have space between them. [...] Space, then, has been seen in distinction to place as a real without meaning – as a 'fact of life' which, like time, produced the basic coordinates for human life." (Cresswell 8-10) In order to put it very simply, places are "spaces which people have made meaningful" (Cresswell 7). Space and place have to be read in connection with personal and social memories. The individual or a society chooses the respective memories which are to be associated with and conserved in particular places. The highlands as well as the virtual space within his computer game both mean a spatial retreat for the individual. However, they offer different possibilities of self-reflection. In contrast to *Negative Space*, the northern landscape in *Ever Fallen in Love* has less of a mythical and more of a political meaning underlying the narration. The notion of social dominance forms the underlying tension in the novel. It deals with the split between English versus Scottish, upper versus lower class. Richard chooses a remote, coastal Highland village as a retreat and new home, which is far away from his home and university towns. The northern space is characterised by absence in this novel: the absence of inhabitants, of civilisation, of progress. At the same time, this northern,

coastal part of the Highlands is endowed with an ambivalent quality in this novel and often stigmatised as inferior. The novel suggests that the landscape itself is less relevant for the plot, as it remains largely vague and undefined, but what is important is its historical significance and its social memory.

They followed the road back round the bay, not stopping to sit on the beam this time, and passed the ruins of the crofts opposite the beach. ‘Kind of sad, I always think,’ Richard said. ‘So many people lived here, once. There was a whole community, shifted to the coast by the clearances.’ – ‘It must have been hellish.’ – ‘Yes. And then I guess some of them emigrated, in the end. Or were forced to emigrate.’ (EF 143)

Similar to *Negative Space*, *Ever Fallen in Love* portrays scenes of decay, memento mori indicating the presence of a community which has long gone. However, while the landscape has a shaping, inspiring function on young Stella, the later novel focuses on the Highlands’ emptiness. On the one hand, Richard empathises with the highlanders’ fate, who were forced out of their land, bereaved of their homes and income. Not only did the Clearances result in homelessness or theft of belongings, but many highlanders lost their lives in the conflict. It made them refugees and migrants fleeing to far away countries. The remains of this self-sustaining community are deserted and left to decay for every passer-by to see like a sad memorial. This vast emptiness is the location of Richard’s home which only has one neighbouring house. This remote place offers Richard the isolation from his former life, which he desires, and the peace and quietness he needs to focus on his work. Isolation means protection for him. By cutting off all contacts and taking a place in this refuge, he intends to escape the ghosts of his former life, which haunt him to this day. Tim Cresswell emphasises that “memory is also social. Some memories are allowed to fade – are not given any kind of support. Other memories are promoted as standing for this and that. One of the primary ways in which memories are constituted is through the production of places. Monuments, museums, the preservation of particular buildings (and not others), plaques, inscriptions and the promotion of whole urban neighborhoods as ‘heritage zones’ are all examples of the placing of memory.” (Cresswell 85) Not only are those abandoned cottages memento mori, similar to the shipwrecks on Orkney in *Negative Space*, they conserve communal and social memories, reminding the present-day observer of the shared wound in Scottish history.

While Richard seeks refuge in his little house in the Highland village, originally built as a holiday home, denying the fact that he ‘ran away’ from his former life (*EF* 56), first to Dundee and then up north, and seems to be enjoying the peace and solitude which helps him focus on his work, his social environment dismisses his new home as a backward place. Repeatedly, he has to justify his choice of relocation to his sister who does not seem to understand the motivations to move to “the back of beyond” at first (*EF* 35). It is the solitude and isolation Richard appreciates, being cut off of his former life. Like a traditional liminal place, his cottage is a place which is excluded from everyday life. The damaged houses remind Richard of a different time; they narrate their own tales. The protagonist connects with the history of the place, which is a bond of displacement and pain. When his sister and her friend Loren arrive, he perceives this spontaneous visit as an intrusion into his territory and his peaceful retreat hazarded.

Since his sister’s arrival he’d found himself caught up in a gradual process of colonisation. Cosmetics sprouted around the bathroom, citrus and bergamot drifted through the house as she bathed or showered. Unfamiliar music blared from the iPod dock in her bedroom. Her bedroom, not the spare room; after only three days it had acquired a new name. (*EF* 63)

He draws parallels to the traumatic event in Scottish history, which has left a significant scar in Scotland until today with the highlands still being empty and the Scottish-English relations being subliminally charged. His sister Stephie, but even more so her friend Loren, who intrude into his privacy and the isolation from his former life as they disturb his daily routine, keep him from working and question his attitudes. Even more importantly, this intrusion was planned without his consent, Richard concludes: “Stephie, nobody’s ever just passing, not here. Did you plan this?” (*EF* 97). The highlands, and particularly his little old cottage in the highland village, represent home and haven for Richard in the novel. At the same time, the novel also addresses the potential hazard of intrusion and the connected loss of security. It thus draws a connection to the historical events. Cresswell describes home as a place of rootedness and attachment where the individual has “some degree of control over what happens within a limited space” (Cresswell 24). By implication, the intrusion of one’s home entails the loss of control over this space, which has been made meaningful and familiar. In addition to this, Richard’s friends and colleagues subtly put him down by ridiculing his home. *Ever Fallen in Love* addresses the issue

of cross-border humiliation. It portrays the Highlands as supposedly absent of civilisation and modern technology. The stigma of backwardness is, simultaneously, a sign of suppression, of being kept small by a superior entity. Similar to neighbour Manby's display of an incredible arrogance and class-consciousness which expresses a prevalent feeling of superiority, Richard's boss Rupe frequently belittles the highlands and Richard's home. He, who is supposedly one of the "Yah's", the English that is (*EF* 117), propagates this pejorative stigma of underdevelopment: "'I hope you've washed your hands. You do have running water up there, don't you?' – 'I've told you before Rupe. The toilet is inside, the septic tank is outside.' – 'Septic tank. Marvellous. I love it.'" (*EF* 117). Richard's unnamed highland home thus stands exemplary for refuge, humiliation and the conservation of one of the most sensitive chapters of Scottish history. Without pointing towards or removing the relicts of past highland communities, but leaving the ruins to decay, only changed by the processes of time, the area lives with this historical wound visible to all. Thus, the traces of former inhabitants remain and are left untouched, reminding the viewer and reader of the horrible past.

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Virtual reality is a liminal space which is neither present or absent, it is not physical but it exists. Richard's way of dealing with virtual reality offers insights into his emotional constitution. It is a complex concept which questions established notions of reality, space, social interaction and personal identity. After being evicted from his humanities course in his previous university, Richard starts a course in computer games design and programming at Dundee University. Programming offers Richard a new perspective in life after the traumatising experience of being involved in a girl's death. Virtual reality in *Ever Fallen in Love* is more than a place of escape into a virtual games world; it also shows Richard's ambivalent attitude towards power and influence. It brings to light the protagonist's suppressed desires. What is more, I assume that the content of his computer game, set in the Great War, can also be read as a critical comment on twentieth-century political developments in Scotland. I will first shed light on the concept of virtual reality as I understand it in general and will apply this notion to a reading of the novel.

Without a doubt, Richard's highland home as well as his chosen profession point towards a desire to escape and leave his former life behind. The highlands with its sparsely populated landscapes, small towns and significant distance from urban culture offer Richard the peace and quiet he needs to focus on his work. At the same time, they isolate him spatially and socially from humans – be it new neighbours or old acquaintances from his former life. In the course of the plot, Richard develops into a very successful computer games programmer, creating virtual worlds and characters. This virtual game space, however, is a peculiar one as it problematises established notions of identity and reality. It is also a highly ambivalent space which connotes the gamer's desire for isolation from the real world. Deborah Lupton emphasises the appealing promises of utopian freedom in virtual games; freedom from physical experience as well as social conventions. At the same time she warns that a gamer who connects with others, makes himself vulnerable since interpersonal contact underlies other rules of social interaction as in real life, since games are not regulated by the same laws (Lupton 111). Of course, the quality of the virtual world depends on the number of players who interact simultaneously and on whether it is an online game, which potentially connects a certain number of people in different places on the globe, or a simple computer game, played on one terminal device. Lupton's warning thus applies to online games with a greater number of connected players. When Kevin Robins adds that virtual space is "a space in which the imperatives and impositions of the real world may be effaced or transcended", this is exactly one of the aims towards which Richard is striving (Robins 143). Learning "how programming could create new worlds, how whorls of code could twist and turn into three-dimensional characters capable of speech and action" (*EF* 119), enables Richard to take control over a course of action, a virtual plot and a variety of characters' fates. He can outlive his desire for a change, for an alternative life. Self-critically, Richard reflects whether his chosen path, his passion for games programming, is not actually a pretext, a suppression of actual hopes for a brighter, more vivid life: "Or had he been waiting, subconsciously perhaps, for the knock at the door, for the suggestion of something more exciting, more real?" (*EF* 120). This implies two aspects vital for the underlying meaning of *Ever Fallen In Love*. On the one hand, it expresses the desire to escape the restrictions of real life, social

conventions, class restrictions, as virtual games reality is a liminal space outside of real social conventions. This is, of course, a fallacy. While the locations of interaction as well as the individuals therein change, social conventions remain the same due to the gamers' socialisation and value systems which they bring into the 'new world'. On the other hand, it raises the question of what reality is actually about. Is it a subjective memory that shapes the course of one's life, or is it rather the impression of reality one creates, possibly even on a virtual platform? Important is the fact that virtual reality questions the notion of a simple perception and conception of reality. By offering the chance to play god and to create avatars, virtual space creates an alternative reality, which has a different *raison d'être*. Virtual space is not a representation. Richard dreams of the powers of virtual games reality:

One day perhaps a game would exist that keyed into the memory of the player, and replayed it in the virtual world. You would be able to teleport within your own mind, go back to school to beat the bullies who'd reduced you to ill-concealed tears after PE class. Special powers of strength and speed would guarantee escape from unpleasantness and danger. One night stands could be rejected at the first approach, the objects of unfulfilled crushes become lifelong loves (or the target of cruel rejections). The dead could come back to life. Until the player became as immersed as a Korean teenager in *Lineage* and derived sustenance only from a fridge that automatically re-ordered from a computerised warehouse. Because who was to say that real life consisted of that which took place externally, through clumsy action and resonating error. (*EF* 72-73)

This passage highlights that memory is one major aspect of identity construction. What is important is the way in which experiences are processed and remembered. Richard's fantasy plays with an advanced form of virtual reality in which real life merges with the virtual world. Michael Heim explains that the term virtual reality carries the philosophical implication that today's life is only thinkable in relation with computers (Heim 65). In fact, according to Robins, virtual reality offers the chance to explore the complexities of self-identity and alternative forms thereof in a playful way (Robins 140). "Rather than the computer/human dyad being a simple matter of self versus other," Deborah Lupton adds, "there is, for many people, a blurring of the boundaries between the embodied self and the PC" (Lupton 98). The computer, and in Richard's case the computer game, functions as an extension of the body, another option of experiencing. "Identities are composable in so far as the constraints of the real world and real-world body are overcome in the artificial domain. The exhilaration of virtual existence and experience comes from the sense of transcendence and liberation from the material and embodied world." (Robins 138)

Undoubtedly, it is Richard's desire to reverse, change, or smooth out aspects of his past, be it hurtful experiences at school, traumata, or the loss of a person. The ghosts of his past, homophobic bullying or the guilty conscience as a consequence of Lucy's death, still haunt him even though he relocates and invests effort to escape them. Virtual reality thus seems like a welcome tool to select or discard alternative ways of life, as Robins states (Robins 138) and thus dissolves the boundaries between real life and mobile or exploratory identities. Simultaneously, this passage points towards one of the main underlying motivations for male gamers. In her work, Martina Löw considers the sociological implications of virtual spaces on young people's development and socialisation. She states that males play computer games to act out their desire to apply power and violent physical dominance over their peers (Löw 99). Richard's creation *Somme* is a game which satisfies such desires. Richard's fantasy, however, demonstrates the wish to apply power onto those who hurt him and use superpowers to overcome the limits of his personal abilities. Michael Heim adds another quality of virtual reality:

First, virtual entities are not representations. They do not re-present. They do not 'present again' something that is already present somewhere else. [...] Virtual images are not like the images in paintings which we can mistake to be an outside entity and which the graphic image represents. In VR, the images are the realities. We interact with virtual entities, and we become an entity ourselves in the virtual environment. (Heim 70)

In other words, playing a virtual game is entering a second layer of reality or an alternative reality. It is another sphere, a second space, which is neither the real world, as it is governed by a different set of rules and enables the individual to overcome the limits of his former life to start a new identity with his avatar. Virtual space exists within our reality, but at the same time, it is not quite the same. It has its own rules, even though restricted to the designer's programming. What is more, another aspect of virtual reality is that it is a medium, which is used locally, but potentially connects people around the world (Löw 103). By doing so it offers the gamer the possibility to recreate a new social environment with like-minded individuals developing new social constellations, redefining one's social position. Transgressive behaviour is accepted and even welcomed. Mark Poster explains that our concept of reality is problematised by the addition of a second layer thereof.

What is more, these individuals need not be in the same physical location but may be communicating information to the computer from distant points through modems. Further 'movements' in virtual reality are not quite the same as movements in 'old reality': for example, one can fly or go through walls since the material constraints of earth need not apply. (Poster 85)

Thus, it is a mediated environment which the individuals inhabit, but which enables them to overcome the limits of our physical reality. According to Berthold Schoene's characterisation, this aspect adds a cosmopolitan quality to *Ever Fallen In Love*. Virtual realities enable and facilitate globalised communication. Schoene states that "the representation of worldwide human living and global community" is a central aspect to the cosmopolitan novel (Schoene 2009: 17). The question arises whether Richard's virtual reality is actually an example of the liminoid instead of the liminal. Turner and Thomassen describe the liminoid as a phenomenon which takes place when an individual steps into a theatre or a casino in order to consume. In their opinion, art, theatre and leisure halls are modern-time phenomena which mock liminal processes. However, as Thomassen states, the liminoid does not involve a personal crisis and a break from real life (Thomassen 2014: 84). The liminoid is a quasi-liminality which does not need to involve a process of transition. If we follow this view, Richard's video game has to be categorised as liminoid. However, I believe that it has a different quality. If we consider Heim's definition, virtual realities are realities that exist parallel to our real life (cf. Heim 70). That means that characters do not represent, but have an existence of their own. Of course a virtual character always implies that a person is controlling its actions, but a second layer of reality is created in which rites of passage can theoretically take place. This is why I argue that Richard's engagement with his own virtual world is an engagement with a liminal setting, not a liminoid one.

If we take Richard's desire for escape, the ambivalence of virtual reality and the difficult conception of reality into account, the question arises what the content of the game itself implies. *Somme* is a violent computer game set in the Great War, in the trenches of Somme in France. The first person shooter game offers several avatars to choose from (*EF* 117). These have to be imagined as types of characters, reduced to particular characteristics. While Richard invests a lot of effort into shaping the characters and giving them depth, his boss, Rupe, makes him reduce the

avatars' complexities. This implies two of the main functions explained above: while Rupe aims at satisfying the gamers' wishes to live their brutal fantasies, Richard would prefer to make the characters as real as possible, simulating a real identity. While he aims at creating a valid second reality, he is, however, not allowed to work in a detailed way and name any of the characters (*EF* 65) so that they intentionally stay vague and stereotypical: "*OFFICER is brave sometimes to the point of recklessness and he'll risk his own life to protect his men. The product of public school, he's patriotic and used to an all-male environment.*" (*EF* 71; italicisation in the original). In fact, estranging the characters from their possible real-life inspiration, giving them an 'edgier' character, is the instruction Richard receives. The officer's noble upper class origin is to be juxtaposed with the transgressive homosexual affair between him and the lower-class infantryman:

A new set of possibilities for OFFICER rampaged across Richard's computer screen, ones which would allow the character to sacrifice his men to protect himself rather than vice versa. And COLONIAL, he could now seek revenge for injustices perpetrated by his supposed superiors, WOMAN might be a bloodthirsty psychopath, or else unveiled and transformed into a damsel in distress, ripe for rescue, And why shouldn't a romance blossom between OFFICER and INFANTRYMAN? Lars wanted edgy, didn't he, and that would offer a nice twist for the hetero gamer, take them 'out of their comfort zone'; something which was, according to marketing, desirable within the genre. Richard scrawled a two-way arrow between the two on his mind map. There were plenty of means of dying: by mortar, by bayonet, by blood poisoning, by gas, by drowning. (*EF* 129)

By leaving his carefully scripted plan of each level, he makes his characters less complex and thus also less moral and less ideal (*EF* 119). Simultaneously, he neglects his aspiration of historical accuracy and an educational value in favour of a transgressive fantasy scenario (*EF* 74). The plot Richard writes appeals to dark fantasies: the side actions of the war filled with brothels, sexual assaults, fist fights, psychopaths and transgender soldiers (*EF* 71). This is a departure from Richard's romanticised ideal of a historic computer game which enables the gamer to travel time to when the empire was still strong. This ambivalent war-time nostalgia with its naturalistic war strategies, however, does not seem to be transgressive enough to be profitable. Nevertheless, it is significant that Richard chooses the Battle of the Somme as the temporal and spatial frame of his game. For the British Empire, the Battle of the Somme is an extreme example of gruelling positional and attrition warfare and resulted in a great number of casualties. It was also the battle in which tanks were first used which thus defined a new type of war. Consequently, the Battle

of the Somme has a symbolic character as it reminds the reader of the horrors happening on each side of the front as well as of the slow decline of the empire and it shows that Richard tends to lose himself in meticulously planning an alternative world in order to have directive control over a particular environment. For Richard, it is important to be the creator of a new environment, to be in control and not determined by social pressures, which is a feeling under which he has been suffering all his life.

Ever Fallen in Love has often been read as a modern gothic novel. It is mainly Luke and, ten years later, Loren, who show particular parallels in their attitudes and behaviour manipulating their peers and egoistically taking what they desire. The text critically deals with the prevalent class tensions, particularly in urban environments and I assume that both, Luke and Loren, perform their individual acts of revenge on the intruders. Transgressive behaviour is instrumentalised by Luke, Richard and Loren to compensate a feeling of inferiority in order to be in the position of power and manipulation. In her online essay, ‘Looking Back’, Fiona McCulloch argues that *Ever Fallen in Love* is a significant new part of the Scottish Gothic tradition (McCulloch 2012). She emphasises the transgressive quality of Richard and Luke’s deeds of past university days, which are gradually revealed after ten years of being kept secret. She focuses on the uncanny tropes of the novel. Gothic places, or heterotopias, such as the graveyard, Luke’s vampire character traits or the literary double form the main argument of her essay. Without a doubt, *Ever Fallen in Love* can be read as a new Gothic novel. In Ian Duncan’s definition,

[the] thematic core of Scottish Gothic consists of an association between the national and the uncanny or supernatural. To put it schematically: Scottish Gothic represents (with greater historical and anthropological specificity than in England) the uncanny recursion of an ancestral identity alienated from modern life. [...] A series of historical disjunctions, most conspicuously Scotland’s loss of political independence at the 1707 Union of Parliaments, but also the growing social division between urban professional classes and rural populace. (Duncan 2001: 70)

Duncan continues by explaining that gothic literature makes use of a “formal repertoire, which includes plot (labyrinth, mysterious, driven by a traumatic or secret past), setting (castles and monasteries, ruins, tombs, sublime natural scenery), psychology (‘feminine’, passive, intensely inward and susceptible, versus a masculine, aristocratic will to power” (Duncan 2001: 74). *Ever Fallen in Love* is a

novel which works with two parallel plots on two levels of time which are tightly interwoven. The motif of the double, thus, is already present in the form of the novel. The uncanny or supernatural aspect is mainly present in the form of the ‘ghosts of Richard’s past’, and, strikingly, in his part-time job. As the local gravedigger’s assistant, teenage Richard spends his afternoons between tombstones:

Don’t worry, Mum said. You won’t have to dig graves, will he Kenneth?

My dad told her not to be stupid, but nevertheless, I lay awake in my bed that night, turning the combined mileage of poof and gravedigger, grave robber, ghoul over and over in my mind.[...] I couldn’t wait until I left school. Until then though, I was going to have to find a way of living with being the grave digging poof. (*EF* 113)

Nicholas Royle points out the association of homosexuality and the uncanny: ‘The uncanny *is* queer. And the queer is uncanny’ (Royle 43). Richard is not accepted by his peers who are not comfortable with his homosexuality. He suffers from the stigmatised otherness of his sexual orientation and the resulting humiliation he experiences at school. The graveyard has an ambivalent quality. Despite the morbid and uncanny associations, Richard’s new work-place is a retreat from the pressures of his social life. The graveyard, as the epitome of a liminal place, is a location which is one of Foucault’s heterotopias. It is a place which exists within but excluded from a city, it exists parallel to everyday life. Similar to virtual space, the cemetery is a space of otherness. This is why it is a place with which Richard can connect as he himself is often stigmatised as ‘other’.

Another gothic element is his behaviour. The young games programmer is haunted by memories of past deeds which he has attempted to suppress or forget. Fleeing to one of the northernmost areas of Scotland is therefore also an attempt to escape and cut all connections to his past. Richard and Luke’s classmate, Lucy, died what was officially called an “accidental death” (*EF* 231): “It wasn’t that long after the ecstasy death scares in the papers and there were traces of MDMA in her bloodstream,” Richard tells his sister (*EF* 232). The arbitrariness of the circumstances, the fact that it might have been an accidental drowning due to drug abuse or suicide, haunts him. However, it is not only the fact that the circumstances of Lucy’s death are not entirely solved, even though Richard is directly involved in the young girl’s drug abuse, but his feeling of guilt is due to his sexually

transgressive past. Fiona McCulloch speaks of gothic perversity when both young men rape young Lucy.

The three of us balanced on that narrow college bed, its sheets stamped with the blue logo of the university linen supplier. It's alright, he'd said earlier, Richard's gay, but when it came down to it that was the ace in his pack; she could help me, I don't know, be certain, fulfil a wish. He made it seem both safe and some kind of special privilege, awarded just to her. [...] She didn't consent, not in the strict legal parlance, but she didn't say no, of that I can be absolutely sure. (*EF* 193)

This is a traumatic experience for Lucy who is left huddling on her bed. Richard uses her as a tool to fulfil his sexual fantasies and desires for Luke, who, in turn derives pleasure in manipulating Lucy until she does not reject his desire to take control over her. Both men dominate and abuse her; Lucy's lack of consent makes it a violent, humiliating, and thus transgressive sexual act. Despite the excitement of a wish fulfilled, Richard is haunted by a guilty conscience, particularly as he learns of Lucy's death. The young girl turned out to be dependent on anti-depressants as well as Luke's drugs. As a matter of fact, and in addition to the form of the novel, the gothic double permeates the entire work: Luke and Lucy, their names having the same meaning, are doubles and opposites; they are offender and victim, actively attacking versus passively bearing, evil versus innocent. Luke is the egoistic consumer, benefitting from others, sometimes with harmful consequences. He is the one who plays psycho-tricks on his environment, including his best friend.

Richard manages to overcome his personal trauma and face the ghosts of his past by actively confronting his fears. He arranges to meet up with Luke in the end of the novel. By doing so, he surmounts his fears and his inner blockade so that he manages to overcome the situation which caused him to live in isolation in fear of being found by relicts of his past. It is a process of personal negotiation he undergoes in his highland cottage and by interacting with the personal, but fictitious possibilities of virtual reality. The liminal settings first serve as a refuge and then as a medium to gain personal strength. Overcoming this fear is his step towards completing his personal ritual of passage.

In summary, both novels, *Negative Space* and *Ever Fallen in Love*, deal with crises of identity as well as traumatic experiences that haunt the protagonists' lives. They also deal with the issue of applying control and the ability to redefine one's

identity. In my opinion, space, especially the mystical space of northern Scotland, is the catalyst of change in both novels. While *Negative Space* deals with the difficult process of the utterly disrupted young woman towards a better understanding of herself, *Ever Fallen in Love* is a story about the repression of and escape from Richard's past. The earlier novel makes use of the mythical landscape of the north of Scotland, with its settlement history and pagan traditions. Stella finds new hope and a perspective, a new understanding of herself and strength to determine her own life by going back to her family's roots on Orkney, by looking inward and thus recognising an individual. She manages to overcome the heteronomy and accept her 'otherness'. The later novel, on the other hand, deals mainly with the haunting memories of Richard's past and the unsuccessful suppression of his feeling of guilt. It is not so much about the mystical, but rather the historical implications of the northern areas of Britain, in this case predominantly the Highlands. The historical references directly allude to Scotland's tragic history of Highland Clearances and the ever present wound resulting from that. *Negative Space* and *Ever Fallen in Love* are texts with a political undertone, referring to Scottish history. Moreover, both novels subtly address gender issues. Stella undergoes an emancipatory process in *Negative Space*, both with regard to her gender as well as her sexual orientation. She steps out of a male-dominated, heteronormative shadow towards accepting her homo- or bisexuality and determining her own life. *Ever Fallen in Love*, however, deals with the construction of a virtual reality with a male target group, which serves to compensate violent and homo-erotic desires, to establish an alternative identity by making use of overly masculine gender stereotypes. The advantage of a virtual alter ego or avatar suggests a chance to start again, to re-establish one's identity independent of one's real-life personality. The powers of a virtual world enable the individual to overcome the boundaries of their selves, to blur physical restrictions temporarily. The northern, the virtual, and internal spaces which are created are significant for the course of the action in the two novels. All of these spaces have a strongly liminal quality, allowing the protagonists to take a step back from their real, every-day lives. While the north conserves history and thus inspires each protagonist to interact with their histories, virtual spaces are a peculiar phenomenon which are simultaneously in and out of time. They exist parallel to the 'real' world, but enable

the actor to create a second, equally existent identity – however, on a different level of reality.

Particularly charged liminal spaces clearly offer a fruitful ground for a negotiation of particular norms, limits or values. This is undoubtedly an aspect that many of the novels discussed in my thesis share. The confrontation with an in-between space, an unstable setting, forces characters to reconsider their own selves. This is due to the fact that liminal spaces do not provide stability but instead present a state in which order is destroyed. Thus, as both Turner and van Gennep describe, it is an individual's task to overcome this state of instability by discovering his or her personal strengths. The two novels in this chapter demonstrate what can be summarised for the entire thesis: liminality is a universal phenomenon which can occur in different shapes. It often either serves as a catalyst for a substantial change or triggers a discussion on the legitimacy of a particular norm.

Conclusion

Limits, liminalities and transgressions are phenomena which have to be thought in union. They are, as Jochen Achilles and Ina Bergmann suggest, results of cultural and socio-political processes (Achilles and Bergmann 2015: 23). Liminality can apply to individuals as much as it can apply to settings, to time and space. There are different approaches to dealing with liminality and there are various anthropological theories which have evolved from Arnold van Gennep's study on the tribal structure of one small tribe in Africa. When these anthropological observations are applied to our contemporary, large-scale societies, the study of liminality has to be thought in accordance with social, cultural and political phenomena of the time, as Jochen Achilles and Ina Bergmann emphasise. I have translated the use of an anthropological theory onto contemporary literary criticism, which is a bold step. However, I am convinced that it makes an insightful and an important contribution to the discourse of contemporary literature with regard to socio-political phenomena therein as it reveals narratives of power and social interaction which are dealt with in the works of fiction which I have studied. I consider Jochen Achilles' and Ina Bergmann's position a central statement in the context of liminality and literature which is why I come back to it at this stage at the end of my study:

In the interplay between fictionality and normativity, the normativity of boundaries becomes obvious in gestures of border crossings and transgression, when existing boundaries are being subverted, removed, or displaced. (Achilles and Bergmann 2015: 23)

This normativity of boundaries is the central aspect in the discussion of transgression and liminality in contemporary Scottish literature. I have demonstrated that transgressive behaviour can often be observed as a reaction to, or rather as a rebellion against restrictive norms and personal boundaries. Transgressive behaviour is a means of overcoming obstacles to create order. However, I am convinced that transgressions usually do not serve this purpose as they do not solve the individual's conflict with the limit as it is. It is liminality that offers a more sustainable approach to dealing with boundaries. When the original setting and the rules of everyday life are temporarily suspended, the individual is forced to reflect his own position as a part of a society. Liminality can thus have several functions. It can be a theme of

protest to overcome the tension of social hierarchies and the limits of human existence, as Shmuel Eisenstadt suggests (Eisenstadt 314). This is what happens in both of Alasdair Gray's novels. In the first chapter, I suggested that socio-political power discourses, particularly the ones reflected in Gray's work, inhibit the freedom of individual development and have a harmful effect on the citizens of a particular society in focus. This destructive effect is reflected in the use of grotesquely distorting diseases or mental health issues which lead to death or self-harm as in the transgressive consumption of drugs. It is in the presence of liminal spaces and phases that the protagonist in focus is able to liberate himself and to revolt against the system. Liminality challenges the existing social order as it provokes the individual to question its own position with regard to the norm in order to accept or reject it. The carnivalesque is a powerful and illustrative example of confronting the power discourses which are often associated with norms. However, carnival, being a concept very closely connected to liminality and transgression, does not overthrow a political system or a political order. It does not have a lasting effect on the individual and does thus not directly correspond with Arnold van Gennep's original idea of a rite of passage – which necessarily requires a progress, a process of substantial change. However, it corresponds with Victor Turner's idea of the liminal as a phase of negotiation, of mocking and reflecting and thus of temporarily subverting the existing order.

In the second chapter, I have dealt with the issue of how permanent liminality can explain the underlying personal challenges in a situation of social exclusion and alcohol addiction in a literary text. Permanent liminality is a situation, in which rites of passage, in this case rites of identification, are repeatedly performed in order to constitute a particular identity. The individual itself is not able to progress but is caught in this situation of permanent ritual actions. Permanent liminality helps to identify and discuss the internal struggles which the protagonist in *Paradise* undergoes. I have also shown that a liminal situation and a liminal character can solve the emotional blockade of the protagonist in *So I am Glad*. Both trigger an internal process by dissolving the original boundaries of the body and the self and thus enabling the protagonist to redefine her personal limits.

Questioning or transgressing a norm does not necessarily have to imply criticism. It is an integral part of a rite of passage – the individual is thus required to transgress a limit. Transgression can also re-emphasise a norm. Jochen Achilles and Ina Bergmann further elaborate that liminality is a concept of both demarcation and mediation between different stages, spaces and internal states (Achilles and Bergmann 2015: 3). It can be a negotiation, a dialogue, a dialectic or a radical transgression. It opens a discourse on alternative ways of living aside from the norm which often implies a power discourse. This negotiation process can be identified in many works I have discussed. It is a central aspect in *Trumpet*, but also hidden in *1982*, *Janine* or *Negative Space*.

In the third chapter, I have dealt with constructions of masculinity and deviant gender identities. Liminality offers two approaches to reading *Trumpet*. On the one hand, it helps to describe Joss' life as a performance of masculinity and thus a repetitive performance of rites of identification. And on the other hand, it describes, in the very traditional understanding of van Gennep's idea of the concept, that Joss' son Colman undergoes a classical rite of passage, from an appalled, overly masculine young man to a more comprehensive, more tolerant individual who accepts and understands the motivations of his parents' actions. *The Wasp Factory* is a novel which voices harsh criticism of the power discourses in a society which determines the norms of masculinity. By hyperbolising what is often regarded as ideal male characteristics, it unveils the harmful effects of these social discourses on the individual itself, as it has a destabilising potential, and on the environment, as the individual can have a destructive effect on others.

In the fourth chapter I have dealt with liminal spaces in Zoë Strachan's *Negative Space* and *Ever Fallen in Love* as spaces of reflection. Liminal spaces have different qualities in the novels I have discussed as they either have strong historical and mystical associations or deal with alternative realities. They offer the protagonists the opportunity to connect with their personal and national history via the places they visit. The negotiation with the places, which are charged with historical events, causes processes of self-reflection in the protagonists. I have demonstrated that virtual reality, in the shape of an interactive war game, is a

particular space which enables the individual to create a new identity. It is an alternative reality, which does not represent, but exists parallel to our reality. While the places themselves are liminal, as they build a bridge between life and death, the individuals undergo rites of passage which enable them to transgress their personal boundaries.

Liminality is a phenomenon which aids meaningful insights in socio-cultural processes and to explain underlying developments. It is, however, a very broad phenomenon which has to be differentiated clearly as the various readings of Arnold van Gennep's original theories imply multiple consequences as to how to approach social or literary phenomena. This is where the limit of my study is. I have suggested that applying this anthropological approach to a new reading of literature highlights relevant social discourses and gives them space for negotiation. I am convinced that this is an approach which serves to illuminate social discourses underlying literary texts. However, my thesis cannot give definite answers as to what constitutes and characterises identity in contemporary times, it does not approach Scottishness, but deliberately only addresses aspects of living in Scotland in the past few decades as the phenomena discussed are prominent issues that concern many western societies. For further research, I suggest to draw a clear restriction and focus on one approach of liminality when applying it to a new reading of fiction in order to be able to compare and contrast a wider corpus of literature more carefully. My aim was to demonstrate how various facets of liminality can present a useful conceptual tool to negotiate the relationship between individuals and the normativity of different boundaries with which they are confronted. For my study, it was vital to grasp the issue of liminality as a whole with all its implications in order to demonstrate various facets of social, historical, political and cultural developments that are discussed in western societies; Scotland being one prominent example. I would be interested to see how the focus on one critical approach to liminality can serve as a conceptual tool in further research to understand particular ongoing processes in society which are reflected in literature. Being 'betwixt and between' is a phenomenon which we have taken up from studies on human interaction. It can be observed in small communities as much as in large-scale societies. For the study of literature, I believe that liminality is a useful concept which draws connections between an underlying

socio-political discourse in the novel and its literary content. It serves to unveil the individual's negotiations with limits and norms and highlights the underlying processes of conflict at work.

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