

Longing for Belonging:
Bildung, the *Doppelgänger* and Liberalism in *The Private Memoirs and
Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824)

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Introduction

James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) is constituted, as its titular sinner Robert Wringhim describes so fittingly, "of a series of adventures which has puzzled myself, and will puzzle the world when I am no more in it" (89). With extraordinary foresight Robert refers to the ongoing debates about the reader's inability to finish the book with the satisfaction of fully understanding the incongruent events it presents. Moving beyond a mere open ending *The Private Memoirs* is a novel that begins, progresses and ends with gaps, questions and contradictions. The reader soon discovers that trying to reason one's way out of the novel's plot is futile, but so is the path of supernatural tradition or religious belief. Readers are left with one story, told twice, or two stories that are perceived to be one – whatever the case, the reader remains in the dark as to the true nature of the story.

However, I argue that the literary relevance of *The Private Memoirs* is not so much the nature of its story as its exploration of 'human nature.' In particular, the novel examines the sometimes problematic desire for belonging and self-realisation – as an individual as well as a member of society. Understanding the novel as a satirical *Bildungsroman*, it becomes clear that Robert Wringhim's failure both to reach maturity and assimilate into society is the result of his inability to change. Robert faces a constant (re)negotiation of the self and its external influences, such as family and society, through which the process of self-realisation takes place. This negotiation is, as will be shown below, a form of *Bildung* (understood here through Johann Gottfried Herder's conceptualisation of the term) where the young individual must actively participate in the learning process rather than passively take in information or passively undergo experiences.

Even though the story's protagonist Robert meekly accepts his teachers' words, he never adapts to new knowledge, depriving himself of any changes or experiences that might enrich his existing knowledge. This prevents Robert from developing throughout his life. Not only does this mean he cannot reach maturity, it also prevents him from becoming a functional part of society or enabling him to feel he belongs to it. The failure of social integration, in turn, leads to the creation of a *doppelgänger*. But Robert is not fully responsible for his inability to change his early identity – the identity established during childhood – since this seemingly fixed identity was already preordained, albeit not by God, but by his direct society: his family.

Although his family does not actually preclude Robert from their society, it is their insistence on his being preordained to live in heaven that causes him to feel that above all he belongs to – and longs for – this future state. However, since human nature is preordained before the earth was made, his behaviour should remain the same from the day he was born and he must deny any new knowledge, beliefs or feelings. Much as Stout suggested, “neither action nor alteration will adulterate the ore of the his [Robert's] predestined identity” (549). Ultimately, with no self-realisation and a strong desire to go to where he feels he belongs, Robert's short life can only end in his premature death.

However, finally, *The Private Memoirs* is not merely a critique of bad parenting or religious excess. Rather, Robert and his family become a metonymy for something larger and more prevalent: liberalism and civil society. After Robert's initiation into the elect and he becomes part of the “society of *the just made perfect*” (Hogg 88), “[Robert] wept for joy to be thus assured of [his] freedom ...” (88). However, this freedom is only imagined. Indeed, both Robert's parents and liberalist ideology encourage a belief in freedom, yet this freedom can never be realised. Freedom becomes freedom to have property, rather than freedom of

thought. In the end, liberalism becomes a system of exclusion rather than inclusion of difference and thereby unearths the destructive power of neglect.

The Private Memoirs in Short

Divided into three sections, Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* appears before us as an authentic document that contains the memoirs of the titular sinner Robert Wringhim, introduced and reflected upon by an editor. The novel opens with the editor's narrative, in which he professes to give an objective account of Wringhim's experiences as described in the memoir, though he confesses that for most part of the story it is "to tradition [he] must appeal" (Hogg 5).

In his long introduction the reader hears of Robert's divided family – how his mother, Rabina, no longer wishes to share the same space with her husband, Lord Dalcastle. As a result, Rabina occupies one side of the Dalcastle manor with Robert and her spiritual guide, Rev. Wringhim – who is also suggested to be Robert's real father – while Lord Dalcastle occupies the other side of the house with George, Robert's (half-)brother, and Mrs Logan. It becomes clear that Robert has learned to have great antipathy for his brother and that there are strange circumstances surrounding the latter's demise. In fact, it seems Robert may have had potential complicity in the murder of his own brother and later, when he is Lord of Dalcastle, in the murder of both his mother and bride to be.

In the second section, it is Wringhim's turn to tell his life story from his first-person perspective. Some parts of the memoir are consistent with the editor's narrative, although he also presents new insights. Firstly, the reader learns of Wringhim's Antinomian upbringing, a religious doctrine which leads him to believe he is one of the elect: that is, someone predestined for God's salvation and thus above moral laws. Secondly, the memoir introduces a new character, Gil-Martin, who, Wringhim remarks, has "the cameleon art of changing [his]

appearance” (Hogg 95). Throughout the story it is Gil who fosters Robert’s increasingly violent and destructive behaviour and who encourages Wringhim to put justice into his own hands by killing those who do not adhere to the Antinomian doctrine. Yet the question forms: who or what is Gil - a real person, a figment of Wringhim’s mind or the devil himself?

The two narratives point in opposite directions. In his reflections on the memoir, the editor seems to prefer the psychological reading, while Wringhim, initially, is convinced that Gil is real, although becoming increasingly suspicious as people start referring to him as the devil incarnate. However, neither approach seems to explain or exclude other possibilities. Various accounts by people who have seen Gil undermine a belief in the psychological explanation. On the other hand, as the editor reflects, “in this day, and with the present generation, it will not go down, that a man should be daily tempted by the devil” (Hogg 189), making the belief in the supernatural equally suspect. The novel’s closure with the editor’s reflection on the memoir – although self-negating in its nature – clearly questions the memoir’s authenticity. Yet the authenticity of the editor’s own narrative is equally questionable, thus leaving the reader to ask concordantly with the editor: “WHAT can this work be?” (Hogg 178).

The Private Memoirs in Context

Hogg’s novel appears to have the potential to be many things. After its rediscovery by André Gide in the 1920s the novel became a subject of interest for many scholars. As Ian Duncan explains in his introduction to *The Private Memoirs*, there was a “surge of criticism of the novel itself, which brought to bear psychological, sexual, textual, theological, and (more recently) national-historical interests” (xvii). However, despite such variety in criticism most scholars seem to agree that the novel can be categorised as a Gothic novel. Perhaps more so because of a lack of a better genre rather than the Gothic genre being a perfect match.

Certainly, there are some features which could ascribe the *Private Memoirs* to the Gothic fiction genre. In the introduction to the *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, Jerrold Hogle defines the Gothic as “usually tak[ing] place (at least some of the time) in an antiquated or seemingly antiquated space,” and “[w]ithin this space, or combination of such spaces, are hidden some secrets from the past (sometimes the recent past) that haunt the characters, psychologically, physically, or otherwise at the main of the story” (2). *The Private Memoirs* does indeed feature the rather antiquated manor of Lord Dalcastle, where Robert experiences severe memory-loss.

Furthermore, the secrets from the past which haunt the characters are, in *The Private Memoirs*, symbolised by Robert Wringhim who himself is seen as a force from the past by the contemporary editor writing several years later. In addition, as Hogle argues: “Gothic fictions play with and oscillate between the earthly laws of conventional reality and the possibilities of the supernatural ... often siding with one of these over the other in the end, but usually raising the possibility that the boundaries between these may have been crossed...” (2-3). Yet in *The Private Memoirs* there seems to be no siding at all. The sinner himself “lost all hopes of ever discovering the true import of these events” (Hogg 91), just as the editor “cannot tell” (178) what the work is. Indeed, as Graham Tulloch argued in *The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*:

Even more importantly, the Gothic does not offer Hogg an outlet for the supernatural, at least not for the kind of supernatural that fascinated him.

Hogg’s supernatural came from folk tradition: stories of fairies, ghosts and the Devil. ... Other Gothic novels (e.g., by Ann Radcliffe) feature apparently supernatural phenomena only to explain them away. This strategy does not work for Hogg, who habitually writes as though the supernatural is real, an aspect of common life. (Tulloch 124)

Clearly, the Gothic contributes only insofar that it constitutes a genre in which the novel could be labelled and grasped. However, Hogg's fiction seems to have little in common with the more mainstream Gothic stories, such as the likes of works by Ann Radcliffe or Matthew Lewis.

A more fitting classification of the novel comes from Duncan who sees *The Private Memoirs* as a specifically Scottish Gothic novel. According to Duncan, "[t]he thematic core of Scottish Gothic consists of an association between the *national* and the *uncanny or supernatural*" (Duncan, "Walter Scott, James Hogg" 123, emphasis in original). This connection between the national and the uncanny is of particular importance to this thesis. Indeed, as will be argued, *The Private Memoirs* shows how the nation and by extension the family can become a place of the uncanny, a place that creates a crisis of belonging.

However, it must be noted that for the purpose of this thesis, only the notion of uncanny will be used and not the supernatural. As Tzvetan Todorov has explained in *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, his exemplary book on the fantastic, the supernatural and the uncanny are two different species. While the supernatural is clearly determined as something that is not from this world and can therefore be understood, the uncanny is something that once was familiar but has suddenly become fearful to us for no apparent reason and can therefore not be fully understood. The relationship between the nation and the uncanny, then, is that of something that was once familiar, but now has become unrecognisable and thus frightening. How this happened will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

The importance of the nation and the community to the novel has already been argued by other scholars. Magdalene Redekop, for example, has argued that Hogg's novel "affirms the simple values of love and forgiveness.... by offering the process of misreading itself ... as

an experience of mutual fallibility and by intimating ... a prophetic level which makes us all one congregation” (182). As readers we misinterpret the text, as did Robert, and this fall into misprision makes us one community. For Redekop it is vital to understand this communal bond. Knowing this also makes one understand that this is “the final role of the reader – not to judge or even to understand, but to forgive” (181).

Redekop’s argument connects with the argument of this thesis, although only to a certain extent. While it might be true that we are all part of one community and are all fallible, this also might suggest that Robert is acquitted of any responsibility of his own. Admittedly, Robert was destined to fail due to the specific community he grew up in, but, as I shall show in Chapter Two, he also neglected to take up his own responsibility. We may all be one community, but blindly following this community, so the novel seems to imply, is neither good for the individual nor the group.

In his article “Castes of Exception”, Daniel Stout presents a similar critique on following the herd heedlessly. Here Stout argues that Hogg’s novel stands up against the romantic nationalist notion, which Stout contends holds the belief that “the most appreciable culture is the culture which most closely resembles the way things were” (358). He claims that Herder was such a romantic nationalist who saw culture as direct copies of past culture. However, his mentioning of Herder seems to be rather out of place. In fact, Herder was adamantly against the preservation of a past culture and saw change as a necessary condition for the preservation of a people – something that will be argued more thoroughly throughout this thesis.

However, Stout does make an interesting point saying that:

Hogg’s novel ... comes out against the viability of this model of cultural identity [where the most appreciable culture is the culture which most closely

resembles the way things were], not by asserting the absolute discontinuity between past and present, but by seeing the very notion of continuity as necessarily involving forms of change and evolution that make it difficult to set up a one-to-one relation (that is, a relation of identity), between a present practice and a past state. (537-8)

Indeed, the novel does indeed insist on the natural changeability of cultural identity, although it is Herder, as one of the most important theorists on nation and cultural identity, who would have undoubtedly agreed with Stout's suggestions. Herder insists on change – even when change is not wanted:

But as men are not firmly rooted plants, the calamities of famine, earthquakes, war, and the like, must in time remove them from their place to some other more or less different. And though they might adhere to the manners of their forefathers with an obstinacy almost equal to the brute, and even apply to their new mountains, rivers, towns, and establishments, the names of their primitive land; it would be impossible for them, to remain eternally the same in every respect, under any considerable alteration of soil and climate. (Herder 349)

***Bildung* the Nation?**

In this thesis I shall show, through the use of the concept of *Bildung* – both as a separate notion and in conjunction with the novel, the *Bildungsroman* – that Herder was very much aware of the fact that cultural identity changes over the course of time. In fact, it is vital that it does change because if change did not occur it would mean premature death.

Herder, therefore, will be central to this thesis. Importantly, it is Wilhelm von Humboldt who is often considered the father of *Bildung*, but it is Herder's specific interest in

the idea of the nation and culture that makes him far more relevant to this thesis. Indeed, as Roger Scruton explains in the introduction to his book *Modern Culture*:

Kultur, for Herder, is the life-blood of a people, the flow of moral energy that holds society intact. *Zivilisation*, by contrast, is the veneer of manners, law and technical know-how. Nations may share a civilisation; but they will always be distinct in their culture, since culture defines what they are. (1)

Herder is more interested in culture as the natural form of *Bildung* and education, while “[f]or Wilhelm von Humboldt ... culture meant not untended growth but cultivation” (Scruton 1). As we will see later on, Hogg did not necessarily believe in the notion that culture had to be cultivated and therefore could not be accessible to all. Hogg “was willing to recognise, like, and admire ‘talents and moral worth’ in any kind of person: Whig or Tory, duke or shepherd” (Mack 71). Indeed, culture was a personal, communal or heritage, not the result of intellectual cultivation only.

Accordingly, Herder is of great importance to this thesis. He was invested in the idea of the nation – a term that did not as yet have the same connotations as it has today. In his works Herder uses nation and *Volk* interchangeably – in this thesis, following Vicky Spencer’s example, *Volk* will be used to refer to Herder’s definition in order to avoid confusion (130). A *Volk* “is most appropriately defined as *a socially cohesive community with shared historic memories, a common culture, and a sense of solidarity and belonging that unites its members*” (Spencer 144, italics in original). Herder believed that a *Volk* was an organic system that would consist of natural relations, which would grow, develop and change on its own terms.

For Herder, both a *Volk* and the individual need to develop naturally, they need to go through the process of *Bildung* in order reach maturity. Such development requires the

acceptance of change on the one hand and freedom on the other. However, both change and freedom are not limitless. Too much change might risk both the individual and the Volk to become detached from their roots, alienated and so forever wandering. Complete freedom is also impossible because one is always connects to others, we are bound to each other and society, which means ultimate freedom cannot be had.

Chapter 1: The Scottish Nation and Intellectual Impress

Before delving deeper into the notion of *Bildung* and change, it is first important to come to understand the complex history of Scotland. Scotland had always been a divided country and consisted of many different peoples and cultures. Certain events, such as the Reformation, the Union of Crowns and the Union Parliaments with England, were vital for the establishment of Scottish identity. Not just in terms of its being an independent country – despite its dependency on England – but also because of the development of a unified culture.

Furthermore, these events set the stage for the rise of modernity, first through the Enlightenment followed by the Romantic period. In the latter period, particularly, people became very much aware of their dependency on the time and culture in which they were born and lived their lives. It was a crisis of identity, caused by the Union of Parliaments, that would encourage first the Enlightenment thinkers and then the Romanticist to critically rethink the notion of what it was that allowed for an identity in the first place. It became part of their *Zeitgeist* to reflect critically on this same *Zeitgeist*.

As we will see, both periods tried to come to terms with the complexities this new and modern world offered them. Yet, both periods, too, failed to understand that the crisis of identity they were experiencing could not be resolved – either by neglecting a ‘past’ and traditional culture, as did the Enlightenment thinkers, or by attempting to retrieve this ‘original’ past and copying it without change. The complexities of modernity cannot be resolved, but must be accepted. In fact, trying to resolve these would end up in excluding the viability of certain options. Just like the novel, choosing one solution over the other also means the exclusion of something equally possible.

Scottish History

Already since the Middle Ages Scotland and England had been very keen on annexing one another. Neither party was particularly successful, however, so both remained to exist as two separate nations up until the eighteenth century. An important element for this somewhat forced maintenance of the status quo was the Scottish rugged landscape, which prevented England from invading its northern neighbours on any large scale. Conversely, this landscape also left the Scots relatively poor with not much arable land and, more importantly, did not allow for a centrally governed nation to develop itself. This, in turn, made organising a large scale invasion of English territory hardly feasible (Mackie 14-15). Accordingly, neither was able to take on the other and both were left with just their own nation and a persistent dislike for the other.

Most Scots did not want to have anything to do with England, even though their own internal structure was dangerously unstable. Because Scotland was difficult to govern centrally, the country was much divided, which came particularly to the fore when comparing the north to the south. The large gap between the Highlands and the Lowlands of Scotland was difficult to overcome due to their differences in education, religion, language and social organisation. Indeed, in *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (1992), Linda Colley explains that Scottish Lowlanders would often consider their fellow countrymen as backwards, violent and uncivilised, which made the differences between Highlands and Lowlands much bigger than, for example, the differences between the Lowlands and the north of England (14-15).

When in the sixteenth century the Protestant Revolution reached Scotland, the country was meant to become predominantly Protestant. Yet, Protestantism had a difficult time reaching the Highlands, most of the islands, and also parts of the border region. In fact, while the Reformation was considered to have been a successful enterprise, by the end of the sixteenth century a large part of Scotland was still Catholic (Mackie 158). Again, an internal

union had not been possible. Still, unlike many other countries during the Revolution, Scotland managed to keep the Revolution relatively non-violent. This caused multiple religions to exist parallel to each other – albeit behind closed doors – which maintained the internal division (Mackie 158).

Externally, however, Scotland would become closer to England due to the Union of Crowns in 1603 where King James, king of Scots, would take the English throne. Nevertheless, this union was by no means an attempt to actively unite both nations, but instead was a purely a move based on the desire of the Scottish king (Mackie 174). However, on both sides of the Island people were unhappy with these new developments. For the Scots it meant that even though it was their king that would sit on the throne, they would also become more dependent on England. The English, on the other hand, felt that with this new king the much poorer Scots would now have free access to their riches for which the Scots had not worked. As such, a union in name it most certainly was; a union of hearts was still far off (Colley 11-12).

During the next few decades England and Scotland had not grown closer together. In fact, the large discrepancy between the riches of England and the poverty in Scotland only increased. Especially the Scots had serious difficulty with finding the means to maintain their economic situation, which continued to deteriorate. Their independence would prove increasingly difficult to maintain (Emerson 11). Finally, in 1707, Scotland was united with England through the Union of Parliaments. The union, however, was never one based on mutual affection. Rather, for the English at least, it was based on fear. Queen Anne had remained childless and with no suitable heir to the throne, it was feared that the Scots would reinstate their Stuart king and a Catholic successor (Mackie 257). Scotland, on the other hand, also only seemed eager to unite because it would allow them access to much needed financial aid and would make them part of a growing empire (Emerson 11-12).

Nevertheless, the Union of Parliaments did little to overcome the divisions within Scotland, nor did the hostility between Scotland and England decrease. Indeed, Scotland was still very much a collection of kingdoms rather than an actual nation. In fact, the 1707 Union only created an even bigger gap between the ‘modern’ Scots and ‘traditional’ Scots. As Ian Duncan explains: “[this] series of historical disjunctions... informed a wholesale temporal distinction between Scottish modernity - the *habitus* of the middle-class literary subject - and a category of cultural otherness designated as pre-modern” (“Walter Scott, James Hogg” 123-124). This distinction between modern and pre-modern became particularly prominent after the Union and with the rise of the Scottish Enlightenment.

Although *The Private Memoirs* never explicitly refers to any of these events they are still crucial in shaping the novel’s background. As Duncan shows in his introduction to the novel, it is particularly relevant that “[Robert’s] lifetime coincides with ... the Treaty of Union of 1707, which dissolved the Scottish Parliament for a joint English and Scottish assembly in Westminster” (xxiv-xxv). Interestingly, the novel is situated against the backdrop that was to decide the future direction of the nation. For Duncan, “Hogg’s novel synchronizes its protagonist’s story with the foundation of the modern state – meaning, in this case, not the birth but the demise of an independent nation” (xxv).

As the following chapters will show, the nation is taken its shape via the people that inhabit it, while the nation, in turn, influences individual development and the establishment of an individual identity. The two are inextricably connected. As such, the downfall of Robert Wringhim taking place around the same time of the 1707 union is not coincidental. Instead, Robert can be seen to symbolise the idea that establishing and maintaining an independent identity – whether personal or national – cannot be seen as a rigid and universal strategy, where, as long as one has the right theories and rules, identity will follow.

The novel, instead, shows that Robert's identity is only built upon reason and rules and that he does not actually seem to identify with what these rules try to maintain: that is, a living culture. If, warns Hogg, Scotland does not want to end up like Robert, they should inspect their culture before it is too late. Both the Enlightenment and the Romantic period are the intellectual impress of these periods that reverberate through the novel and direct their focus to the problems, such as universality versus individuality, reason versus imagination, which is why it is important to first look at these periods before delving deeper into the problem of identification.

The Scottish Enlightenment

After the 1707 Union with England Scotland entered a difficult time. That is, the Union meant that Scotland was now, beyond a doubt, no longer an independent nation. Accordingly, they had to ask themselves who they were going to be – would they have to take on an English identity or was there a possibility to remain Scottish after all, one way or another? During the Enlightenment, intellectuals would try to fix this sense of loss by establishing theories of national identity, history and progress. All of which served to contribute to strengthening Scotland confidence and self-image.

Many argued that Scotland had been given the chance to move on to a new stage, and was stepping away from an archaic and obsolete past. Theorists would deny that there was a function for traditional beliefs and habits beyond a mere nostalgic reference. However, rather than creating a unified nation, it would only lead to a starker contrast between the old ways and the new. Indeed, it was to create a rupture between a modern and enlightened people and those who would remain faithful to a more traditional past.

This conflict between what was seen as past and the present, between tradition and modernity, was one of the many problems of this period. Indeed, with the rise of

Enlightenment also came the rise of modernity. As we will see in Chapter Two and Three, the development of modernity meant an increase in contradicting and conflicting desires and needs. It would fuel the need for progress, while at the same time cherishing the past; it would emphasise the possibility for freedom, while increasingly larger communities required more and more laws and rules. As we shall see, solving modernity's contradiction is not the task at hand, but rather to live with these differences. If this is not done, the nation will create its own doppelganger, its own other by excluding its possibility. This, in turn, leads to a premature death.

The European Enlightenment was a complex phenomenon and is difficult to trace back to a specific origin or period of time. It is, therefore, also hard to delineate, though Jonathan I. Israel's account in his *Democratic Enlightenment* (2011) presents us with an easy to understand definition:

Enlightenment, then, is defined here as a partly unitary phenomenon operative on both sides of the Atlantic [occurring between 1680 and 1800], and eventually everywhere, consciously committed to the notion of bettering humanity in this world through a fundamental, revolutionary transformation discarding the ideas, habits, and traditions of the past either wholly or partially, this last point being bitterly contested among enlighteners.... (7)

Among other things, the Enlightenment focussed on: the application of reason to material improvement; empiricism; and a distrust of authority – “both to achieve systematic knowledge of nature and to serve as an authoritative guide in practical life” (Bristow). It was “driven principally by ‘philosophy’, that is, what we would term philosophy, science, and political and social science, including the new science of economics lumped together leading to revolutions in ideas and attitudes first, and actual practical revolutions second, or else the

other way around ...” (Israel 7). Although the Enlightenment was a primarily cosmopolitan phenomenon, there are some national points of focus. This national specificity is particularly clear in the Scottish Enlightenment due to its own peculiar historical developments.

After their union with England, Scotland no longer had any political sovereignty, yet it did keep its own religion and autonomous legal, banking and educational institutions. Lawyers, university professors and clergymen would make up a Scottish social elite and would preside over the public sphere. As regulators of what was later known as civil society these professionals informed Scottish culture and shaped the Scottish national identity accordingly (Duncan “Edinburgh” 163). With mostly intellectuals at the top of society and their power exercised through a powerful network of patrons it is not surprising to see the rise of intellectual enterprises. As Roger Emerson has argued, “[t]he success of the enlightened in Scotland derives, then, from their sponsorship by men who shared many of their views and had the power to impose their values and ideas on an often reluctant society” (17).

As explained above, Scotland’s union with England was mostly felt as a necessary evil. But this case of necessity also provided the Scottish with a new impulse to better their own situation. Still, the Scots felt they needed to be able to identify themselves as Scots and possess a form of independence within the union. However, the question was: how was such a union going to look in terms of social organisation? “Freedom and its meaning, the sources of change, the limits which should be placed on power, the ways in which climate and manners created or influenced institutions, how those interacted” (Emerson 12) – each of these were important considerations, since these would either enable or thwart the possibility of keeping their own identity apart from England. This was all the more difficult seeing that their national identity was unstable at best.

As Israel explains, “[u]niversalism was one of the quintessential characteristics of the Enlightenment” (5). Not only did the Enlightenment enforce the belief in a universal human nature, there was also the conviction that all societies were part of a universal system. Such theories aimed to establish a universal system of social organisation and to ground these in the progressive and linear development of history. That is, Scottish social theorists saw their position as backward and ancient compared to England, but envisioned this merely as a stage in a universal order through which they needed to pass.

In Scotland, Adam Smith argued for the existence of a four-stage development of society. According to Smith, every society on earth would traverse four different stages starting with nomadic hunter-gatherers, to shepherding pastoralists, to settled agriculturalists and finally reaching the ultimate stage of national and international commerce (Pittock 87). What is important is that Smith’s claim resulted in the general belief that certain mores, tradition and beliefs that were relevant for the previous stage would no longer be so for the next. Accordingly, universalist theories like these would promote a radical rupture between the present and the past – a modern and pre-modern dimension as mentioned above.

They explained the break with the ‘primitive’ past, the disconnection with origins as inevitable in the larger scheme of things and a necessary condition for improvement. “The discourse of improvement, in other words, produced the category of a cultural pre-modernity – a past recognized in order to be renounced – as its enabling antithesis, its own negative origin” (Duncan, “Edinburgh” 164). This theory about social development was also one of the theories that created a rupture between the old and the new, between superstition and reason. In fact, it caused a tremendous change in thought where reason and empirical data could finally allow one to come to the truth.

However, this change of thought was perhaps less radical than the one that arose during the Romantic period at the end of the eighteenth century and that would counter the Enlightenment. This does not necessarily mean that romanticists were anti-Enlightenment, though some certainly felt that Enlightenment values were up for revision. Instead, many romanticists wrestled with the systematic and universalist notions enforced during the Enlightenment – not to radically oppose Enlightenment theorists, but to make certain ideas better adaptable to life as romanticists felt it was actually lived. In the following section the Romantic period will be explained more thoroughly and shown as having enforced a crisis of identity – the precise crisis that the Enlightenment theorist tried to prevent.

Romanticism

The Romantic period was only designated as such long after the fact and, more importantly, is both difficult to define and to frame in time. Generally, most academics accept the period of around 1776 up until 1832 to be the Romantic period. The Romantic period was, just like the Enlightenment, an international phenomenon of which the beginning of the former blends in with the ending of the latter. Romanticism was primarily concerned with the sublimity of nature, the imaginary, the authentic and, as Wordsworth called it, “the self-sufficing power of solitude” (qtd. in Pittock 88). However, as Isaiah Berlin explains, there cannot be a satisfactory definition that encompasses all the Romantic authors working in the period as a whole (1).

What Berlin does argue is that the romanticists achieved a radical change of thought – something that was never done before. That is, while Enlightenment theorists only changed the way in which an ultimate truth could be found, romanticists claimed that the idea of finding an ultimate answer would be impossible. Whereas universality and reason once reigned supreme, now it was difference and unbridgeable opposition that was the ideal. Indeed, the ideal, not philosophical ideal, but the common ideal for which one would sacrifice

all only because one believes in this ideal (Berlin 9-10). However, like the Enlightenment, romanticism varied in their conceptions of this ideal.

Indeed, scholars like Ian Duncan and Penny Fielding have suggested that Scottish Romanticism was significantly different from the English variety. Fielding, for instance, contends that “[w]e still need to account for the fact that most Scottish writers do not turn as readily to certain forms of affective, individual or phenomenological relation to space as can their English contemporaries but, rather, assume the already-historicised character of geography” (4). Yet, even though in general such a distinction may be possible, it would also allow English geography little or no historical significance. Such a denial of significance, however, would go against the notion that England and later Great Britain would attribute much of their power to the fact that God destined them to securely live on an island. Their geography was closely associated to divine predestination and their right to power (Colley 17-18).

Nevertheless, if understood a bit more cautiously, it can indeed be argued that Scottish geography was more readily associated with its history and social organisation. That is, unlike England, Scotland had never before been governed centrally. As explained above, this made them much more disjointed than the English and this diversity was felt strongest in the division between Highland and Lowland Scotland. Furthermore, this division was not only based on differences in religion and politics, it was also very much based on culture.

Nevertheless, as a result of the 1707 union, Scotland would have to find a way to come to terms with its internal division in order to have a clear role in a Great Britain. The Enlightenment thinkers had theorised that Scotland would take up this role as a nation that had moved on to a new and reasonable stage. However, as this meant the refusal of tradition as a whole, or at least in order to establish a dialogue with these rigid Enlightenment

measures, romanticists felt they needed to return to the past. Accordingly, “antiquarian scholars and poets began to invoke the national past, ancestral origins and regional popular traditions in an influential series of attempts to reimagine cultural identity in a post-national age” (Duncan, “Edinburgh” 159).

But here, too, Romanticists are too eager to ‘fix’ the problem. Indeed, it tried to retrieve the past as they felt this was the only way to set the present right. Yet, the present can never be put right by copying the past or seeing it as the original and, perhaps, better version of the present. The present must be different from the past, because only then a nation can evolve, mature and grow. In this respect, the Enlightenment thinkers were right. Though the Romanticists were right in considering the present as having some bearing on the past. However, as we will see in the next chapter it is all about change, negotiation and adaptation that allows a nation, but also the individual to mature, to realise itself and, finally, find a sense of belonging.

James Hogg

That change is such a central aspect of the novel has to do with the author’s life. James Hogg (b. 1770) was the son of a tenant farmer in Ettrick, a small town in the Scottish Borders, and worked as a shepherd for more than twenty years. When his parents went bankrupt, they could no longer afford to keep Hogg in school. As a result, Hogg started working as a shepherd at a very young age and continued to do so for many years. In those years, Hogg, with the little education he had received, tried to improve his reading and writing by copying substantial parts from books, especially the Bible. At the end of the eighteenth century he started to gain fame in his local community with his poems and songs. Nevertheless, Hogg did not start his career as a professional writer until he was in his forties (Duncan, Introduction xii-xvii).

Hogg was born at around the same time the romantic period may be thought to have begun. However, Hogg's relationship with romanticism was quite a complex one. On the one hand, the universalisms and rationality from the Enlightenment period were then still a powerful belief, and, furthermore, one Hogg did not fully reject. On the other hand, the idealistic tendencies of romanticism were also tempting, since they assigned value to his own 'barbaric' background. Still, it seems that Hogg saw that both points in time had their disadvantages.

The Enlightenment is for Hogg a source of knowledge and, even though scholars have argued against this, he did not fully reject the importance and relevance of that knowledge. Indeed, in her article "Embodied Damnation" Megan Coyer argues that Hogg "was also clearly imaginatively stimulated by the vibrant scientific and medical culture of post-Enlightenment Edinburgh" (2). Indeed, in a thorough investigation of some of the major medical studies of the time – phrenology, somnambulism and addiction – Coyer is able to show similarities between medical accounts on psychological health issues, such as the split consciousness or the seeing of apparitions, and Robert Wringhim's account of past events.

However, Hogg was eager to show that reason was not limitless and that it did not have to replace the notion of religious traditions. Rather, as Coyer explains, Hogg's use of medical research serves "to productively mediate materialist science with supernatural Christianity" (13). Indeed, science, like belief, can be seen to support the idea that man must know his nature in order to improve personal and social life. Most importantly, then, Hogg's *Private Memoirs* "is a critique of the way in which [Robert Wringhim's] fanatical antinomianism forces him to defy the 'natural' human feelings and societal bonds, which at this time were being reified in medical and scientific discourses" (13). So while Hogg most certainly did not deny the fruitfulness of scientific investigations he also made sure it would not undermine the Christian tradition.

This effort to show that different beliefs could have the same value is of course symptomatic of the romantic period. Yet, with romanticism too, Hogg seemed to have some issues. In 1802, Hogg became acquainted with the “aspiring poet” and well-established lawyer Sir Walter Scott (Duncan “Introduction” xii). Scott had been working on a collection of traditional Scottish tales and songs and had asked Hogg for help. Hogg’s maternal grandfather, so the story goes it was told, was the last person in Scotland to have conversed with the fairies – therefore, both Hogg and his mother would be a rich source of many a Scottish tale (Miller 18).

Hogg finally acquiesced and supplied Scott with many stories his mother had told him. Yet, in the end, Hogg had not been altogether happy with Scott’s final product, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802-3). Using one of his mother’s replies to Scott’s book Hogg condemned the so-called antiquarian project:

there war never ane o’my sangs prentit till ye prentit them yoursel’, an’ ye hae spoilt them awthegither. They were made for singing an’ no for reading; but ye hae broken the charm now, an’ they’ll never be sung mair. An’ the worst thing of a’, they’re nouthar right spell’d nor right setten down. (qtd. in Bold and Gilbert 13)

It was Hogg’s way of criticising antiquarianism “for its printing of what had been transmitted orally over centuries, for hastening what was perceived as the inevitable death of oral tradition, and for not even transcribing the material correctly” (Bold and Gilbert 13).

Indeed, “[b]y this time Hogg had come to distrust the antiquarian search for the ‘real’, original object of antiquity and the seeming disdain for practitioners of living tradition” (Bold and Gilbert 13). He had grown up hearing traditional songs and stories that were orally transmitted rather than read from a book and now saw that they not only were put to paper,

but were mutilated in the process of doing so. However, this does not mean that Hogg felt no one was allowed to write about traditional Scottish stories. Rather, it was the arrogance of the antiquarian who thought that their version of the tales was correct and better than those of, for example, Hogg.

Yet, despite identifying himself as a Tory Hogg was not necessarily against change or progress. Many of his friends were Whig or radicals and Hogg himself was renowned for his egalitarian attitude (Mack 64). Still, the course progress had taken was not the one Hogg had envisaged. At first, seen from an Enlightenment perspective, Hogg's traditional life was useless and should be discarded; then, the romanticists tried to retrieve this past, claiming it as authentic but at the same time unable knowing whether it was.

This frustration was increased by Hogg's own problematic personal life. Although Hogg was clearly displeased with Scott's antiquarian project, it was Scott, too, who would lead Hogg into the literary circles of Edinburgh. Here he was received with much reserve and only accepted out of goodwill rather than out of respect. In fact, 'the Ettrick Shepherd,' as he was often called, encountered much opposition when he tried to rise in these literary circles. As Ian Duncan explains: "the higher [Hogg] reached, the more they pushed him back in the role of the Ettrick Shepherd ..." (Introduction xii). However, Scott's introduction to many of the Edinburgh literati also led Hogg to gain much attention for his works, and money.

Yet, in order to retain both the attention and the remuneration, Hogg had to make concessions. For one, with his growing ambition it became increasingly harder to stick to the identity of the Ettrick shepherd, the crude, naïve and rustic bard – the identity that allowed him to write in the first place. More importantly, though, he was only to write that which the literati thought would suit him best: songs and folkloric poetry. That Hogg is often seen as the bridge between the literati and the lower-classes is perhaps overstating the situation. He "was

indeed granted entrance into polite society, but it was as an unusual and amusing guest, quaint in his extravagance, his very *nom de plume*, ‘the Ettrick Shepherd’ underscoring the social distance between him and his colleagues” (Velasco 39).

Hogg was never fully accepted by his colleagues. He was too much of an outsider, too different. However, as we will see in the next chapters, this difference is what allowed him to write *The Private Memoirs*. It was his understanding of how one individual could be many persons and how many different people were forced to behave as one and the same. Indeed, it was awareness that modern times had made life more complex and more confusing. One in which finding a place one really belonged to and felt at home at was very difficult to achieve.

Chapter 2: *Bildung*, Belonging and Bonds

The Private Memoirs is first and foremost a novel that is concerned with human nature and the difficulties humans must face, which in turn, inform human nature. Indeed, as Karl Miller put it: “the heart of the matter is the energy, pathos and delusion of the human struggle” (227). In particular, it is a struggle for identity, recognition and belonging – all of which are close to Hogg’s heart. Hogg was known as a complex person, whose personality never seemed to fit into any kind of category – the shepherd, the bard, the literatus or Edinburgh intellectual. The novel explores and echoes his multifaceted personality, as Hogg’s personality seems to bear close resemblance to his characters in *The Private Memoirs*.

Miller, for example, points out how Hogg said of himself that he was greatly invested in the behaviour of others:

by contemplating a person’s features minutely, modelling my own after the same manner as nearly as possible, and putting my body into the same posture which seems most familiar to them, I can ascertain the compass of their minds and thoughts. (qtd. in Miller 226)

In the novel, Gil-Martin echoes Hogg’s ability when saying:

If I contemplate a man’s features seriously, mine own gradually assume the very same appearance and character. And what is more, by contemplating a face minutely, I not only attain the same likeness, but, with the likeness, I attain the very same ideas as well as the same mode of arranging them, so that, you see, by looking at a person attentively, I by degrees assume his likeness, and by assuming his likeness I attain the possession of his most secret thoughts. (95)

Miller notes how Gil claims to have no “full control” (Hogg 95) over it, “but it enables him to control others” (Miller 227). Yet, Hogg too has this inability to control himself and pleads innocent: “‘I canna help it’ – something Hogg was given to saying” (Miller 11).

But this is not just Gil, but also Robert who tries to exonerate himself by continuously stating he “had not power to have acted otherwise” (88) or had “done so in some absence of mind that I could not account for” (Hogg 101). Even Hogg’s sexual escapades are found in the form of Rev. Wringhim – not only does Wringhim have an adulterous relationship with Rabina, he also has an illegitimate son, Robert, with Rabina. Although, of course, it is also a reference to Hogg’s criticism of hypocrisy in Scotland where “sexual abstinence came to be idealised by men who did not practise it” (Miller 12).

Hogg’s identities are multiple and represented by characters who each have their flaws which in a sense mirror his own. Hogg’s struggles to find a common ground between these personalities was real, but, so the novel suggests, so are those of its characters. Moreover, these struggles are, arguably, universal, while, on the other hand, they are also decidedly personal. For Hogg, however, it was always both, never one. Personal differences are as dependent on character as they are on the society in which a person lives. It is this connection between the social and the individual that signifies Hogg’s personal project:

He was to show, and to affect, the ‘innocent rusticity’ and ‘blunt simplicity’ that sophisticates expect from country folk and men of action; and yet he was to project a psychology – whereby the idea of a collective humanity is married to that of an individual multiplicity – which has contributed to the way we think of ourselves now. (Miller 14)

This emphasis on the bonds between the social and the individual is a recurring theme throughout Hogg’s *Private Memoirs*.

As this chapter will show, the novel is an attempt to show how self-realisation is achieved through constant mediation with one's culture or *Volk*. The formation of the self is a way of *Bildung*. Since self-realisation is a process which requires adaptability, it will also become clear that Robert's inability to do so leads him to corruption. However, Robert is not the only one to blame, since he was indeed in part preordained to fail – not by God, but by his own society. Hogg's *Private Memoirs*, then, is a satirical *Bildungsroman*. Self-realisation is not achieved because Robert does not belong to any kind of society – the only one he does feel he belongs to is the one in the next world. This belief in the next world is why he feels little inclined to change, leading him into a vicious cycle of self-deprecation and personal exclusion.

Universal Human Struggle and a Lack of Responsibility

Hogg structures *The Private Memoirs* by first taking Enlightenment notions such as universality and reason as the foundation of the novel's characters. This allows him to show how all human beings are, in the end, similar, particularly in their wish to belong – to find their home. The novel portrays the constant negotiation between individuals and groups of which they are part, willingly or not. This process of negotiation recurs throughout the novel in different ways. It is most visible in the behaviour of Robert. However, Robert's mother, Rabina, is also clearly searching for a place to call home. Even George, who seems to have it all, is at one point struggling for a sense of belonging after Robert begins to stalk him and push him away from his friends (Hogg 31-32).

Hogg's depiction of this human struggle resonates with David Hume's thorough investigation into human nature as described in his *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-1740). For Hume, human nature is the most important subject of inquiry for philosophers, since an understanding of human nature is the only road to understanding other philosophical concerns, such as "*Logic, Morals, Criticism and Politics*" (43, italics in original). The three

books that make up the *Treatise* cover three subjects, respectively: the understanding; the passions; and morality. In each of these Hume uses observation and experience to give an idea of the general makeup of mankind. All that cannot be proven is not worthy of investigation because the answer always remains debatable, at best. In relation to this thesis, what stands out is Hume's insistence on human nature being universal, but, at the same time, dependent on external factors as well.

Hume argues that reason is not responsible for opinions or beliefs, but that customs and associations are their source. They provide the connections between certain ideas. However, "custom works before we have time for reflection" (153). What is important is "that experience may produce a belief and a judgment of causes and effects by a secret operation, and without being once thought of" (154). So not only is reason not the cause for our beliefs, we do not always realise that custom takes over: "In all cases we transfer our experience to instances, of which we have no experience, either *expressly* or *tacitly*, either *directly* or *indirectly*" (155).

Hume thus believed that human beings were constructed similarly. However, he also realised that the potential and development of each individual was not merely dependent on this inner nature, but was also influenced by an external world. This world shaped not merely our ideas and beliefs, but made them indistinguishable from how we perceive human nature. Hogg, too, believed that "[m]an is, in fact, more the child of habit than any other creature, and the study of it is curious and interesting" (*Lay Sermons* 197). And, like Hume, Hogg's novel seems to insist that education or guidance is at the foundation of the development of habit. This is part of the process that will here be referred to as socialisation.

Yet, for Hume, education seems to have quite a dark side to it. As he notes in his *Treatise*:

All those opinions and notions of things, to which we have been accustomed from our infancy, take such deep root, that 'tis impossible for us, by all the powers of reason and experience, to eradicate them; and this habit not only approaches in its influence, but even on many occasions prevails over that which arises from the constant and inseparable union of causes and effect.

(Hume 165)

Education thus not only influences our beliefs, it imprints them on us in such a manner that we cannot think otherwise. As mentioned above teaching should help the individual's self-realisation. However, as Hume sees it, the self *is* realised – it does not realise its own formation. Yet, as the novel shows, this notion of education seems too narrow. Hume thinks reason is the only way in which certain rooted beliefs can be eradicated. But since he also believed that reason is always overcome by passion (462), reason would never be able to remove any habitual beliefs or ideas.

It is here that Hogg diverges from Hume. That is, in the novel Hogg shows that education does indeed determine a large part of an individual's habits and customs, yet it does not eradicate certain feelings that are common to all human beings. One can be fully educated in a certain way but, for Hogg, one's natural feelings will always remain. So even if Robert is completely devoted to the Antinomian cause by continuously perfecting his knowledge of the religion, he still never really loses his natural feelings towards other human beings. This is clearly seen when Robert is at the point of pushing George from a cliff, but then fails to do so:

I could for my life not accomplish it! I do not think it was that *I durst not*, for I have always felt my courage equal to any thing in a good cause. But I had not the heart, or something I ought to have had. ... These THOUGHTS are hard enemies wherewith to combat! (Hogg 122, emphasis in original)

Robert cannot kill George because, in fact, he *has* a ‘heart.’ It triggers thoughts about whether his instructions might have been so righteous after all. Robert is faintly aware of the fact that his actions may not be for “a good cause” and thus cannot summon up the courage or the will. His lessons have not eradicated all his human feelings.

Furthermore, in the novel, education also means development and change while for Hume it seems to be something fixed and immovable. As such, no one can be held accountable for their actions as changing appears to be out of the question. Indeed, Hume’s conception education and individual development also leaves very little responsibility for each and every person. It allows us to say, as Robert does, that:

... I had hopes of forgiveness, because I never sinned from principle, but accident, and I always *tried* to repent of these sins by the slump ... and though not always successful in my endeavours ... I regarded myself as in no degree accountable for the failure. (Hogg 86-87)

Yet, as the novel shows, Robert is in fact accountable. Perhaps not fully, since his upbringing does influence his behaviour to a large extent. But Robert still shows signs of being conscious of his actions and that these actions do not correspond with his feelings. “For Herder, ‘the spirit of change is the core of history.’ Recognition of the value and role of cultural traditions thus commits us to a process of reinterpretation in light of our particular and changing circumstances, not to an uncritical acceptance of them” (Spencer 84)

Taking the deterministic view, both in terms of predetermination by God and society, allows Hogg to show that such a view makes no one feel accountable for any of their own actions. Indeed, as Stout has already argued, “[t]he problem with romantic-nationalist tradition, that is, is that it puts individuals in a position, like the justified sinner himself, to feel that the fault is not theirs for only living in the here and now” (540). Yet, as the novel

also shows, people are in fact capable of reconsidering a course of events. For example, Robert does move away from his parents' teachings when he starts his murderous quest where he kills those that are evil, at least, according to Robert's knowledge – beginning with Mr. Blanchard, then his own brother and finally his own mother and his betrothed.

In fact, reflecting upon his father's teachings and his preaching to the wicked, Robert does not see how it could be useful. Instead Robert decides to become different from his father. Not a preacher, but a champion of faith:

I could not disbelieve the doctrine which the best of men had taught me, and toward which he made the whole of the Scriptures to bear, and yet it made the economy of the Christian world appear to me as an absolute contradiction.

How much more wise would it be, thought I, to begin and cut sinners off with the sword! (94)

Clearly, Robert does reflect on the culture in which he was born – maybe not taking the best of directions, but still very much conscious of his own society. It is this mix between nature, nurture and reason which allows both for identification with and resistance to a certain established culture.

Interestingly, Hogg tries to find a way to merge the idea of a fixed or predetermined universal culture with individual responsibility and ability to change one's ways. Both the culture of a certain people and the individual identity are shaped through a process of identification with each other to establish a certain universal identity. At the same time, however, this process of socialisation necessarily involves change, because, so the novel suggests, nothing can remain invariably the same. The development of identity resonates with the idea of *Bildung* as developed by Johann Gottfried Herder. As it is precisely Robert's

failure to establish his person through *Bildung*, it is important to understand what Herder exactly meant by this.

***Bildung* and Maturity**

Herder was born in Mohrungen, Prussia in 1744. He was, as Isaiah Berlin argues, one of the “true fathers of romanticism” (57). In fact, in *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism*, Daniel Dahlstrom has suggested that Herder is part of a Counter-Enlightenment movement because of his “insistence on understanding human nature holistically and thereby dismantling walls erected between reason, on the one hand, and language, history, or nature (including human sensuous nature) on the other” (76). However, he is not an adversary of reason, but shows “a commitment to a reason sufficiently robust and self-conscious to embrace and promote the spontaneity, individuality, and geniality of human life in all its different historical, linguistic, and cultural expressions” (Dahlstrom 76).

As mentioned in the introduction, Herder saw a *Volk* as something that could not be forced or constructed, but would adapt to the needs of its time and mature naturally, as an organic system. The idea of natural development is what Herder called *Bildung* and could relate to both the nation and the individual human being. *Bildung* can have multiple meanings, though is mostly associated with education, and can be used as both a verb and a noun. However, most important here is, in Reto Speck’s words, “... Herder’s employment of *Bildung* as a verb (*bilden*) – that is, as a means to reach the goals of *Kultur*, *Zivilisation* and *Humanität*...” (43).

In order to reach the ultimate goal of humanity, *Bildung* was necessary. Accurately and rather elaborately Speck describes Herder’s use of the word as follows:

In its active sense, Herder generally distinguished *Bildung* from yet another semantically close term, namely *Erziehung* or ‘education’. Even though

Bildung, like *Erziehung*, has in Herder's usage strong pedagogic elements, it is nevertheless used to denote a distinct kind of pedagogy. Whereas *erziehen* has connotations of an active teacher imposing knowledge on a passive pupil, *bilden*, according to Herder, signifies an iterative process between teacher and pupil, emphasizing the active absorption of knowledge by the latter by the means of reappraisal and adaptation. (43-44)

For Herder, *Bildung* could be used to develop a *Volk* by strengthening its culture, the habits and beliefs that in turn form the *Volk*. As such, education seems to be the key to achieving a strong *Volk*.

Although the term *Bildung* also has a political dimension to it, and to which I shall return in Chapter Three, it primarily rests on the notion that a *Volk* can exist without any formal government. Rather, any *Volk* can be formed or reformed through its culture – of which language is an important element. Culture, however, is not fixed and can be changed by the individuals participating in it. In fact, change is fundamental for the survival of a *Volk*. However, this also means that the individuals part of this *Volk* should not be passively receiving its habits and beliefs, but actively absorb them. “Human beings are limited and bounded creatures in ways that hold significant import for the way we ought to live and our conceptions of justice, but we are simultaneously interpretive creatures who are never wholly determined by our language and culture” (Spencer 70).

However, it does not completely negate Hume's statement that many of the habits take deep root and are difficult to change. Herder, too, sees this and claims that one is always connected to the *Volk* in which one was born: “We are born into a specific *Volk*; whether we like it or not, we discover we are part of a unit of people with a particular cultural heritage that has played a significant part in our personal development” (Spencer 87). Yet, what is

most striking is that Robert's belief in the elect is more often than not *argued* as being true.

Robert, repeatedly, claims that he has reason to believe something rather than actually believing it. Furthermore, the more he reflects on the belief in the elect, the more he must convince himself – or must be convinced by Gil – of the elect's righteousness.

Both Hume and Herder thus argued that human nature is primarily driven by customs and habits that are, in the first place, 'received' through their interaction with the external social world – the first phase of socialisation. Although the individual may be able to reflect on his or her culture in later stages of life, as we have already seen, it will be important to delve a bit deeper into the first phase of socialisation. The family is the primary source for this transmission of customs. In fact, Herder sees the family as a miniature version of a *Volk*. As Spencer explains, "[a] *Volk* is like a family because both are bound together by their members sharing a common history" (Spencer 139). As will be shown elsewhere, this connection of the family with nation is also important with relation to the novel.

Nevertheless, the symbol of the family does not mean that Herder believes that a common history is either found in a blood connection or in the retelling of stories that profess a common heritage of all. Indeed, "[b]lood, for Herder, does not demarcate *Völker*; rather, it distinguishes human beings from other species" (Spencer 138). Furthermore, "the significance of folk songs, poetry and fables is not confined to their role in creating a presumed ancestry" (138). As such, a *Volk* and the family symbolise the connection between the members that might be based on heritage, but also on a shared history or just shared memories.

Herder believed that:

[f]rom the moment an individual is born, it is a social animal in need of culture, and its sociability and its natural need for culture both express themselves in

Bildung; that is, the transmission of culture from parents to children, without which no survival, let alone a fulfilled existence, is possible. (Speck 53)

A human being is a social animal that needs to learn lessons in life. Robert Wringhim, too, is dependent on this transmission of culture in order to find a sense of belonging and happiness –find a home in this world. What is interesting is that in view of the above *The Private Memoirs* is a novel that shows some striking similarities with the *Bildungsroman*.

Bildung of the Individual and Society

In its simplest form, a *Bildungsroman* is a “kind of novel that follows the development of the hero or heroine from childhood or adolescence into adulthood, through a troubled quest for identity” (Baldick). *The Private Memoirs* could certainly be understood in these terms. After all, Robert Wringhim is followed from a relatively young age starting his life as an outcast, moving on to his becoming one of the elect, up until he seemingly reaches adulthood as Lord of Dalcastle and even having his own (albeit unwanted) wife to be. It is a life full a hardship and suffering in which he aims to establish his own identity.

Nevertheless, in spite of these obvious similarities, it would be interesting to view the novel as a satirical version of the *Bildungsroman*, as an educational novel gone wrong. Whereas a more stereotypical educational novel would follow the mental and physical development of the protagonist's identity, Hogg’s novel does not show such a development at all. That is, even though Robert changes in the degree of his viciousness and becomes more and more evil, it should be noted that he never actually changes the way he perceives the world. As such, his failed attempt to establish an identity brings up the negative side of the *Bildungsroman*.

What is interesting, however, is that for Moretti the classic *Bildungsroman* symbolises something more than just a book about adolescents growing up to be adults. Rather, Moretti argues, the *Bildungsroman* is:

‘A specific image of modernity’: the image conveyed precisely by the ‘youthful attributes of mobility and inner restlessness.... Modernity as – in Marx’s words – a ‘permanent revolution’ that perceives the experience piled up in tradition as a useless dead-weight, and therefore can no longer feel represented by maturity, and still less by old age. (5)

This realisation of life being less predictable and more chaotic is something that was particularly noticed during the Romantic period. The *Zeitgeist* of Modernity was considered restless, mobile and changeable. However, the representation of modernity by youth is only possible, because:

Youth is brief, or at any rate circumscribed, and this enables, or rather *forces* the *a priori* establishment of a formal constraint on the portrayal of modernity. Only by curbing its intrinsically boundless dynamism, only by agreeing to betray to a certain extent its very essence, only thus, it seems, can modernity be *represented*. Only thus, we may add, can it be ‘made human’; can it become an integral part of our emotional and intellectual system, instead of the hostile force bombarding it from without with that ‘excess of stimuli’ which – from Simmel to Freud to Benjamin – has always been seen as modernity’s most typical threat. (Moretti 6)

The *Bildungsroman* is thus a way to place and tame the erratic youthfulness of modernity. The young protagonists that start out as restless will need to change, go through the process of identification, which will finally incorporate them within a stable social network. Indeed,

youth is its ultimate symbol, “as it portrayed and promoted modern socialization” (Moretti 10). As Franco Moretti explains, “the nineteenth century, under the pressure of modernity, had first of all to reorganize its conception of change – which too often, from the time of the French Revolution, had appeared a meaningless and thus threatening reality” (Moretti 6). Now, however, change was no longer as radical as the French Revolution, but instead could now lead to the establishment of stable society.

However, in *The Private Memoirs* this notion is radically subverted. Robert does not integrate safely into society, but instead attacks it from within. The problem, as we will see, is that Robert’s belief in his preordained state as one of the elect leads him to stay rigidly the same throughout his life. As such, there is no socialisation and, by extension, no self-realisation. Indeed, self-realisation and a sense of belonging rest on the process of successful socialisation. But as mentioned before it is not only Robert’s lack of responsibility that leads him to resist socialisation. It is also very much the culture and society in which he grew up that hampers his self-realisation. Indeed, fundamental to this process of self-realisation or *Bildung* is the beginning of Robert’s life.

In *The Private Memoirs*, Robert Wringhim explains how he is born “an outcast” (75), implicitly telling us that from the moment he was born he did not (yet) belong anywhere. Even Robert’s superfluity of fathers could not give him a sense of security and the feeling of home. His “more than probable” (Hogg 17) father, Lord Dalcastle, publicly disavows Robert as his own son. Rev. Wringhim takes Robert in as his adopted child, but he too tries very hard to disavow Robert is his natural son. Finally, up until Robert’s eighteenth birthday, even the Holy father does not acknowledge him, since Robert is constantly told he is still in the bonds of inequity (Hogg 76). Robert only seems to belong to his mother – who, ironically, is one of the people he despises most (87).

Accordingly, it seems that the basis upon which Robert develops his own identity is somewhat complicated. This is particularly problematic since, as Berlin has argued: “The notion from which both Judaism and Christianity to a large degree sprang is the notion of family life, the relations of father and son, perhaps the relations of members of a tribe to one another” (3). Robert is thus devoted to Antinomianism, but lacks the relations upon which the very notion of Christianity is built. What is striking is that in most *Bildungsromans*, the protagonist has an unusual family situation – in *Great Expectations* (1861), Pip is raised by his strict sister and her caring yet dim-witted husband, Jane Austen’s *Emma* (1816) sees Emma brought up by only her old and forgetful father and in Scott’s *Waverley* (1814), the protagonist Edward is sent to live with his peculiar uncle.

Clearly, it seems that having family situations that are different from what might be considered the norm impedes the child’s self-realisation and socialisation. This problematic start is what allows for the *Bildungsroman* to exist in the first place, as it requires the protagonists to find other means to develop their senses of self. They all need to take a different path to reach maturity and become part of society. Yet while most of these protagonists meet new people and explore the ‘real’ world, Robert seems bound to home. He does not seem to have many – if any – friends and is thoroughly dependent on his stepfather. As such, Robert’s self-realisation only seems to take place through Rev. Wringhim, proclaimed by Robert as his “faithful teacher” (82).

For Herder the parent is crucial in guiding and educating the child. However, he also makes clear that this does not mean that this is an authoritarian relationship. The relationship should be a form of *Bildung* rather than *Erziehung*. If this is not the case, Herder sees this as “a bad father who educates in such a manner that his child remains in lifelong immaturity and has a lifelong need for a tutor” (qtd. in Speck 54). This is precisely the problem for Robert who never seems to mature to a point where he can take steps on his own. Indeed, “Robert

was brought up with Mr. Wringhim, the laird paying a certain allowance for him yearly; and there the boy was early inured to all the sternness and severity of his pastor's arbitrary and unyielding creed" (Hogg 17).

So, Rev. Wringhim is the one responsible for Robert's "high conceptions and glorious discernment between good and evil, right and wrong ... and it was he who directed [Robert's] studies aright..." (Hogg 75). But Robert only passively absorbs the information rather than actively think about it. Throughout the novel, Robert is seen to run to Rev. Wringhim whenever he experiences any difficulties: for instance, when Robert cannot master John Barnett or when Robert needs help with his studies and Rev. Wringhim sits up with him "for a whole night" (83). Robert is completely dependent on Rev. Wringhim and cannot seem to fend for himself.

However, when he is finally accepted as one of the elect – a symbolic rite of passage and a step to greater freedom and independent life – he meets Gil. But rather than being the humble follower Gill pretends to be, he is another of Robert's tutors. One Robert does not want, but cannot do without: "... but I soon felt, that, instead of being a humble disciple of mine, this new acquaintance was to be my guide and director ..." (96). Robert's passive education makes him incapable of growing out of his immaturity. Indeed, not much further Robert observes that "I now only moved by the will and mandate of my illustrious friend: I had not peace or comfort when out of his sight, not have I ever been able the boast of much in his presence" (Hogg 123). Robert knows that to fully realise his person, he must become independent. However, even though he seems to want to be alone, he also is afraid of actually taking a step forward.

However, it is not merely that his education makes him dependent on a guide it also does not allow him to develop new relationships with others who are on equal footing. Indeed,

throughout the novel it becomes clear that Robert has few or no friends. He often “communed with [his] own heart” (Hogg 77, 152) and never seems to have intimate conversations with anyone but his father or Gil. In fact, Robert claims that Gil only visits him when Robert is alone (164). Seeing that Gil and Robert spend most of their time together implies that Robert must often have been alone. Clearly, Robert is always directed by the will of another: “He [Gil] mocked at my cowardice, and began a-reasoning on the matter with such powerful eloquence, that before we parted, I felt fully convinced that it was my bounden duty to slay Mr. Blanchard; but my will was far, very far from consenting to the deed” (Hogg 101).

Yet it is not striking that Robert is extremely dependent on his stepfather and later Gil. In the case of Rev. Wringhim it is not only because he is an authoritarian man, but also because both Rev. Wringhim and Rabina deny Robert access to the society of the elect. That is, not until his eighteenth birthday is Robert finally confirmed to be one of the elect – before that invariably being ‘in the bond of iniquity’. In a way he is placed within the same society as his real father, Lord Dalcaste, and his brother, the two people he has learned to resent (Hogg 17).

Chapter 3: Liberalism – Home of Freedom for Just a Few

According to Franco Moretti, the young protagonist needs to find home or the directions towards it. It is home that will finally establish a sense of belonging:

To reach the conclusive synthesis of maturity, therefore, it is not enough to achieve ‘objective’ results, whatever they may be – learning a trade, establishing a family. One must learn first and foremost, like Wilhelm, to direct ‘the plot of [his own] life’ so that each moment strengthens one’s *sense of belonging* to a wider community. Time must be used to find a homeland. If this is not done, or one does not succeed, the result is a wasted life: aimless, meaningless. (Moretti 19)

For Robert, the same applies. After having become independent of his stepfather Robert must find his own way now. However, Robert never seems to grow and never comes closer to this kind of home – even though he tries – because he is destined to stay the same.

Indeed, at the end of the novel still finds himself as innocent as the child unborn (134) when it comes to being aware of his own actions. The child unborn he is, because he barely advanced beyond that. He still blindly accepts whatever he is told and never wonders whether this information is wrong. Furthermore, Robert only seems to wish to quench his thirst for the now and that which will give him immediate gratification. To be sure, he does this because he knows he will go to heaven in the future. Yet, this future is at the same time his present. He is one of the elect, not only in the present, but also in the past and in the future.

His present is also his future. And in searching for his home, he can only look at the future, because only there can his journey end. “Youth is, so to speak, modernity’s ‘essence’, the sign of a world that seeks its meaning in the *future* rather than in the past” (Moretti 5)

Yet, home, as a place he belongs to, becomes increasingly synonymous with death. Naturally, it is the society of the next world of which he is part, not any societies on earth. Still, Robert attempts to come closer to that idea of belonging in the present, to come closer to finding a home. After having murdered George, the Lord of Dalcastle soon dies from grief and Robert “took undisputed possession of the houses, lands, and effects that had been my father’s” (Hogg 130). Initially, Robert feels “so much gratified,” but only because he is “the undisputed and sole proprietor of so much wealth and grandeur” (130) rather than giving him the idea of belonging. It gives him the sensation that this is where his happiness might be found and he “immediately set[s] about doing all the good [he] was able” (130).

But, as Moretti argued, “objective results” are not enough in order to find a place to call home. So not long after Robert had come in possession of his ‘real’ father’s mansion he becomes increasingly unhappy. He feels anything but at home and he seems to suffer from severe memory-loss while here. Interestingly, perhaps the most important memory Robert lost is that of him trying to seduce a girl from the village. When her mother goes the Dalcastle manor to insist on Robert marrying her daughter, Robert is bewildered and is “assuring the dame that I had never so much as seen either of her daughters to my knowledge, far less wronged them” (131).

In order to understand the relevancy of this marriage proposal, it is important to realize that another way the home is often symbolised, in Moretti’s view, is through marriage – a kind of social contract in which the individual is completely socialised. Although this often happens at the cost of the individual, it is a way to find peace, happiness and a sense of belonging (Moretti 24). However, for Robert marriage may be seen as anything but a cause for happiness. Indeed, the novel starts with the marriage between Rabina and Lord Dalcastle that is soon dissolved – albeit informally. So rather than signalling the end of the novel and the beginning of happiness, marriage, for Robert, becomes the precise opposite.

Still, marriage might have saved him. As the mother of the girls warns Robert: “if I [Robert] did not *marry* her daughter, she would bring me to the gallows, and that in a very short time” (131). Nothing could be more poignant to Robert’s situation, as in fact the gallows are where he meets his end. But, marriage and the home are not what make for a happy individual, at least not for him. He becomes sole owner of the house, through dodgy practices, but never feels at home. Similarly, although “highly as I [Robert] disapproved of the love of women, and all intimacies and connections with the sex, I felt a sort of infinite pleasure, an ungracious delight in having a beautiful woman solely at my disposal” (136). Yet, owning both the house and the girl, do not turn them into a home and a wife. Indeed, after both acquisitions, Robert still “had heart-burnings, longings, and yearnings, that would not be satisfied” (136).

So Robert must still find his way home, but the problem is his belief in the elect. Even already after his initiation into the society of the elect Robert is confused that that his behaviour does not change accordingly. That is, he does not stop lying and, in fact, only becomes more evil. However, instead of feeling confused that his behaviour does not change, it might also be the confusion that he is finally accepted as one of the elect. His human nature is preordained before the earth was made. His being one of the elect should be felt by him and his behaviour should be in tune with his preordained state from the day he was born.

So when Robert explains how he was sinning while in the bond of iniquity, this should have stopped after his acceptance to elect – after all, how can one be one of the elect but also a sinner. But Robert cannot not change his sinning behaviour, because his fate was already determined before he was born. Yet, the actual acceptance does not make sense, rationally speaking, because how can one be a sinner and destined to go to heaven. So Robert has to deal with that discrepancy. That this is so can be seen when Robert, before he is actually

accepted as one of the elect, tells himself that whatever he is and has been doing makes him destined for heaven:

I depended entirely on the bounty of free grace, holding all the righteousness of man as filthy rags, and believing in the momentous and magnificent truth, that the more heavenly laden with transgressions, the more welcome was the believer at the throne of grace. And I have reason to believe that it was this dependence and this belief that at last ensured my acceptance there. (Hogg 87)

It is precisely this that makes Robert unable to mature and become independent. His desire to be accepted in heaven forces him to stay radically the same.

The inability of Robert to change thus makes him work against the established order. He cannot become part of society, because this would mean he must adapt to the standards of society on earth. Since he does not develop Robert remains immature and disconnected from any society. As shown in the above discussion this disconnection from society is symbolised by Robert's inability to successfully run the Dalcastle manor and his killing his wife to be. Robert cannot find home and a sense of belonging – at least, not in this world

It is not strange, then, that Robert becomes increasingly “sick of his own existence” (136). His existence fails to lead him to a home. Finding a sense of belonging and happiness, according to Moretti, can be found in the home is the goal of most *Bildungsromans*. But Robert cannot find happiness and “longs for utter oblivion” (138). And so the Dalcastle estate becomes a place of terror for Robert rather than comfort. As Robert says, “With my riches, my unhappiness was increased tenfold” (138). Also the idea of marriage is marred by the death of the intended – presumably caused by Robert himself.

Home and marriage are signalled to be doomed, when we hear that Robert started haunting the house of his interest (132). Finally, Robert's “time at Dalcastle was wearing to a

crisis” (153). Socialisation has failed and Robert cannot find peace. Instead, the mansion has turned into a fearful place and rather than being the end of his journey, it is the beginning of his terrifying last few months.

As I have already pointed out in my bachelor thesis, Freud’s examination is important in understanding the notion of the uncanny. In his essay on “The Uncanny” (1919), Sigmund Freud explains “das Unheimliche” or the “uncanny,” as “that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar” (1-2). It might, therefore, be easy to assume that the uncanny, being the opposite of “familiar” or “native” (*heimlich*), is “frightening precisely because it is *not* known and familiar” (Freud 2). Yet, Freud rejects E. Jentsch’s notion that an uncanny feeling is the result of “intellectual uncertainty; so that the uncanny would always be that in which one does not know where one is ...” – for Freud the “definition is incomplete” (2).

Instead, he argues, “[the] *heimlich* is a word the meaning of which develops towards an ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, *unheimlich*” (Freud 4). As such, it is easy to understand that the familiar can be uncanny too and that therefore “intellectual uncertainty” could not be a source for an uncanny feeling. Seen within a larger framework, the idea of belonging becomes uncanny to Robert. Not only did his fathers fail him, he also rejects and the ultimately sublimates his role as a male and patriarch by killing off his intended and by his inability to secure his role in the home.

Interestingly, Andrew Webber, in his book *The Doppelgänger: Double Visions in German Literature*, constituted nine premises, which are at the basis of most literary doppelganger. The most important here is the ninth premise, which states that “[t]he *Doppelgänger* is typically the product of a broken home. It represents dysfunction in the family romance of structured well-being, exposing the home as the original site of the

‘unheimlich’” (Webber 5). Indeed, as we will see next, Robert’s doppelgänger Gil appears the moment Robert leaves his home.

The *Doppelgänger*

In the novel, Gil-Martin appears right after Robert becomes part of the elect – a rite of passage as mentioned above. What is interesting is that in the classic *Bildungsroman* maturity is never achieved like this, but is the result of effectively directing one’s path towards an end goal – home. As Moretti explains “It [the *Bildungsroman*] is a constant elusion of historical turning points and breaks: an elusion of tragedy and hence, as Lukács wrote in *Soul and Forms*, of the very idea that societies and individuals acquire their full meaning in a ‘moment of truth’” (Moretti 12). Indeed, societies and individuals evolve and grow to reach maturity – it is not for nothing that maturing can be a verb as well.

His mother tells him he now belongs to the just made perfect – and it would not be too much of a leap to see how this suggests Robert is fully mature now. He has reached the state of perfectness, his final destination. Indeed, it was Robert’s goal to become better and better: “I missed no opportunity of perfecting myself particularly in all the minute points of theology in which my reverend father and mother took great delight; but at length I acquired so much skill, that I astonished my teachers...” (Hogg *Private Memoirs* 76).

So when Robert is symbolically set free from his parents this appears destined to fail – in particular because Robert is still very much dependent on Rev. Wringhim. Robert has not wandered long and far when he runs into Gil who “was the same being as myself” (89). Gil is a doppelgänger, but not every doppelgänger is the same. In *The Private Memoirs* Gil is a doppelgänger that is not so much Robert’s conscious as the embodiment of excess – Robert’s excesses to be precise. This is in part the result of Robert needing to displace his ideas in order to disclaim responsibility. However, more than that, it is the result of Robert being

unable to handle his just received independence and his inability to incorporate society's rules with his own.

In their research, Marcias and Núñez tried to find a link between the literary double and real cases of split consciousness. According to Marcias and Núñez, identity is rarely as straightforward as is often argued. Rather we are all subject to different feelings and emotions.

If we are inhabited by different pulsions, if we cannot escape from our own selves, how can we act and live in a society with a split identity in accordance with the regulations? The main characters in the works mentioned above struggle towards integration in society by repressing or trying to control their other selves. The social norms described by romantic authors as frivolous, bourgeois and tedious are the ones from which both characters and authors are trying to escape. (Marcias and Núñez 262)

It seems that we all have a split consciousness, but this split doesn't match with society's expectations that all individuals should have a singular self. The doppelgänger is an extreme example of how failure to integrate into society can turn out. According to Milica Živković, "[t]he baffling power of this archetype [a universal duality] lies in its ambiguity and contradiction which cannot be resolved" (123). What is important, however, is that a similar tension exists when looking at the *Bildungsroman*. Moretti declares:

When we remember that the *Bildungsroman* – the symbolic form that more than any other has portrayed and promoted modern socialization – is also the *most contradictory* of modern symbolic forms, we realize that in our world socialization itself consists first of all in the *interiorization of contradiction*.

The next step being not to ‘solve’ the contradiction, but rather to learn to live with it, and even transform it into a tool for survival. (10)

This is perhaps the most important issue of the novel: resisting the resolution of contradiction. The *Private Memoirs* does not only suggest that the human struggle is to find belonging, but also to do so in an increasingly complex and contradictory world.

When looking at the doppelgänger, however, the doppelgänger image or motif has changed with the progression of time and religious or traditional beliefs. Otto Rank argued that “[o]riginally conceived of as a guardian angel, assuring immortal survival to the self, the double eventually appears as precisely the opposite, a reminder of the individual’s mortality, indeed, the announcer of death itself” (qtd. in Živković 123-4). This older and more straightforward understanding is found, too, in *The Private Memoirs*.

Indeed, Robert first believes Gil to be precisely this: “I conceived at first, that I saw a vision, and that my guardian angel had appeared to me in this important era of my life...” (89). Yet, in the end Gil becomes Robert’s announcer of death. After Gil explains how they are “amalgamated, as it were, and consociated in one” (142), Robert explains how Gil’s words make him feel: “It was like the announcement of death to one who had of late deemed himself free, if not something worse than death, and of longer continuance” (142). It seems Gil not only announces death, but also paves Robert’s road to hell. As Marcias and Núñez have argued, “both patients and literary heroes are concerned about their social integration. Patients and literary heroes anxiously fear an imminent dissolution of their self or predict their own deaths” (265).

Yet, the notion of angel and devil was already being reshaped in more ‘modern’ forms, as more abstract ideas, such as good/evil, man/woman, reason/emotion. That is, the modern mind became increasingly attuned to understanding the world in a binary manner – but

without being able to effectively distinguish between one or the other. It was no longer just a matter of pure good and pure evil, but much more complex – a trend that is still progressing (for better or for worse). What is interesting is that Živković has argued that “the modern, rational mind wants to resolve this terrible inconsistency ... ancient and ‘primitive’ peoples prefer to accept it as it is, without looking for a way to bargain themselves out of the dilemma” (Živković 123).

Indeed, as we will see, even though Robert can be considered as an ancient force set loose, Robert is, in fact, precisely this modern mind – he cannot let the contradictions of life unresolved and goes to extreme lengths to prove his ‘solution’ is correct. As mentioned above Robert believes that “that the more heavenly loaden with transgressions, the more welcome was the believer at the throne of grace” (Hogg 87). Yet such a belief goes against the idea that nothing one does affects one’s final destination. However, it is for Robert’s modern mind that needs be able to logically explain the discrepancy between his being one of the elect and his transgressive behaviour.

Robert shows this same attempt to come to terms with his conflicting thoughts. However, this conflict in Robert’s modern mind can go two ways – either he can accept the contradiction or he resolves it. But since Robert is taught to find a single solution or answer to a problem, he cannot accept the fact that opposite ideas may exist within his mind. So instead of internalising the contradictions, Robert deals with the contradictions vicariously through Gil. It is through Gil that he allows opposing thoughts to enter the same mind. He retains a kind of consensus, a harmony, between the different thoughts by expelling those that do not fit his general belief. Importantly, Robert’s mind fluctuates between the beliefs he holds and though his main belief does not budge, he might change his mind on a smaller scale – when he does so, Gil changes with him in accordance.

Indeed, one particular striking example of how this works is when Gil explains how Robert “shall rise to great honour and preferment” (120) and “shall be lord of your father’s riches and demesnes” (121) if only Robert kills George. Yet, Robert does not wish to listen to this idea and believes it is selfish: “I disclaim and deride every selfish motive thereto relating ... farther than as it enables me to do good” (121). Indeed, honour and wealth should not be the reason to kill his brother – rather, the reason should be because George is a sinner and would relieve earth from evil.

However, not long after the death of George, Robert takes possession of the Dalcastle manor. What is interesting is that once here Robert becomes jealous of Mrs. Logan or the old Lord Dalcastle’s “reputed concubine” (116) when he finds out she inherited most of the Laird’s wealth as “[Lord Dalcastle’s] plate, and vast treasures of ready money, he had bestowed on a voluptuous and unworthy creature, who had lived long with him as a mistress” (130). Robert states that “[f]ain would I have sent her after her lover, and gave my friend [Gil] some hints on the occasion” (120). Yet, what is striking is that this time Gil has the same reply for Robert as Robert had for Gil when asked to kill his brother: “[Gil] only shook his head, and said we must lay all selfish and interested motives out of the question” (130).

Robert thus has two, if not more, minds – each of which trying to have the upper hand. That is, it seems Robert must fix his mind and have one singular identity to be able to fit within his society. So although Robert manages to separate his thoughts and to resolve the contradiction, he cannot do so without any consequences. By externalising thoughts that oppose his strongest feelings, he also makes them something invariably different, other. That is, they cease to be part of the self and so can become regarded as unfamiliar at best and evil at worst. Indeed, as mentioned above, Robert already feels that Gil might be the harbinger of death.

Yet, this externalisation of contradiction is not just something solely applicable to individuals. Indeed, solving the problem of conflict through the exclusion of certain beliefs, thought, principles or behaviours is something that can also be found in larger groups and societies. Robert, in that sense, becomes an example of the practices of liberalism in Scotland. After the union with England Scotland needed to find a stronger identity to secure its own position within Great Britain. However, as the novel shows and will be explained in the next section, this identity was not based on Scottish culture but on a form of civilization. This not only caused a false notion of freedom, but also an increased focus on consensus which would lead to exclusionary practices. Both, in turn, would be responsible for excessive behaviour, as found in Robert.

Liberalism

In order to understand how Robert's inability to develop mirrors the problems of liberalism, it is first important to know what liberalism actually entails. As the term itself already implies, liberalism is concerned with the freedom of all peoples. However, beyond that there are many different ideologies and theories connected to the term. Still, according to Gerald Gaus, Shane D. Courtland and David Schmidtz in "Liberalism," there could be made a general description of liberalism. Indeed, they have argued for a "*Fundamental Liberal Principle*" which means that

freedom is normatively basic, and so the onus of justification is on those who would limit freedom, especially through coercive means. It follows from this that political authority must be justified, as they limit the liberty of citizens.

Consequently, a central questions of liberal political theory is whether political authority can be justified, and if so, how. (part 1, emphasis in original)

Liberalism, then, is concerned with freedom – yet understood as being limited by certain political and/or social constraints.

However, for classical liberals these constraints should not be determined solely by some political authority, but should rather be the result of general agreement between a nation's *Volk*. Indeed, “[i]f it [liberalism] is to serve as the basis for public reasoning in our diverse western societies, liberalism must be restricted to a core set of political principles that are, or can be, the subject of consensus among all reasonable citizens” (Gaus et al.). Yet, as *The Private Memoirs* suggest, there are two problems with such an understanding of liberalism. On the one hand, liberalism seemed actually to be primarily grounded in the freedom to have one's own property in order to boost commercialism and the economic market. On the other hand, intellectual freedom was accepted as long as it fitted within the bounds of society – if it was a principle that could be subjected to consensus. Both will be explained in more detail.

The ability to hold, keep or sell one's private property played an important part in the development of a liberal society. According to Bristow,

The rise and development of liberalism in Enlightenment political thought has many relations with the rise of the mercantile class (the bourgeoisie) and the development of what comes to be called ‘civil society’, the society characterized by work and trade in pursuit of private property.

Interestingly, this pursuit of freedom through the acquisition of property seems to resonate with Robert's quest to find his sense of home. Indeed, to be more specific, it appears that for classical liberalism

liberty and private property are intimately related. From the eighteenth century right up to today, classical liberals have insisted that an economic system based

on private property is uniquely consistent with individual liberty, allowing each to live her life – including employing her labor and her capital – as she sees fit.
(Gaus et al., part 2)

So when Robert inherits Dalcastle manor, he should have attained his goal of freedom and, it is implied, happiness. He can decide his own fate without the interference of any authority and can now enjoy his individual freedom and happiness.

However, clearly, Dalcastle manor did not offer any individual freedom, but rather became the opposite – Robert was to become a captive in his own home and was incapable to set himself free from authority. On the one hand, it becomes clear that Rabina remained to live in the house, when Robert explains that one day “my worthy and reverend parent came with one of his elders to see my mother and myself” (138). As such, Robert’s rite of passage into adulthood did not fully set him free from his mother. Indeed, as will become clear from the next quote, Rabina still interfered with her son’s life. On the other hand, Robert’s friendship with Gil takes on a threatening form and the house becomes a burden rather than the symbol of individual liberty and a relief of authority. Indeed, Robert becomes more and more pressured by “his [Gil’s] controlling and appalling presence” (140).

However, when he hears of both Gil’s disappearance and his mother’s it is not until he actually leaves the house that he feels a free man:

For all the perplexity that surrounded me, I felt my spirits considerably buoyant. It appeared that I was rid of the two greatest bars to my happiness, by what agency I knew not. My mother, it seemed, was gone, who had become a grievous thorn in my side of late; and my great companion and counsellor, who tyrannized over every spontaneous movement of my heart, had likewise taken himself off. This last was an unspeakable relief; for I found that for a long

season I had only been able to act by the motions of his mysterious mind and spirit. I therefore thanked God for my deliverance, and strode through my woods with a daring and heroic step; with independence in my eye, and freedom swinging in my right hand. (Hogg *Private Memoirs* 140-141)

As mentioned above, material objects or results are not what make for a good home. It is not property that allows Robert his freedom, but a diminution of authority. In fact, the way Robert “strode through the woods with a daring and heroic step” emphasises how he can now finally start his own journey and direct his own life.

Interestingly, this is a repetition of what happened earlier in the novel. After Robert has been accepted as one of the elect, he leaves the house. This rite of passage and the accompanying independence gives Robert the feeling of ultimate freedom. Yet, this only occurs after he has left the house, as if the removal of home and society can only allow for ultimate freedom:

I wept for joy to be thus assured of my freedom from all sin, and of the impossibility of my ever falling away from my new state. I bounded away into the fields and the woods, to pour out my spirit in prayer before the Almighty for his kindness to me: my whole frame seemed to be renewed; every nerve was buoyant with new life; I felt as if I could have flown in the air, or leaped over the top of the trees. (88)

The freedom can be enjoyed outside the house where he is, just like much later, relieved of authority and feels buoyant and free. Nevertheless, in both cases, too, Robert’s freedom is barred by Gil, whose authority and control Robert cannot deny.

So in both cases it is the leaving behind of the home rather than having one that seems to give the idea of ultimate freedom and independence. Or, in any case, the home does not

guarantee individual freedom as it was often regarded by classical liberals. Indeed, the novel suggests that freedom cannot be found in the acquisition of private property or in the possession of a woman as such. However, at the same time the question arises whether freedom is desirable or even actually attainable. Indeed, according to both Moretti and Herder freedom can be achieved, though without happiness. Of course, the opposite applies as well, so that happiness can only be found within the bonds or limitations of society.

Moretti, for instance, argues that “For Schiller and Goethe, instead, happiness is the *opposite* of freedom, the *end* of becoming. Its appearance marks the end of all tension between the individual and his world; all desire for further metamorphosis is extinguished” (Moretti 23). So finding one’s home is not having found one’s freedom, but having found happiness within the limits imposed by society. Indeed, Moretti’s standpoint resonates with Herder’s as explained by Spencer:

Human beings are limited, bounded creatures. ‘Where the Lord’s spirit is,’ Herder writes, ‘there is freedom.’ But for him, freedom requires, as it subsequently would for Hegel, that we recognize these limitations: ‘Here it is truly the first seed of freedom to feel that one is *not* free, and with *which* bonds one is bound. The strongest, freest human beings feel this most deeply and strive further.’ (Spencer 92-93)

So while property is a means to an end, is the place where happiness can be secured, it can only be perceived as such if one accepts the limitations this brings. Liberalism, that is, allows economic freedom through property, but at the same time requires the acceptance of limitations in return. Happiness cannot coincide with freedom.

Yet at the core of this deal is the notion that liberalism rests upon consensus between all reasonable people. However, in the *Private Memoirs* it becomes clear that this so-called

uniformity cannot exist without problems. Although writing in 21st century, Chantal Mouffe in *The Political: Thinking in Action* (2005) gives interesting insights into the problems portrayed by Hogg. Having the advantage of decades of research Mouffe is able to show how liberalism is focussed on “a rationalist and individualist approach, which forecloses acknowledging the nature of collective identities” (10). This kind of liberalism which was in the making during Hogg’s time, it seems Mouffe claims, cannot come to terms with the wide variety of personal and social identities and “the conflicts that pluralism entails; conflicts for which no rational solution could ever exist” (Mouffe 10).

In fact, Mouffe shows that every idea of rational agreement is based on exclusion, because there are always people who disagree. Indeed, “by showing that every consensus is based on acts of exclusion, it reveals the impossibility of a fully inclusive ‘rational’ consensus” (11). However, first the idea of reason must be approached. According to Mouffe, “... next to individualism, the other central trait of most liberal thought is the rationalist belief in the availability of a universal consensus based on reason” (Mouffe 11). This is not possible, since it is not only reason that guides human beings. Indeed, as was already argued before Hogg’s time by David Hume, human beings are creatures of habit. Reason can only be influential to certain extent. And when dealing with things that actually concern people, the passion will always win from reason. “Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them” (Hume 462).

This means there will always be different ideas, beliefs and feelings – no matter how much one might push for reason to rise to the top. However, achieving a general agreement about certain principles is even more difficult when it becomes clear that modernity offers many conflicting themes that are all valued and desired:

... freedom and happiness, identity and change, security and metamorphoses: although antagonistic, they are *all equally important* for modern Western mentality. Our world calls for their *coexistence*, however difficult; and it therefore also calls for a cultural mechanism capable of representing, exploring and testing that coexistence. (Moretti 9)

A way to represent and test this coexistence might be synthesis of the multiple and opposing themes. However, as we have seen above, merging, for instance, freedom and happiness seems impossible, as happiness can only be found by realising one is a bounded creature.

So, for Moretti, “Far less ambitious than synthesis, this other solution is *compromise*: which is also, not surprisingly, the [*Bildungsroman*’s] most celebrated theme” (9). Yet, while this may not seem radically different from the idea of consensus, compromise is actually based on the acceptance of different and opposing principles. It is the realisation that no solution can be found for the conflicting desires people can have – not even when using reasonable arguments. Consensus on the other hand is a general agreement based on reason alone. It does not allow for difference, because difference means that there is no agreement.

This means that, in liberalism, a collective identity can only be made by the exclusion of difference. “In the field of collective identities, we are always dealing with the creation of a ‘we’ which can exist only by the demarcation of a ‘they’. This does not mean of course that such a relation is necessarily one of friend/enemy, i.e. an antagonistic one” (Mouffe 15). A particular good example of this can also be found in the novel, although the demarcation is rather hostile. Indeed, in her article “Antinomian Reviewers” Cates Baldrige explains how Antinomian religion is used as a metaphor to examine the political influence in reviews of contemporary literature.

According to Baldrige,

... in Hogg's hands Antinomianism becomes a metaphorical weapon by means of which he critiques two intimately related practices of Romantic periodical: intemperate denunciations of the literary productions of those organs' perceived ideological foes, and shameless puffing of the works of their political allies and personal friends. (386)

She claims that during Robert's illness where he does not know who he is – either his brother George or Gil-Martin – is the result of the constant pressure to adhere to either party principle (396). One is at liberty to choose their identity, as long as it fall within the two extremes, though not in the middle nor beyond these. But, as I have already shown above, Macias and Núñez argued, identity may consist of multiple selves. So when society forces those to choose one of these selves in order to be accepted by society, this could lead to “self-alienation” (Baldrige 396). That is, the choices are in such opposition with each other that one cannot be part of the one without refuting the other.

For Baldrige, “... the blow [at Hogg's Tory friends] was aimed at the ideological extremism of the nation's cultural gatekeepers ...” (385). Indeed, it is important to understand that Scotland, after the union with England, was now ruled by a social elite – a non-political society later understood as civil society. This elite would influence the cultural landscape of Scotland – indeed, “[p]ractically and institutionally, in the absence of political sovereignty, culture supplied the terms of a Scottish national identity that flourished within the cosmopolitan or imperial framework of civil society” (Duncan “Edinburgh” 163) It would enforce “the separation of spheres (public and private, political, religious, juridical, economic, aesthetic) upon which civil society is founded” (Duncan, “Fanaticism” 344). According to Duncan, once could understand “civil society as a regulated system of individual differences” (Duncan, “Fanaticism” 345).

Yet, that civil society in which differences are regulated, but free to be expressed nonetheless has, in Baldrige's analysis, become a society in which differences are preselected and must be chosen from. There is only room for those who can choose a side, not for those wishing to be in the middle, choose both or want anything beyond what is offered. This resonated closely with Hogg's own life. In the *Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, Douglas Mack has argued that

During Hogg's lifetime there were three major political groupings in Scotland: Tories, who were supporters of the status quo; Whigs, who advocated measured and moderate reform; and Radicals, who sought fundamental changes that would create a society based on the French Revolution's principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. As he often said, Hogg was a Tory. Nevertheless, some of his closest friends (for example, James Gray) were people of Whig or even Radical sympathies, and his own attitudes were consistently and assertively egalitarian. (64)

Hogg, too, had difficulty choosing where his political inclinations lay and, again, Hogg's own 'split' personality shines through the novel.

Most importantly, however, is that politics, which was to be removed from civil society, now found its way back in the form of literature. Culture has become politicised, which means civil society was no longer separated from the political and had become another place for contestation. But it is not only the fact that politics had found its way back to the Scottish social domain, it is also the form it had taken. Rather than finding a compromise and a way to come to terms with an increasingly difficult modern world, cultural agents had only corrupted it in their conviction one could find a solution for the complexities in the form of binaries.

However, although Baldrige has argued Robert's split consciousness symbolises the extremities of the cultural gatekeeper, it still keeps Robert within the bounds of society. Yet, as we have seen throughout this thesis, it is rather Robert's inability to identify himself with anything that is found within the limits of society. Baldrige's argument, however, is important because it emphasises the fact that civil society had not only become political, but also that the "regulated differences" Duncan talks about are regulated to such extremes that there is no freedom at all.

Liberalism as such was meant to establish a society in which differences are regulated, but free to be expressed. Yet, it has now become a society in which differences are preselected and must be chosen from. Interestingly, according to Chandler, "one of the most important historical points to recognize about this [Romantic] period is how literary activity became so crucial, so quickly, to national (and indeed international) affairs - how poets could come to seem legislators" (6). Although Chandler refers in the main to Great Britain and England, the idea that culture had become another and, perhaps, more relatable sphere for a country could not be more suited to Scotland. This social enforcement of the law and politics within civil society make it a far less liberal system where all individual differences can be freely expressed.

The critique on liberalism and civil society voiced in the novel are not merely showing the rigidity of what is supposed to be an organic cultural sphere. It also shows that Robert's behaviour, in particular his inability to cope with his conflicting beliefs and desires, are the result of liberalism. Nevertheless, in his article "Fanaticism and Civil Society" Ian Duncan emphasises that the religious fanatic, like Robert, is not the enemy of liberal imagination, but rather a more radical ideology of modernity. Robert Wringhim's zealous commitment to the Antinomian religion is not, according to Duncan, a result of his being remnant of forgotten time, but, logic and rhetoric are (344).

Indeed, as argued above, Robert, though seemingly a religious zealot, often claims that he has “reason to believe” (87) in the truth of something rather than just believing in it. In fact, Robert is much like his stepfather. For example, when Robert is still in the bonds of iniquity, Rev. Wringhim prays to God for Robert’s acceptance. The way he does this, however, is remarkable: “I [Rev. Wringhim] have struggled with the Almighty long and hard, ... but have as yet had no token of his acceptance in his behalf. I have indeed fought a hard, but have been repulsed by him who hath seldom refused my request; *although I cited his own words against him ...*” (76, emphasis my own).

Rev. Wringhim seems hardly interested in religion as faith or belief in the Almighty above, but as game a word wrestling, where the best man may win. Yet, Rev. Wringhim is the only man playing – at least, God can hardly be regarded as one on equal footing with Rev. Wringhim. Yet, the manner in which Rev. Wringhim speaks of his encounter with God makes it seem as if God can be persuaded and that reason, logic and proper argument can result in a proper liberal agreement on the destiny of the likes of Robert. In addition, this same setting also makes it seem as the destiny of Robert has not yet been determined, as if one’s fate can be changed by reasonable argument, while Rev. Wringhim told Robert that one is chosen to be saved before one is born and is written in the book of life (SOURCE).

This focus on argument, reason and logic shows how, according to Duncan, Robert’s beliefs are “cut off from a traditional society of customary or naturalized belief and founded on ‘abstract speculative principle’” (344). Indeed, using David Hume’s phrase, Duncan explains that Christianity’s tendency to the proliferation of factions is based on their using the tools of philosophers: logic and rhetoric (344). But using rhetoric and logic to justify

Christianity only encourages arguments, bigger schisms, more rivalries and generates more extreme doctrines.

Indeed, Robert's ideas are brought to a dangerous extreme through reason. That is, every time Robert is unsure about the course of action he himself has taken, he must persuade himself of their righteousness. For example, as young boy in school, Robert would have been the best of his class in Latin, were it not for his classmate M'Gill. Robert "was *convinced* he [M'Gill] had dealings with the devil. Indeed it was *believed* all over the country that his mother was a witch ..." (83, emphasis my own). The reason Robert is so sure is that M'Gill the spawn of Satan is because M'Gill "popped up above" (83) Robert when they are examined Mr. Wilson, their teacher – even when Robert "often read as well and sometimes better than [M'Gill]" (83).

Clearly, M'Gill's supernatural or devilish connections are rooted in quite a mundane problem – who is the most popular or smartest boy in school. In order to get rid of his opponent, Robert accuses M'Gill of things the latter is not guilty of, but Robert is. Finally, when M'Gill is expelled by their teach, Robert explains how

[he] can hardly describe the joy that it gave to my heart to see a wicked creature suffering, for though he deserved it not for one thing, he richly deserved it for others. This may be by some people accounted a great sin in me; but I deny it, for I did it as a duty, and what a man or boy does for the right, will never be put into the sum of his transgressions. (84)

Robert is euphoric, because M’Gill is gone and Robert now “stood king of the class” (85). Robert support his choice to cheat by claiming it was all in the name of righteousness not because he wanted to be better.

What is interesting is that back then Latin was still used to separate the elite from the lower classes, albeit it to a lesser extent - in particular in universities and publications. As Spencer shows

“It must be remembered that the relationship between language and political power was clearly defined in Europe in the eighteenth century. The use of Latin in the affairs of public life effectively excluded the majority of people in European countries from participation in the affairs of their own community” (151).

So when looking back at Robert’s desire to get M’Gill expelled it is interesting to note that M’Gill was Robert’s better not just in Latin, but also regarding their prospects in life. Certainly, we do not know anything about M’Gill besides what Robert tells us, but the similarity in name with Gil-Martin and the latter’s role as prince of Russia – even when only imagined by Robert – does seem to give the idea that M’Gill might not have been Robert’s equal.

So Robert seeing Robert’s behaviour as a young boy make him seem very much concerned about not only very humane issues, but also resolves these in manners that he argues to be right rather than believes in. Naturally, this obsession with logic and reason are the result of the behaviour of his parents. Indeed, it is Robert’s guardians who are seen to “set keenly to the splitting of hairs, and making distinction in religion where none existed” (Hogg 16).

So according to Duncan, because of the possibility for having individual opinions in the system of regulated difference, there is little consensus to be found. The word of God is text based and can now be read and interpreted by the individual as they please. As such, there is no longer an “organic consensus” (345). Consequently, stability is imposed by authoritarian forces through establishing uniformity, but this only leads to more instability. This uniformity may be imagined, but it does eliminate the individual difference that make up civil society.

The extreme socialisation destroys civil society, since it destroys every difference it may hold by enforcing consensus. For Duncan, Gil seems to be a parody of Adam Smith’s theory about sympathy (345-346). Taking away all differences between Gil himself and another person bears striking similarities with how one sympathises with another. For Hogg, according to Duncan, this sense of sympathy is again regulated and finally destroys the differences between the individuals. For Hume sympathy is basically the same, though he believes that sympathy is rather contagious. It is not a choice, but inevitable. For Duncan, this means that Smith’s model collapses in Hume model (346).

This problem of using reason and rhetoric in culture leads to alienation, because identification is imposed on the people. There is no authority which could relieve this pressure, because authority itself is held suspicious. Logic supplants cultural imagination of the reviewers. Like the more collective group of enlightenment thinkers, identification is constructed and brought on by over-socialisation. Over socialisation through culture is one of the dangers of modernity’s civil society. As Baldrige effectively summarised: “Thus, whereas certitude is conventionally seen as the very ground and prompt of rhetoric, Hogg insists that under certain extreme conditions the former becomes highly corrosive of the latter” (Baldrige 394)

So, liberalism and civil society are meant to foster a community of freedom, happiness and choice. One is free to determine their own identity, but only insofar as this identity with within the parameters of society. However, “The aim is to highlight the fact that the creation of an identity implies the establishment of a difference, difference which is often constructed on the basis of hierarchy” (Mouffe 15). Indeed, as we have seen in the example of Robert’s Latin class, identity is something that allows for a certain place on society’s social ladder. In addition, this identity is far from stable and that it may consist of multiple selves, each fighting for their own space. One can force some kind of consensus between these or learn to live with the different urges.

What is important here is that universal consensus can only be achieved through exclusion of those who cannot find themselves in the ‘solution’ offered. As mentioned in Chapter one the nation must learn to live with its own discrepancies – if it does not, and wishes to resolve internal differences, it cannot do anything but become exclusionary. It will make a division between acceptable differences and those that are not acceptable. Robert’s behaviour mirrors the behaviour of those of his time in an effort to exclude unacceptable differences and thereby resolving and complicated contradictions. However, repressed differences always seem to have a way of returning – in the case of Robert, the repressed contradictions found a way back through the Gil, through the doppelganger – the doppelganger is no longer the result of archaic beliefs in angels and devils, but the result of more complex and abstract reasonings.

Looking at Fredric Jameson’s work, Živković argues that “Any social structure tends to exclude as ‘evil’ anything radically different from itself or which threatens it with destruction” (124). Indeed, “A stranger, a foreigner, an outsider, a social deviant, anyone whose origins are unknown or who has extraordinary powers, tends to be set apart as evil. The double is defined as evil precisely because of its difference and a possible disturbance to the

familiar and the known” (Živković 124). So Robert’s externalisation of deviant thoughts grow from something different to something evil. Indeed, Robert becomes increasingly repulsed by Gil. In a similar vein, liberal society expels all differences, all that does not fit within its ideology of consensus. This signals collapse of community, because difference becomes externalised, rather than seen as part of a whole

Conclusion

“Outside the Whole,
outside the world-as-homeland
there is no life whatsoever”
-- Moretti 19

After almost 200 years, James Hogg's *Private Memoirs* is still a puzzle to those who have ventured to read it. However, its relevance is not so much the fact that the novel remains as inexplicable as it was back then, but in its ability to sketch an image of the complexities and difficulties in the rise of modernity. Indeed, it presents us with the struggles of human beings – in particular the struggle to find a place to belong in an increasingly complex and conflicting world. In order to find this place one must mature. That is, one needs to grow, develop, change and find a way to achieve some kind of self-realising.

However, *The Private memoirs* shows us that maturing is not so easy. Growing up requires a constant negotiation between the self and the other – whether the other is an individual or an entire community - and try and find a way to establish an identity. There is a mutual relation between the individual and the whole, an independence which constantly influences one or the other. This influence also means that both society and the individual must change and need to adapt to whatever time brings them..

In the novel, Robert must search for his sense of belonging and way to realise one's self. Not unlike others Robert needs to find a place which he could call home, a place to which he could direct the steps he would take in life. It is a process, what Herder has called, *Bildung Bildung*, according to Herder, is the natural maturation of an individual. It requires change and adaptation through the active incorporation of a continuous stream of new knowledge and experiences. Maturity can be reached in many ways, though most commonly is achieved by finding one's way home often symbolised through marriage.

The fact, however, that it is often portrayed through something objective, such as marriage, does not mean that objective results define maturity or can be a goal in itself. Maturity must be reached by finding something that allows the individual to integrate into society – the difficulty lies in the fact that this cannot be known. However, Robert fails to become part of a society, but instead becomes the antithesis of modern society. He never reaches maturity because he refuses to change and will not adapt to any new circumstances or new revelations. His failure is partly his own fault and partly the fault of the society in which he grew up in.

That is, on the one hand, Robert denies the possibility that what he has learned in the past can be proved wrong in the future. That is, Robert's belief in the righteousness of his society and, consequently of himself, leaves him unable to give a proper place to ideas that conflict with his original knowledge or beliefs. On the other hand, Robert's direct society, his guardians, are the ones who instilled this belief in the first place: the belief in the elect. This not only makes it impossible for Robert to find any purpose in his earthly life that does not influence his life in the next; it also allows him to believe that he cannot be held responsible for his own behaviour.

The result of his inability to change and to reach maturity is the creation of his *doppelgänger*, Gil-Martin. His *doppelgänger* allows him to speak out vicariously in a mature and powerful manner. Furthermore, the *doppelgänger* is a way for Robert to deal with the contradictions of modernity he is trying to resolve. Yet, as Moretti has argued, these contradictions should never be resolved, but rather turned into a tool for survival. In Robert's case the opposite thus happens – in his attempts to resolve the conflicting thoughts he is having he creates the *doppelgänger*, which turns from saviour of the soul to the harbinger of death.

Still, the *Private Memoirs*, is not just a critique on Robert or his family. Rather it shows how both Robert and his parents represent a larger, societal problem. The novel therefore sets out a critique of liberalism and civil society itself with its constant efforts to reach consensus and its false notion of freedom. Although consensus does allow for certain smaller differences, the larger discrepancies do not get a voice. Civil society rejects those differences that cannot be absorbed and contained within civil society itself – that is, if it cannot be assimilated into the idea of consensus. The novel thus exposes the superficial belief that ultimate liberty can be found for all.

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