“A Zigzag of Contradictions”

Manifestations of Duality in Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Kidnapped*,
Lewis Grassic Gibbon’s *Sunset Song* and Irvine Welsh’s *Trainspotting*

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Abstract

A common theme in the discussion and analysis of Scottish literature is the concept of duality. Duality as a theme is the depiction of two opposing forces, such as good and evil, romantic and realistic, or Highlands and Lowlands. Duality can be found in many Scottish works, from fiction published in the early nineteenth century to works produced in the twenty-first century. This thesis explores the manifestations of duality and its evolution, connecting together the depiction of the theme and the developments over time in the social, political, and economic climate in Scotland. To gain a better understanding of the manifestations of duality in Scottish literature, a brief overview of notable Scottish works dealing with the theme of duality is provided, Scotland’s history following the Union of the Crowns surveyed, and postcolonial theory briefly explored. To explore the evolution of duality, three renowned works of Scottish fiction are scrutinized and the theme emphasized. These works are Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Kidnapped* (1886), Lewis Grassic Gibbon’s *Sunset Song* (1932), and Irvine Welsh’s *Trainspotting* (1993). In addition to the novels being discussed, the authors’ backgrounds, and the political and social climate at the time of writing these works are brought to light in an effort to illuminate the development and importance of duality in Scottish fiction. Finally, the ways in which the treatment of duality in Scottish fiction has evolved is discussed and the three novels are compared. Overall, the thesis provides an overview of how different manifestations of duality are explored in texts from different time periods, analyzing how the authors’ treatment of duality reflects elements of Scotland’s history as well as other elements of Scottish society and culture, such as the relationship between Scotland and England, the relationship between the Highlands and Lowlands, and the choice between Scots and English.
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1. Introduction

The development of Scottish literature has been explored and examined in volumes such as Kurt Wittig’s *The Scottish Tradition in Literature* (1958) and Robert Crawford’s *Scotland’s Books* (2007). Keen students of literature will notice that Scottish literature possesses some qualities which divides it from the rest of the English literary canon. What precisely this distinction is can be debated, although one of the more popular topics centers around the concept of duality. Anyone who has read novels such as James Hogg’s *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), or shorter fiction like Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), will have noticed the theme of the double. Is it the Calvinist religion that worms its way into the Scottish writer’s psyche, as *Confessions* might insinuate, or is it the problem of identity, of being both British and Scottish at once, that lies behind duality? Whatever the case may be, duality can be found in a wide range of Scottish texts, new and old.

It is useful to explain what duality means in this context. In the Oxford dictionary, one of the definitions of duality is: “an instance of opposition or contrast between two concepts or two aspects of something; a dualism” (‘Duality’). This definition gives a relatively clear image of what the term duality means in the context of literature. In examining duality, the contrast of two opposing forces, such as good and evil, or poor and rich, is explored. Duality has been a popular theme to explore in Scottish literature, so much so that the presence of duality in novels by Scots has warranted its own terminology. In the book *Scottish Literature, Character & Influence* Gregory Smith characterizes Scottish literature as being almost “a zigzag of contradictions” (4) because of the opposites that can be found in Scottish literature. Smith labels the duality he sees present in Scottish fiction as “the Caledonian antiszyzygy”, where he sees “a reflection of the contrasts which the Scot shows at every turn, in his political and ecclesiastical history, in his polemical restlessness, in his adaptability […] in his practical judgement, which is the admission that two sides of the matter have been considered” (ibid.). Smith is not the only one to support the idea of duality being prominently featured in Scottish literature, as Crawford affirms that Hugh MacDiarmid, one of the spearheads of the Scottish Literary Renaissance in the 1930s, was a staunch supporter of Smith’s book to the point where he wanted it to be put in the hands of young Scots who might participate in the Renaissance (544). It might be unreasonable to characterize all Scottish literature as
containing the duality that Smith speaks of, however there are numerous works throughout the history of Scottish literature that contain elements of the Caledonian antisyzygy.

*The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* by James Hogg is perhaps one of the most notable early examples of Scottish literature, published in 1824, where duality is particularly noticeable. The novel is split into two narratives, the first of which is an editor’s account of a murder involving two brothers, George and Robert, where George is the victim. In *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* there is a contrast of various dualities, from the fanatical Calvinistic upbringing of Robert compared to George’s more liberal rearing, to the contrast of good and evil. Even the two narratives contrast in a way, with the initial narrative mentioning only “facts” and therefore upholding a sense of rationality. The second narrative is composed of Robert’s diary, detailing his version of events which have a fantastical, if not unbelievable, perspective on the turn of events.

Almost eighty years later George Douglas Brown published *The House with the Green Shutters* (1901). Once again there is a clear theme of duality, although perhaps not as striking as in Hogg’s novel. John Gourlay is a successful, mean, and stingy merchant in a small Scottish town. Using his privileged position John is something of a bully, but because of his successes the townspeople tolerate his bullying. However, things change when James Wilson moves back into town after years of absence. Gourlay is rude to Wilson, which eventually escalates into a feud between the two. Gourlay and Wilson, along with their sons, represent duality in Brown’s novel. Gourlay is the detestable businessman, while Wilson is the likeable and kind merchant, and their sons contrast each other as they show different responses to their fathers’ success. In the end it is Wilson and his son who emerge victorious, as Gourlay is eventually murdered by his son.

Later in the twentieth century novels like Robin Jenkins’s *Fergus Lamont* (1979) have duality as a central concern. In the eponymous novel, Fergus Lamont is a character who is of two different cultures: he is the illegitimate child of a working-class woman and a laird. Duality takes on a few forms in *Fergus Lamont*, amongst which is the issue of class, revealed through Fergus’s upbringing by working class people to his ascension to an aristocratic lifestyle. There is also the contrast of landscapes, as Fergus eventually escapes the slums of his childhood and finds refuge in an impoverished island, only to long for a return home where he can share the healing effects of his life in the island with the people from his childhood slums. *Fergus Lamont* is not Robin Jenkins’s only novel that deals with duality, as
some of his novels deal with class issues through contrasting the differences and rifts between them, such as in The Changeling (1958) where experiencing a middle-class lifestyle results in a dramatic choice for the working-class Tom Curdie.

When it comes to Scottish women writers, one of the more notable authors that tackles and deals with the theme of duality is Emma Tennant. She is remembered for using old tales as a basis for her writing, reworking them to reflect a new perspective. One of her most notable works, The Bad Sister (1978) is often contrasted with Hogg’s Confessions, as both texts deal with two siblings, one recognized and the other considered illegitimate, and a mysterious evil force. Not only does The Bad Sister reawaken the double theme present in Hogg’s work, but by changing the gender of the characters, focusing on two sisters as opposed to two brothers, Tennant does not only present duality within her novel but also creates a duality outside of it by her reworking of renowned Scottish literature with another perspective.

The recurrent presence of duality in Scottish fiction is evident when these aforementioned works are considered, and they are only a fraction of the literature that Scotland has produced. Now that it has been established that duality has been a recurrent theme in Scottish literature, there is the question as to how the presentation of duality has changed over time. Duality has been a persistent presence in Scottish literature since at least the early nineteenth century, and it is natural to assume that its manifestation has developed over time. After all, the experience that would shape the views and writings of a person born into Victorian Scotland would likely differ drastically from those of a person living in Thatcherite Scotland. In an effort to paint a clear picture of the development of duality in Scottish literature it is useful to consider novels belonging to different periods of time, not only with the theme of duality in mind but also the circumstances under which the works were produced.

There are many notable Scottish writers who are worth discussing, but in an effort to avoid a drawn-out examination of duality the discussion will be limited to three novels from different time periods, from three notable Scottish authors. The three novels that will be examined are: Robert Louis Stevenson’s Kidnapped (1886), Lewis Grassic Gibbon’s Sunset Song (1932), and Irvine Welsh’s Trainspotting (1993). On the surface these three novels might appear wildly different: Kidnapped is best remembered as an adventure novel, Sunset Song is a realistic depiction of rural Scotland in the early twentieth century, and Trainspotting
is remembered for its unabashed depiction of the heroin addicts and low-life inhabitants of Edinburgh. Despite their apparent differences, the theme of duality is central to all three novels, and it is evident upon examination that the treatment of duality and its different manifestations are shaped not only by the novels’ authors and their experience, but also by the day and age in which they lived. These three novels demonstrate not only the continuous presence of duality in Scottish fiction but also exhibit how social, political, and cultural changes have affected the depiction of duality in Scottish fiction.
2. Context

2.1 Scottish Literature

When people consider the literary canon of literature written in English, they tend to think in terms of literature coming from England and the United States. While this perspective is true of a large portion of canonical literature, it makes it easy to overlook the literature of other, smaller, nations. This does not mean that the smaller nations do not produce great works of literature, nor does it mean that their works are entirely ignored. Writers like James Joyce and Dylan Thomas have called attention to Ireland and Wales respectively, and their efforts have been recognized by literature enthusiasts around the world.

Gregory Smith, in *Scottish Literature, Character & Influence*, speaks of a recurring duality in Scottish fiction, a phenomenon which he calls “Caledonian antisyzygy” (qtd. in Wittig, 250). There are many ways in which this duality can manifest itself: the fantastic and the real, the rational and the emotional, the division of the Highlands and Lowlands, with their differing culture and influence, or between English and Scots, Scots and Scottish Gaelic, native languages and the language of their neighbors. While some scholars have grown tired of the incessant focus upon duality in Scottish literature, there are those who have happily championed the notion. Hugh MacDiarmid was one of them, and Robert Crawford says that MacDiarmid “argued with gusto that Gregory Smith’s was ‘the first text-book [he] would like to place in the hands of any young Scot likely to play a part in bringing about a National renaissance’” (544).

Crawford notes that for most of the twentieth century there were two literary myths that Scottish writers and readers had to choose from: “the MacDiarmid-sponsored Caledonian Antisyzygy […] and the English-language-based Muir view of endemic division as utterly enfeebling” (567). Muir and MacDiarmid were once on friendly terms, but their relationship soured with time, particularly when Edwin Muir’s *Scott and Scotland* (1936) was released. In it he argued that “Scottish literature would have a better chance of international recognition if it were written in English” (“Edwin Muir”). This perhaps might not seem to contradict MacDiarmid’s view initially, beyond MacDiarmid’s fervent efforts to revitalize Scots through his synthetic Scots. However, in Muir’s statement there seems to be an underlying suggestion that for Scottish literature to receive worldwide recognition it would need to adhere to English standards. When this is considered, it is understandable that Scottish writers and readers would have a dilemma where they have to choose one school of thought...
over another. In the late twentieth century, Crawford notes that there is a movement that encompassed “a more inclusive, more mobile sense of ‘Scotlands’ of multiple, once largely separate but increasingly cross-fertilizing literary and cultural strands come to replace these older, one-size-fits-all models” (567). While MacDiarmid and Muir both held ideas that can be seen to befit this later development, it does seem that MacDiarmid’s fondness for the Caledonian antisyzygy is more compatible with the developments in the late twentieth century. After all, a mobile sense of Scotland, where there is a ‘cross-fertilizing’ of cultural and literary strands, carries hints of acknowledgment to the fact that there is more than one Scotland, influenced by more than one culture.

It is evident that MacDiarmid found something crucial in Smith’s work, and his fondness for the Caledonian antisyzygy suggests that he saw something of value in the idea. One possible explanation might be that it expresses the inner conflict that Scots might feel, or have felt. Reid points out that with the Union of 1707, Scots were handed a dual nationality: “officially they were British, but in their own minds, their own mirrors, they were Scots” (52), an effect that the English did not have to deal with, as for them being British and English were one and the same. While it is perhaps ill-advised to classify Scotland as a colonized nation since the Act of Union was not a wholly one-sided affair, the subsequent change in identity, language, and culture makes the relationship between Scotland and England akin to one of colonized and colonizer. It can be argued that countries such as Ireland, Wales, and Scotland are some of the first victims of English colonization, although, as pointed out in The Empire Writes Back, their subsequent complicity in colonial activity with the British Empire has made it so that other former colonies do not recognize them as post-colonial (Ashcroft et al. 31-2). This essay will not debate Scotland’s (or any of the other nations in the British Isles) status in the context of colonialization; however, it proposes that post-colonial literary theory is tool that might shed some light on the duality in Scotland’s literature.
2.2 Postcolonial Criticism

The idea of postcolonial theory being applied to Scottish literature is not a new one; Sassi for instance mentions the merits of examining Scottish literature with a postcolonial perspective in mind, although she is aware that it is problematic not only because Scotland has not managed to break free from England but also because it was implicit in the expansion of the British Empire (6-7). However, Ashcroft et al. point out that “the debate over the validity of the post-colonial may well come down to the question of its efficacy as an historical context, an analytical tool or a theory of cultural relations” (201, italics in original) and they find that in the case of countries like Scotland, “political and cultural analysis […] has found a new dimension in post-colonial theory” (ibid.). While Scotland is not postcolonial in the literal sense, using the postcolonial theory can provide an enlightening perspective on Scottish literature.

In *Beginning Theory* Peter Barry discusses postcolonial criticism, and while he is far more focused on non-European literature, it is still possible to apply aspects of his discussion to Scottish literature. One of the first characteristics of postcolonial writers, according to Barry, is “an awareness of representations of the [country] as exotic or immoral ‘Other’” (194). We can find this phenomenon in novels such as Walter Scott’s *Waverley* (1814), where Scott is keenly aware of how the public would have perceived the Jacobite Highlanders, and by extension Highlanders in general, and through his literature he offers a new perspective on the Highlanders and their cause. The reader is shown that they were not quite the savages that the English would have believed them to be, although Scott is careful not to upset his readers by excusing the Highlanders completely; just as there are more sympathetic Highlanders in *Waverley* there are also Highlanders who are unscrupulous, and even the more positive Highland characters are shown to have glaring flaws, such as Fergus Maclvor’s unruly temper. Scott modifies the narrative that was dominant in the early nineteenth century by showing the Jacobite rebellions in a different, more sympathetic, light.

The second characteristic of postcolonial criticism according to Barry is a concern with language (195). Throughout history, colonialization has often involved the colonizers imposing their languages onto the native people. This imposition can take on different forms, in some cases it is simply that one language takes precedence over the other when it comes to documentation and education, but in some other cases colonizers banned the native language outright and punished the natives for using their own language, as in the case of the Native Americans and the Irish. Scotland had this problem as well; for instance, when James VI of
Scotland became James I of England and moved his court to London there was a change in the language of prestige. Scots had flourished in the sixteenth century but following the relocation of James I’s court English became the language of the upper class in Scotland. In the following centuries Scots would become increasingly associated with the lower class and countryside, places where there is not as much concern with elevating one’s apparent social status, while English was the language of the learned and sophisticated. Scottish Gaelic suffered a change in public perception as well, as the government wanted to encourage the Scottish subjects to speak English, rather than Gaelic which was seen as “the language of barbarism” (Ferguson, 182). Due to the oppression that results from a colonizer imposing their language onto the natives, an inner conflict is likely to occur. The colonizer’s language becomes the language of prestige, the acceptable way to speak while the native languages, in Scotland’s case Scottish Gaelic and Scots, become wrong and shameful. Richardson points out that Scottish people learned that it was wrong to use Scots, and that it was not at all a desirable way to speak (455). There are numerous examples of Scottish literature that deal with language and the struggle between speaking English, a language imposed upon the nation, and Scots. In Scottish literature, this struggle often manifests itself in an inner conflict where the character is not certain of their own identity.

The third characteristic of postcolonial approach according to Barry is the “emphasis on identity as doubled, or hybrid, or unstable…” (196). This is perhaps the most crucial part of the application of postcolonial criticism in relation to Scottish literature, as after all it appears to fall in line with Smith’s “Caledonian antiszyzygy”. One of the most extreme literary examples of identity as doubled would be Robert Louis Stevenson’s Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, where Dr Jekyll finds a way to call forth his hidden self. In her discussion on Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and the double brain, Stiles discusses the Victorian era idea of dual brain theory where the left hemisphere was associated “with masculinity, whiteness, and civilization, while the right brain was the supposedly inferior feminine seat of emotions, instincts and the unconscious” (884-5). Further, she asserts that the right hemisphere, in the eyes of Victorians, “supposedly dominated in the brains of […] savages […] criminals, and the insane” (885). Hearn points out that Craig Beveridge and Ronal Turnbull showed how “polarized tropes are recurrently used to describe the relationship between Scot (‘dark,’ ‘backward,’ ‘fanatical,’ ‘violent,’ ‘barbaric’) and England (‘enlightened,’ ‘advanced,’ ‘reasonable,’ ‘decent,’ ‘civilized,’)” (755). While Stiles does not directly state it in her article, it is possible to use this information to guess that perhaps to some Victorian readers Mr Hyde could have been
seen as the Scottish half, especially considering the fact that Scottish Highlanders in particular suffered from intense propaganda against their culture since the Jacobite risings (Shields, 922), and that Dr Jekyll could be seen as the more civilized southern neighbor, whether it be the Lowland Scots or the English neighbors. Stiles does not see Hyde in a particularly negative light, as from her perspective “Hyde represents the atrophied, stunted right hemisphere struggling to break free of restraints imposed by the dominant left brain” (886). In this light, Hyde can be seen as the wild brute that perhaps resembles the contemporary idea of the Highlander and the true Scottish character, suppressed and condemned by the Lowland, or more English, half.

Fenyô points out that at least in the mid nineteenth century, newspapers like the *Scotsman* and the *Fifeshire Journal* had articles that gave off an attitude of contempt. In the articles the Gaels (Highlanders) were “denounced [...] as an ‘inferior race to the Lowland Saxon’, a ‘dirty race’, which was ‘vicious’, ’perverse’ and ’degraded.”” (qtd. in Fenyô, 3). Fenyô also points out that the perception of Highlanders changed from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. Writers in the eighteenth century such as Samuel Johnson, did use words like “primitive” and “savage,” but these judgments, Fenyô says, “came from an essentially cultural and civilisational point of view” (21). In contrast, the discourse of the mid nineteenth century had shifted from a perspective of civilization to a more racially focused perspective. Newspapers like the Scotsman “could openly pronounce the Highlanders a barbarous and an inferior race” (ibid.). Fenyô in part attributes this shift in perspective to the growing racist thoughts that were present in continental Europe, and Scotland, in the mid nineteenth century. If the discourse of the mid-nineteenth century is any indicator of the sentiments of the late-nineteenth century, then it certainly seems that Mr. Hyde could have been a representative of the Highlander while Dr. Jekyll represents the more Southern neighbor, either the Lowland Scot or the English. It is difficult to tell if this was the intention of Stevenson, but it is tempting to consider his work in this light, as it further highlights the theme of duality in light of the tension between the two countries. Stiles attributes the duality in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* to the Gothic convention popular in the nineteenth century, but it also coincides with the double theme that is often present in postcolonial literature.

Three key words that Barry uses to define the progression of postcolonial literatures are: adopt, adapt, and adept. The *adopt* phase is where “the writer’s ambition is to adopt the form [of the novel] as it stands, the assumption being that it has universal validity” (196). Robert Louis Stevenson did this for instance, his novels often containing themes that feel
relatively universal, a moral suggestion embedded in every story as was the norm for Victorian literature. The second is the adapt phase, where the original form is adapted to a subject matter pertaining to the postcolonial country (ibid.). This is particularly visible during the Scottish Renaissance, where numerous novels exploring the Scottish experience (particularly dealing with duality or the conflict between England and Scotland) emerge. There is no particular focus on a universal meaning in novels by authors such as Neil Gunn or Lewis Grassic Gibbon, although readers could possibly find a common thread between the novels of the time. The emphasis is on what it has meant to be Scottish, and how the progress of the outside world has affected the Scots. Watson notes that the Scottish Renaissance’s agenda “can be seen as an early manifestation of the wider and later postcolonial process” because of the fact that it favored “literary diversity and plurality and the ‘decentralisation’ of all cultural hegemonies” (81). The third and final phase, according to Barry, is the so called adept phase (196). There is a “cultural independence” whereby the writers of the postcolonial country “remake the form to their own specification” (ibid.). Irvine Welsh’s Trainspotting could be considered as an example. Trainspotting deviates from the traditional novel, at least if it is considered in the context of the literary canon, as a large portion of it is in Scots rather than English, and it embraces the low culture of Edinburgh. There is no specific accommodation in Trainspotting for readers who are unfamiliar with Scots or the culture, although the novel has risen to international renown despite the initial hurdle a reader might encounter when trying to read Trainspotting.

Wittig says that literature can be viewed “in relation to the whole cultural trend, the thought, the moral, aesthetic, and intellectual climate of the particular period to which it belongs […]and this] may give us a better understanding of literature as an expression of its own day and age” (3). This stresses that the surroundings in which literature is born are crucial to understanding what it is that shapes the literature. While Wittig places more emphasis on the immediate surrounding of the literature, this thesis proposes that in Scotland’s case it is important to consider the crucial moments in Scotland’s history that end up shaping the Scottish experience. Since duality is of particular interest in this essay the crucial moments that define that aspect of the Scottish experience can be traced back to the 1603 Union of the Crowns.
2.3 Historical Background

Scotland has a long history, and much like any country its history is filled with both conflict and times of peace. While much of Scotland’s history is intriguing and worthy of examination, this essay will only deal with the history that appears to be relevant to the discussion of duality. Since postcolonial theory is a fitting perspective when considering duality in Scottish literature, it is appropriate that we consider Scotland’s history from the events that led up to the 1707 Act of Union.

In 1603 Elizabeth I of England passed away with no named heir. Her nearest royal relative was James VI of Scotland, son of the executed Mary, Queen of Scots, and so the Union of the Crowns took place, making James VI of Scotland James I of England. James I promised his Scottish subjects that he would visit “one year in every three” (Lynch 240), but this promise was broken, as he only visited Scotland once after he ascended to the English throne, i.e. in 1617 (ibid. 239). While James was one of Scotland’s “most successful feudal kings” he was also “the first failure amongst Stewart absolute monarchs of the seventeenth century” (ibid. 244). Regardless of the merit of James I’s rule, there was one particular fact about his rule that can be viewed in a positive light, at least in the eye of modern people, which was his willingness to tolerate the practice of Roman Catholicism as long as the practitioners obeyed the law. Lynch mentions for instance the Octavians, a group of individuals hired to help manage the finances of James VI whilst he was solely the king of Scotland, who were thought by ministers to be “suspected papists” (235). Since Henry VIII’s decision to separate from the Catholic Church in favor of founding his own church (which would recognize his divinity and allow him to make his own decisions), religious tension had dominated England. This tension was exacerbated by his daughter, Mary I, also known as Bloody Mary, due to her execution of Protestants. When Elizabeth I ascended to the throne after her half-sister’s death, England was once again ruled by a Protestant. Scotland, however, was ruled by James V who was Catholic, and when he died it was his infant daughter Mary who was named heir to the throne. Mary I of Scotland was Catholic, and while Catholicism still had followers in Scotland Lynch states that there is some evidence that Protestantism had a relatively “firm footing’ a generation before 1560” (188). Religious tensions were intense during Mary Stuart’s reign, and Lynch says that many, “including Mary’s advisers, felt that the country was on the brink of war of religion” (214). Considering this it is no surprise that during Mary’s lifetime there was not one, but two Scottish Reformations (Lynch, 196). The first was in 1560, while Mary Stuart was still queen in
Scotland, and the latter in 1567 after Mary was forced to abdicate. The reformations ensured that Catholicism was effectively illegal in Scotland, although in some places it survived.

In 1625 James I passed away after a mere 22 years on the English throne and a good 58 years on the Scottish throne, and his son Charles I ascended to the throne. Charles I’s rule is characterized by conflict between the monarch and the English parliament, beginning with Charles I’s document that “proposed to annul all grants of land made by either crown or Church since 1540” (Lynch 247). This conflict would escalate, culminating in Charles I’s execution in 1649 and the temporary abolition of the monarchy by the English Parliament in 1649 (ibid. 278). The monarchy was re-established in 1661 with the coronation of Charles II, Charles I’s son. Charles II preferred a policy of religious tolerance, but he passed acts against dissenters (which is understandable when one considers that his father was executed for not doing as Parliament wished). In 1685 Charles II died suddenly, and his brother James II ascended to the throne. James II was a Roman Catholic, which was problematic given the consistent tension between religions in England. Most of the political elite of England were Protestant and therefore they were deeply suspicious of James II’s motives and intentions, especially of his ties with France, although Lynch points out that the crisis was “an English crisis, with its roots there” (297). When James II produced a Catholic heir there was panic in the political elite, who imagined Catholicism returning to rule over a population where Protestants were in the majority. Thus, the birth of James Francis Edward Stuart in 1688 prompted James II’s daughter Mary, and her husband William of Orange, to invade in an event that would become known as the Glorious Revolution, which can be seen as the culmination of the suspicion on the part of the English Protestant elite. James II and his followers fled to France, where he would keep a mock court until his death in 1701. Since Charles II’s first escape to France, the Stuarts living overseas were known as Pretenders “‘over the water’” (ibid. 282) and James II and his Catholic heirs continued to be referred to as such by their opponents.

In April 1689, following the ascension of William of Orange and James’s daughter Mary, to the throne, “The Claim of Rights” and the “Articles of Grievances” were passed, which amongst other points declared that: no Catholic could be monarch or bear office, the royal prerogative could not override the law, and that episcopacy was an “insupportable grievance and trouble to [the] nation” (Lynch, 302). These articles effectively prevented James, or any of his Catholic children, from retaking the throne. The last point of the article, regarding the status of episcopacy, did not have any particular ill effects as long as the priests
and adherents to episcopacy, showed due loyalty to the new reigning monarchs. However, this did not last, as in November 1690 The General Assembly met in what was, in effect, “a partition church of Southern Scotland which claimed the right to deprive all ministers who fell short of its ideal of full-blow Presbyterianism” and that the “old-style Presbyterian national was dead; the church had instead become an ‘interest’ in politics” (Lynch, 304). It is noteworthy that only 180 ministers and elders attended, all from the south of Tay, which would likely result in only a fraction of Scottish ministry being represented. Following the General Assembly, there was a purge, so to speak, where almost two-thirds of the ministry in Scotland were deprived of their positions. According to Lynch it would take a full thirty years to fill the positions, but by purging the ministry those who attended the General Assembly were able to ensure that the new ministers agreed with their views. It was this purging of undesirable ministers that Lynch says would become evident in the events of 1706-7, leading up to the Act of Union in 1707.

The merit of the Act of Union in 1707 is debatable. The events leading up to it were complicated, not only in terms of monarchs and religion, but also in an economic sense. Scotland had spent a considerable sum on a colonial venture that failed, which resulted in a need for some economic stimulation. The Act of Union was always seen, as Reid explains, “as a Scottish sellout” but he stresses that when this solution was enacted “there could have been no way of knowing how much it was to become an English takeover” (52). To Scottish ears, “1707 is a date as dire as doomsday” (ibid). Not everyone agrees with the negative aspects of the Act of Union, for instance in The Eclipse of Scottish Culture (1989) Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull argue that “Scottish history has constantly been made to pivot on the Union of 1707, which allowed England’s good qualities to flow into Scotland and displace its bad ones” (16-50), and scholars such as H. R. Trevor-Roper have claimed that the Scottish Enlightenment dawned with the Union of 1707, which Campbell and Skinner reject in The Origins and Nature of Scottish Enlightenment (1982) (qtd. in Ferguson). Ferguson argues that the “eighteenth-century Enlightenment […] did not come unheralded, nor spring full grown from a mere conventional change in the reckoning of time. Those who would deny this view depict pre-Union Scotland as an impoverished and intellectually isolated country” (173). Many of the great minds of the Enlightenment were however pro-Union, and it is evident that they were influenced by their more powerful neighbors. Magnusson quotes Douglas Gifford as saying: “The Enlightenment had propounded the idea that we were all emerging from noble savagery and were now rising, through civilisation, to
high plateaux” (654). This view does not seem to contradict the mindset of the Enlightenment, if the views of the men of genius who lived then are any indicator. Richardson points out that David Hume, a renowned Scottish philosopher from the Enlightenment, saw merit in a Scottish education for his son but “the probability that the boy would acquire [Scots] was enough to favor an English education” and in a letter to Gilbert Elliot, Hume referred to Scots as “a very corrupt Dialect of the Tongue which we make us of” (qtd. in Richardson, 455). Anyone sufficiently acquainted with Scots, and particularly the form which reached its peak in the sixteenth century, will assert that Scots was in fact a valid language, cousin of English but distinct from it, but it seems that by the time of the Act of Union the cultural elite were convinced of the superiority of English, and Scots was viewed as a mere dialect.

The Act of Union and the exile of the Stuart monarchs are crucial parts of Scotland’s history. When Queen Anne died in 1714 her distant cousin (but nearest Protestant relative), George I, succeeded to the throne, thanks to the Act of Settlement, which barred over fifty Roman Catholic relatives of Anne from inheriting the throne. It is no surprise that a year following his ascension to the throne there was a rising against George I in an attempt to get a Stuart back on the British throne. The motivation of the 1715 rebellion, according to Lynch, was a “close-knit mixture of traditional residual loyalty to an ancient monarchy and anti-Union feeling” which “few as yet saw as other than indistinguishable” (328). Despite what popular memory seems to suggest, it was not only the Highlander Scots who manned the 1715 rebellion. In fact, Lynch states that it was the “first and last time English Jacobites materially contributed to a Jacobite rising and the sorry episode showed the extent of the incompatibility of the Scottish and English strains of Jacobitism” (329). As a result of the first failed rebellion the government took action against the Jacobites, and the Highlanders in particular. In 1716 a Disarming Act was passed, which banned carrying of weapons in public although it was still acceptable to own the weapons; however, this act did not have the intended effect, as Lynch points out that “the only clans which disarmed were those loyal to the government” (331). Estates belonging to known Jacobite rebels were forfeited and there was what Lynch calls a “Hanoverian landgrab”, although it did not last long, and by the late 1720s “most forfeited estates had reverted to the families of their original owners and the government, intent on punishing past disorders found itself fueling new resentments” (331).

While the 1715 rebellion came first, it is the 1745 rebellion that most people tend to think of when they consider the Jacobite rebellion, despite the fact that the Highland forces in
1715 were near double the size of the force that accompanied Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1745 (Schweizer 446). The 1745 rebellion has received far more attention when it comes to historical fiction concerning the Jacobites, or at the very least the historical fiction dealing with the 1745 risings has been more popular than any depictions of the 1715.¹ There are many possibilities as to why the second Jacobite rising might have received more attention than the earlier one. It could be that the romance of the Young Pretender’s cause, from the odds being stacked against the Jacobites to his desperate flight from Great Britain, drew the attention of writers, or perhaps it was the undeniable defeat of the Jacobites at Culloden and the fact that while failure was, as Schweizer points out, “at no point... certain or inevitable: it was… likely” (448, italics in original). Whatever the appeal has been to writers of historical fiction, the rising had disastrous consequences for Highland culture. Following the failed rebellion some of the iconic items associated with the Highlands were outright banned, including wearing of the tartan and kilts, along with bagpipes, and people caught wearing the kilt were punished. There was however a notable exception to the ban, which allowed Highlanders enlisted in the British army to don kilts and play the bagpipes without fear of punishment. The military was seen as an outlet for the wild and adventurous nature of the Highlanders, and as a way to take these possible rebels out of Scotland where they could do more good for the Empire than harm (Shields, 925).

Recruiting Highlanders into the British army was not only a means of culling what the English saw as the wild and barbaric nature of the Highlanders, but it also helped pave the way for one of the most notorious events in Scotland’s history (Shields, 924). The Highland Clearances were a series of tragic exploitation of power by the British government. The Clearances took place over a number of years, with a different chain of events taking place in various areas of the Highlands, but the common theme was that the Highlanders were being forced off their native lands and displaced either to the coast (a way of life unfamiliar to them) or to other countries. By recruiting the Highlanders into the army the British Empire not only lessened the chance of further rebellion in the Highlands, but they also made the Clearances a relatively feasible task. To make things even easier, Shields points out that throughout the eighteenth century “anti-Jacobite propaganda portrayed Highlanders as thieving, belligerent, uncouth, and even cannibalistic savages governed by blind allegiance to a lawless chieftain” (922); this propaganda might have helped the inhabitants of the

¹ See Walter Scott’s Waverley (1814), Diana Gabladon’s Outlander (1991), Jane Yolen’s Prince Across the Water (2006).
Lowlands and England look past the ruthlessness of the evictions and accept the narrative of improvements being made. When it comes to accounts and historical fiction dealing with the Highland Clearances it is not just the pain of being forced from one’s home that is at the forefront, it is the pain of being betrayed by other Scots.\(^2\) After all, the most notorious cases of the Clearances were arranged by chieftains, people who the Highlanders had been conditioned by their community to look up to and respect, and the factors that made sure to enforce the evictions were not English, but Lowlanders who sought to profit from the evictions (Lynch, 368).

There are other events in the history of Scotland which have shaped its relationship with England, as well as influencing the relationship between its inhabitants, but the aforementioned ones are events in which the sense of duality, of conflict between opposing sides both within and outside of the Scottish community, appears to be deeply rooted. From the nineteenth century onwards Scotland has struggled to have a say in its own history, from the Radical War in 1819-20 to the Scottish Renaissance, to the referendum in 1979 and finally the return of the Scottish Parliament in 1999. The Union of Parliaments had been an effort to improve the country’s economic situation, opposed by many Scots but enacted thanks to a marginal victory. The 1707 Act of Union was meant to be a temporary solution to a problem, one that lasted for a good 290 years. Reid notes that “it took some time for it to dawn on the Scots that by the terms of union, England appeared to have made considerable gains, while they, on the contrary, had acquired an ambiguous identity” (52).

Considering Scotland’s history, it does not come as a surprise that the Scots would be preoccupied with opposites and their relation to each other. Scotland is in effect a country whose identity has been split, by politics, geography (Highlands and Lowlands), language (Scots, Scottish Gaelic, and English), race (Celts, Norsemen, and Saxons), and identity (Scottish and British) amongst others. It is no wonder considering Scottish history that duality has been a prominent theme in Scottish literature. With the context of history and literature in mind, three renowned works of Scottish literature will be examined, the theme of duality highlighted and the evolution of duality from the late nineteenth century to the late twentieth century considered.

\(^2\) See Neil M. Gunn’s *Butcher’s Broom* (1934) and Iain Crichton Smith’s *Consider the Lilies* (1968)
Duality in *Kidnapped*, *Sunset Song* and *Trainspotting*

3.1 Robert Louis Stevenson

Robert Louis Stevenson was born in Edinburgh in 1850, during a time when Scotland was still experiencing a period of great economic growth and prosperity that followed the Industrial Revolution. From a young age Stevenson was often confined indoors because of frequent illness, and in his confinement Stevenson grew fond of stories and story-telling as a way to pass time and reach out into the world. Stevenson’s father, a lighthouse engineer, encouraged his son’s love of stories as he himself had been fond of them. However, Stevenson was still expected to follow in the footsteps of his father, and grandfather, and at the age of seventeen Stevenson enrolled at Edinburgh University to study engineering, but he soon abandoned engineering and turned to law. Yet by the time he had finished his studies Stevenson knew that writing was how he wanted to spend his time. The childhood illness that kept Stevenson indoors as a young child stretched into adulthood, and in the end Stevenson sought refuge from the illness in warmer climates. Stevenson spent a considerable portion of his adult life abroad in places such as the Caribbean, California, or Hawaii. Yet when he had the chance to Stevenson would return to Scotland, and a sense of longing for home can be found in his writings.

Stevenson is known for an array of novels, although he is perhaps most commonly remembered for two works in particular: *Treasure Island* (1882) and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). The latter can easily be viewed as a striking example of the Caledonian antisyzygy that Smith speaks of, and it comes as no surprise. Even those who have not read the story know that the two characters, Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, are two extremes of a person. Amongst many interpretations Dr Jekyll is the rational, the mind, while Mr Hyde is the emotional side, the heart (Stiles, 884).

The social and political climate of Scotland in the late nineteenth century is something to be considered in the discussion of Stevenson and his literature, particularly when it comes to works like *Kidnapped*. After the tumultuous eighteenth century with its risings and strife, the nineteenth century held a different atmosphere. Sassi remarks that the nineteenth century marked “the gradual consolidation of the Union and of relations between its partners” (61). This can in part be explained by the various positive developments Scotland experienced. The Industrial Revolution benefitted the Scots greatly, bringing about “a century or more of sustained economic growth […]”, an unprecedented growth of population, a sequence of
brilliant inventions (with gratifyingly many of them the works of Scots), and a huge increase in capital investment” (Lynch, 406). Sassi maintains that the benefits of the Union which were so readily apparent in the nineteenth century gave the “Scottish bourgeoisie […] plenty of good reasons to celebrate its fledgling Britishness and to overlook the marginalisation of the vernacular aspects of its native culture” (61). If these facts hold true, it seems probable that Stevenson would not loathe the double identity available to him.

In *Scotland’s Books*, Crawford asserts that for Stevenson “division was an obsession” (502), a statement which is only strengthened by excerpts from *The Silverado Squatters* (1883) where Stevenson writers that “Scotland is indefinable; it has no unity except upon the map. Two languages, many dialects, innumerable forms of piety, and countless local patriotisms and prejudices part us among ourselves” (qtd. in Daiches, 20). Even if duality was not so readily apparent in Stevenson’s fiction (whether in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, or in *Kidnapped*) it is evident that the division within Scotland was an issue that was on Stevenson’s mind.

### 3.2 *Kidnapped* (1886)

Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Kidnapped* is a beloved adventure novel where the Lowland boy David Balfour traverses the Scottish Highlands in an effort to claim his rightful inheritance from a malicious uncle. David’s paths cross with the Highlander and Jacobite Alan Breck Stewart and they team up in their efforts to pursue their separate causes. Like in much of Victorian literature, there is an underlying theme that can be said to be universally applicable, a fact which supports Barry’s classification relating to the first phase of post-colonial literary theory of *adopt*. Alan Breck and David Balfour are the main examples of duality, representing the split in Scotland between the Highlands and Lowlands. *Kidnapped* recognizes dualities and the inherent distinction between the two main characters as well as different aspects of Scottishness, while at the same time suggesting that if David and Alan – and by implication Lowlanders and Highlanders – are able to set aside their differences they might be able to make a mutually beneficial alliance.

Even before the Union of the Parliaments, and perhaps even before the Union of the Crowns, Scotland was still divided in its cultural makeup. Up in the North there are the Highlands, and the various isles where the Vikings left a visible mark on the language and the people. Neil Gunn recognized this already present duality in novels such as *Sun Circle*
(1933), where Gunn acknowledges that there is no single race that makes up the Scotland of the twentieth century. In the more southern area of Scotland are the Lowlands, where the culture is more influenced by the Scots’ Southern neighbors in England. In Sorensen’s article on the economies that Stevenson presents in *Kidnapped*, she points out that there is a distinction between the two areas in the way they treat wealth and money in general. The Lowlanders, under the influence of their English neighbors, deal in notes and coins, and store their money safely away in banks, while the Highlanders opt for a different system where they wear belts of gold. On one hand, it is possible to view these different economies as statements on the different level of cultural development between the two areas, the Lowlanders having been civilized under England’s influence while the Highlanders are still in a primitive state of civilization where belts of gold are valued more than flimsy pieces of paper, and the arm of capitalism has not reached into the Highlands. Sorensen points out that these different economies might at first appear to merely emphasize the developed Lowland and the underdeveloped Highlands, but she finds that there is an underlying suggestion that “the weighty embodied form of metal money seems part of a society less open to fluctuation and even corruption” (285). In *Kidnapped* this does seem to be the case indeed, for a few of the Lowland characters David has to deal with are in some way trying to garner wealth: his uncle tries to have David fall to his death to keep his fortune and estate to himself, and when that fails he sells David to Captain Hoseason, who intends on taking David across the Atlantic Ocean and to the Carolinas, where he can sell David into some form of slavery. Even when David comes across sympathetic ears on Hoseason’s ship they are still unwilling to aid him in his situation because their wealth will increase with the sale of David as well.

The Highland characters have a different attitude to money, and it is possible to argue that they behave with more honor in regards to money than the Lowlanders. There are two scenes where David loses his money, one to the thieving crew members of the *Covenant* and the other to Cluny, through Alan’s gambling. In both instances, David’s money is in the hands of people who have a position of power over him. When David is aboard the *Covenant* his purse of gold is taken away from him, and while he does get his purse back it has only about a third of the amount left in it, for which David is surprisingly grateful. When David realizes that Alan has lost all their combined money gambling with the outlawed chieftain Cluny Macpherson, he makes a rather passive-aggressive remark on how the “little money [they] have has a long way to carry [them]” (168). Once David makes their position known, Cluny insists on giving them the full amount back, but it is implied that the chieftain is not
happy about this, as his face continues to grow redder with every word that passes between him and David, and yet he is honorable and returns the money he rightfully won. The crew members of the Covenant do no bother returning the money they stole form David, and even when they are trying to convince David to aid them in the murder of Alan they merely offer him some of the gold that Alan carries on him, rather than tempting him by giving David’s money back. Of course, David is a captive on their ship, one whom they intend to sell once they have landed in the Carolinas, so it does not come as a surprise that they would steal his money. However, in the case with Cluny the money has been won by fair means, even if Alan acquired David’s money under dubious circumstances, and when David pleads his case to Cluny the exiled Highland chief complies and gives David the money back. While at first it might seem that Stevenson is suggesting that the Highlanders were more primitive, at least in their monetary interactions, there also seems to be an underlying suggestion that what might appear to be primitive could in fact just be a different method, with its own merits. Sorensen states that Alan, despite being tied to a monetary system that is more primitive compared to what the Lowlanders are used to, is nevertheless “a more trustworthy character than Davie’s uncle or the Lowland crew members” (285).

Stevenson does not quite discredit the Highlanders as mere ignorant savages, but instead carefully balances the depiction of Highlanders and Lowlanders, making sure that the reader is aware of the fact that there are Lowland Scots who are not wholly good just as there are Highlanders who are not vicious savages. David’s uncle, the miserly Ebenezer Balfour, is one of the more despicable Lowland characters. Once he realizes who David is, Ebenezer pretends to care for his nephew but, intent on keeping his fortune to himself, tries to trick David into an untimely death, and when that does not work he sells him to Captain Hoseason to be taken to North Carolina. It is possible to argue that Ebenezer is under the influence of the obsession with money that Sorensen connected to the growing influence of Scotland’s southern neighbor. After all, the Highland society in Kidnapped is a community where the bonds of fealty are cherished, whether it is to kin or kith. Ebenezer is not the only Lowland character who shows dishonorable behavior, although he is arguably the most shameless of the lot. The captain of the Covenant, Hoseason, is shown to be a morally unreliable character. Upon the death of young Ransome at the hands of Shuan, Hoseason says to Shuan: “Ye sot and swine, do ye know what ye’ve done? Ye’ve murdered the boy!” (54), yet it is made clear to the reader earlier that Hoseason not only knew of the abuse Ransome suffered on the ship, but he also turned a blind eye to it. Hoseason displays questionable judgment in regard to
David as well. When Riach shows him the state of David as he lies sick in the brig, the captain is reluctant to fulfill Riach’s request of giving David fresh air. Eventually he is persuaded, but his reluctance serves to portray a character who is not morally sound. Yet David is able to see past the less desirable qualities of the crew of the Covenant, and manages to empathize with them and find some redeeming qualities. Stevenson has David acknowledge that there is both good and bad in his abductors. The fact that he is able to consider the perspective of the crew and understand how they must feel is not only a mark of David’s occasional maturity, it is also a lesson that can be seen as universally appealing. Stevenson is not suggesting that ill deeds should be overlooked in favor of the more positive aspects of a person, but through David he presents a gentle reminder that things are not black and white; no one is wholly evil or wholly good.

Since the two Jacobite risings of the eighteenth century the Highlanders suffered a campaign of propaganda which was intended to justify any action the British government would want to take against them. Shields points out that “anti-Jacobite propaganda portrayed Highlanders as thieving, belligerent, uncouth, and even cannibalistic savages governed by blind allegiance to a lawless chieftain” (922); this propaganda would not have been alleviated by the fact that there was some condemnable behavior on the part of the Jacobite side of the struggle (MacRobert 16). Stevenson would have been well aware of this propaganda even though he wrote Kidnapped in the latter half of the nineteenth century, especially since it was in part used to justify the Highland Clearances, an unforgettable event in Scottish history. David Balfour seems to harbor some of these biases, although his preconceptions of the Highlanders do not seem to be as severe as the image Shields references. When he is left alone with the Highlander and Jacobite Alan Breck for the first-time David studies him with interest, and says “whatever [his] opinion, [he] could not look on such a man without a lively interest” (61). David does not care so much about politics, and in fact it is made clear soon thereafter that David and Alan belong to different political ideologies, but when David learns that the crew intend to murder Alan with David’s help he disregards the differences between him and Alan. Certainly, it is possible to question David’s motive in helping Alan Breck, as after all they are both in a sense captives on the Covenant; however, judging by David’s reaction to their proposal of killing and robbing Alan, it seems that he is more inclined to side with the Jacobite on moral grounds rather than for his own survival. David does not condone killing, and already he feels that the crew have done more wrong than right, with his own kidnapping and the reckless murder of young Ransome. Whatever truth the reader chooses to
see in the alliance between David and Alan, Stevenson shows two people who are able to set aside their differences to collaborate in a time of need.

In the introduction to the Penguin Classics edition, Donald McFarlan notes that the “fundamental duality in *Kidnapped* is not far to seek” (xxx). As might be clear to a reader familiar with the history of Scotland and the literary tropes of the Lowland and Highlands, David Balfour represents Lowland Scotland, being as McFarlan says, “prudential, canny, Hanoverian and Whiggish, law-abiding and Presbyterian” while Alan represents the Highlands as he is “feudal, romantic, proud to a fault, a lover of lost causes [and a] Jacobite” (xxxi). Stevenson not only contrasts different characteristics of Highland and Lowland development and culture, but he contrasts these two characters. However, as McFarlan notes it is important to not accept an “over-simplistic duality” as well (ibid.). Yet despite McFarlan’s warning, it is useful to consider these contrasting qualities and particular when considering duality in *Kidnapped*. Often these opposing qualities of David and Alan are made to complement each other. Alan, used to having to do whatever he needs to get by, has no qualms with lying in order to get what he wants. David is uncomfortable when Alan uses roguish methods as means to an end. For instance, when Alan is trying to arouse sympathy from a Lowland woman, in efforts to procure a boat, David is dangerously close to ruining the ruse simply because he is uncomfortable with lying. Yet Alan’s ruse manages to elicit the woman’s sympathy, which is enough to convince her to give them food. However, Alan is only able to get them so far, as he indicates that David is tied to the Jacobites when the woman asks about their troubles. Alan shows a lack of understanding of the Lowlanders, seeing only the appeal of romance that their predicament might evoke, and he assumes that she would find sympathy with their lost cause. Alan shows a lack of awareness of the Lowlander’s perspective, as he does not consider that she would either be afraid to go against the ruling government, or that she would have heard a different narrative on the 1745 risings. After all, the Jacobites suffered immensely following the failed rebellion, not only in terms of culture but also in regard to their reputation. When David sees that she is undecided on whether they are worth the risk she would be undertaking if helping them, as he is himself familiar with the ideas that a Lowlander would have of the Jacobites, he reveals to the woman that while he is indeed in trouble, he is in fact aligned with the ruling government. Alan arouses the Lowland woman’s sympathy through his lies while David ensures her cooperation with his truthfulness. Nevertheless, the differences between Alan and David do not always yield a favorable outcome. Following the incident with Cluny and their money,
David and Alan continue their journey, alternating between silence and quarreling. Both men are confident of their views, reluctant to admit that they are in the wrong. Their argument is not so much solved as it is disregarded, as David sets aside his pride and asks for Alan’s assistance, hoping that doing so would “bring Alan back to [David’s] side” (178).

It is possible to see Alan and David as representatives of Scotland’s dualities and conflicts, since after all they are clear representatives of two halves of a whole. Scotland is split into two geographically differing landscapes, the Highlands and the Lowlands, where there is a marked difference between the cultures, particularly during the time in which the novel is set. Stevenson portrays a scenario where two opposing sides learn to see each other in a different light. David not only has his preconceived notions of Highlanders transformed, but he also manages to give the Highlanders a different perspective on their Lowland neighbors. Stevenson does not try to absolve all Highlanders of their notorious reputation, as in the case of the blind Highlander Duncan Mackiegh, who clearly would have shot David if the young Lowlander had not claimed to be carrying a pistol of his own, but he does try to get his readers to understand the plight of the Highlanders and the Jacobites, and the difficulties they had to endure as a result of the Jacobite risings. There are other Highlanders whose moral character is dubious at best, such as those who conveniently only speak English when they are presented with some sort of monetary compensation. Stevenson’s depiction of the Highlander who is only able to communicate after compensation could be seen as negative portrayal. However, Sorensen sees this portrayal as symbolic of the relationship between money and power, where “knowledge of one particular language helps one accrue money in a world where imperial relationships have deemed that one language is more valuable than another” (292). Sorensen’s logic makes it easier for a reader to be sympathetic to the fact that the Highlanders feign ignorance until they are paid, even more so when the history of the Highlands is considered, from the bias against Scotch Gaelic to the systematic destruction of Highland culture by their Southern neighbors. Initially, David resents this deception, and while he does not exonerate this behavior by the end of the novel, it is clear that David learns to empathize and understand the plight of the Highlanders.

One of the significant turning points in the story when it comes to the relationship between David and Alan, and in fact between David and the Highlanders in general, happens following the murder of Colin Campbell, the king’s factor in the Highlands. David and Alan happen to be in the area when the murder is committed and they flee into the heather to get away from the English soldiers. It becomes clear that since the murder happened in Appin
territory, where Alan is from, his clansmen are likely to bear the brunt of the blame even if they are not the ones who committed the crime. David and Alan find their way to Aucharn, where the leader of the Stewart clan, James of the Glens resides, and they are met with the sight of the people that live there frantically hiding weapons they are not meant to have and burning anything that could be considered incriminating. Stevenson effectively portrays the situation of people who are viewed with disfavor by the government and are forced to take drastic measures even if they are not to blame. When James of the Glens suggests that Alan and David be papered, Alan is quick to assent to being papered but he allows David to decide whether he becomes a wanted man for the murder. David relents, saying that he is “Alan’s friend, and if [he] can be helpful to friends of [Alan’s], [he] will not stumble at the risk” (136). Through David’s actions, Stevenson is advocating a practice of cooperation for the greater good. Neither David nor Alan committed the murder, but knowing that the blame is likely to fall on those that live in the area, both are willing to take the blame publicly to exonerate the other inhabitants of Appin. David sides with the Highlanders even though he is not one of them, and in turn they show him immense gratitude, James’s wife giving David a heartfelt thanks where she promises that “as long as [her] heart beats under [her] bosom, [she] will keep [his face], and think of it, and bless it” (ibid.). It is possible to view this as an endorsement of an alliance between different cultures, or religions, or of any two different groups.

It is important to note that the likely readership of Stevenson’s novels would have been at the very least middle class and it is not difficult to imagine that a large portion of his readers would have either been living in England or perhaps Lowland Scotland. The protagonist is a Lowland inhabitant who is mostly ignorant of the Highlands and the people, seeing them as wild and exotic. In his book *The Wretched of the Earth* Fanon says that “early on in a national liberation struggle the native writer is addressing primarily the colonizer” (qtd. in Goulimari, 282). While it is unlikely that Stevenson is taking part in a national liberation struggle, it does seem that he is addressing the colonizer, in this case either the Lowlanders who are ignorant of their wilder brothers in the Highlands, or the English, both groups that took part in acts that at the very least resemble the acts of colonizers. Through David, Stevenson maps out a path to understanding by showing the plights of the Highlanders in a sympathetic light and reminding David (and the reader) that while there may have been terrible and brutish Highlanders, Lowlanders were just as capable of evil, manifested in the misdeeds of characters such as Ebenezer Balfour and the crew of the *Covenant*. 
On the surface *Kidnapped* is an adventure tale where two very different men come to each other’s aid, and through teamwork are able to mitigate their circumstances. Considering Stevenson’s depiction of David and Alan, and by extension his representation of dualities, with postcolonial criticism in mind, it is possible to see the novel as a mediator, pleading for those in the position of power to consider the viewpoint of those who are subjugated. The message can be said to be universal, for it is flexible and is applicable to many different scenarios which makes *Kidnapped* suitable to Barry’s model relating to the *adopt* phase of postcolonial literature.

4.1 Lewis Grassic Gibbon

While Stevenson’s *Kidnapped* displays a relatively optimistic depiction of dualities, where two different perspectives are able to consolidate and work together, Lewis Grassic Gibbon offers a different perspective in *Sunset Song*. Lewis Grassic Gibbon is the pseudonym of James Leslie Mitchell, born in Aberdeenshire in 1901. He spent most of his childhood in a farming community in the Mearns. Growing up in the farming community of the Mearns would leave a lasting impression on Gibbon, creating a “love-hate relationship between [the] area and [Gibbon] which lasted until his early death in 1935” (“Lewis Grassic Gibbon”). This love-hate relationship manifests in Gibbon’s writing, mainly through Chris Guthrie as she struggles with working the land and educating herself. Gibbon was not only a writer of fiction, but he was a journalist as well. During his time as a journalist he became increasingly involved with left-wing politics, much like his contemporaries Hugh MacDiarmid and Edwin Muir.

Gibbon is strongly associated with the Scottish Literary Renaissance, a group of Scottish writers who believed that Scotland was in need of a cultural regeneration, amongst Hugh MacDiarmid, Edwin Muir, and Neil M. Gunn to name a few. Valdes-Miyares notes that there is a relative sense of social and intellectual cohesion amongst the writers who belonged to the Scottish Renaissance, and one of the points was that they had “a conscious reaction against certain literary traditions of Scotland […] associated with sentimentalism and complacency about the state of Scottish society” (136). The most notable literary tradition that preceded the Scottish Renaissance was termed kailyard, which Tange says applies “to a nineteenth-century type of fiction that had imagined Lowland Scotland as a rural paradise cut off from the disruptive influence of time” (“Condition of Scotland”, 250). The rebellion against this tradition can in part be explained by the political and social climate of Scotland in the 1930s.
Leading up to the Scottish Renaissance, Scotland had gone through drastic changes. With the turn of the century came changes in industry, and while Scotland had thrived in the nineteenth century in the afterglow of the Industrial Revolution, its success began to decline in the twentieth century. One of the main changes that is present in *Sunset Song* is the change in farming technology that occurred around and following the First World War, a change that Gibbon likely witnessed as he grew up in a farming community during those times. Scotland also suffered heavy casualties in the First World War, which Lynch theorizes could have possibly led to the “failure of Scottish industry in the 1920s and early 1930s” (423). There was a worldwide depression in the 1930s, which had a great impact on countries across the globe, and Scotland was no exception.

### 4.2 *Sunset Song* (1932)

The Scottish Renaissance of the early twentieth century brought forth many important works of Scottish Literature, from Hugh MacDiarmid’s poetry and political vision for a revived Scotland to Neil Gunn’s empathetic portrayal of the Highlands throughout history. James Leslie Mitchell was one of the important figures of the Renaissance, although he is better known for his contributions to the movement under the name Lewis Grassic Gibbon. His trilogy, *A Scots Quair* follows Chris Guthrie from her childhood in a crofting community at the beginning of the twentieth century to the Depression in the 1930s. The trilogy is composed of *Sunset Song* (1932), *Cloud Howe* (1933), and *Grey Granite* (1934). On the surface *A Scots Quair* can be seen as a realistic view of the changes that Scotland went through in the beginning of the twentieth century; however, there is more to be seen under the surface of the trilogy. *Sunset Song* is the first book in the trilogy, and likely the most read of the three. Tange asserts that *Sunset Song* and *Cloud Howe* “contained very successful analyses of the political, economic, and social situation in Scotland” but finds that *Grey Granite* falls short, failing to evoke a vision of national regeneration, ending instead in “nativism” (261). *Sunset Song* follows Chris through her adolescence through the First World War, giving a portrait of Scotland as it goes through one of its first major changes in the twentieth century. The duality that Gibbon’s contemporary, MacDiarmid, celebrated is present throughout the novel. However, unlike in Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Kidnapped* the dualities present in *Sunset Song* are not able to come together in harmony; the dualities in Gibbon’s works can exist in the same space, but there is little hope for them to fully understand each other.
The most striking duality present in Gibbon’s novels, particularly in *Sunset Song*, is seen in the use of and concern with language. From the beginning, it is made clear to the reader that there are two languages present in Scottish life: English and Scots. Given the history of Scots, from being a flourishing language of the sixteenth century Scottish courts to being dismissed as a dialect and being ill-favored in the eyes of some of Scotland’s greatest geniuses (Richardson 455) it comes as no surprise that the issue of language would be a particularly striking form of duality. In the cases of many colonized countries, the language of the colonizer often takes precedence over the native language. As previously mentioned, the growing prestige of English in Scotland and the subsequent decline of Scots has its roots to some extent in the movement of James VI and I’s court to London, and with time English became seen as the language of the elite, not only the political elite but also those with any sort of higher status (C. Matheson and D. Matheson, 216). Gibbon illustrates this clearly in *Sunset Song* with the Gordons. In the Mearns the Gordons are better off than most of their neighbors, and because of their status they are often caught trying to speak English rather than Scots, setting themselves apart from the rest of the folk in the Mearns. The Gordons are viewed somewhat negatively because of their attempt to speak English; however, during a discussion with Long Rob, a character who represents the old Scottish ways, Mr. Gordon answers Rob’s rage at Scots being viewed negatively by saying: “You can’t help it, Rob. If folk are to get on in the world nowadays, away from the ploughshafts and out of the pleater, they must use the English, orra though it be” (157, italics in original). The need to speak English in order to advance in the world and better one’s own life provides a dilemma for the characters. According to Catherine and David Matheson the stigma against Scots still exists today as “Scots is the language of the unsophisticated, the uneducated, the unserious” (217) and Reid sees the imposition of a new identity as a result of the Union in its “suppressing the native identity and driving it inward to become a secret, private self” (51). The farmers in Kinraddie have no particular need to keep their Scots tongue or thoughts to themselves, but going to school outside of her home Chris is faced with the discrimination towards Scots.

It might be attractive to some readers to consider Gibbon’s use of language in *Sunset Song* as a way of creating an authentic depiction of rural Scottish society, and while perhaps this is to some extent true, there are more reasons behind this choice. It is notable that while Gibbon does make use of Scots, he does so in a way that makes it relatively easy for those unfamiliar with Scots to discern what he means. Preceding *Sunset Song* Gibbon leaves a note
for the reader, where he eloquently draws a comparison between Scots and English by using Dutch and German as an example:

If the great Dutch language disappeared from literary usage and a Dutchman wrote in German a story of the Lekside peasants, one may hazard he would ask and receive a certain latitude and forbearance in his usage of German. He might import into his pages some score or so untranslatable words and idioms – untranslatable except in their context and setting; he might mould in some fashion his German to the rhythms and cadence of the kindred speech that his peasants speak. Beyond that, in fairness to his hosts, he hardly could go: to see effect by a spray of apostrophes would be both impertinence and mis-translation.

The courtesy that the hypothetical Dutchman might receive from German a Scot may invoke from the great English tongue. (n.p.)

Gibbon’s note makes it seem as if in part he does this to depict the peasantry in an accurate light but he is also in part showing deference to English, or at the very least there is an understanding that English is the primary language of literature and that for his story to be heard and understood there is a necessity to accommodate. In *The Empire Writes Back* the second stage of literary production within the frame of post-colonialism is literature “produced ‘under imperial licence’ by ‘natives’ or ‘outcasts’” (Ashcroft et al. 5). While the explanations offered by Ashcroft et al. go along a different route, referring more to education and means of producing literary works, Gibbon’s note almost feels like a plea to English speakers to be considerate of the fact that he makes use of Scots, however sparse his usage might be. Gibbon, much like his protagonist, had to consider the two identities.

Having to choose between being English (or British) and being Scottish cleaves Chris Guthrie’s identity into two: the English Chris and the Scottish Chris. The former is the dominant personality in the first chapter of *Sunset Song*, the Chris who wishes to go to school and become a school teacher; she is the one who Chris feels she needs to become if she ever wishes to escape the farming life. Despite her ambitions, and the split between her English and Scottish self, Chris longs for “Scots words to tell to [her] heart … the toil of [her parents’] days and unendingly their fight” while at times she feels English, and uses the “English words so sharp and clean and true… till they slid so smooth from [her] throat [she] knew they could never say anything that was worth saying at all” (41-2). Chris is torn between the two worlds, for they offer different kinds of relief. One speaks to her heart, like
Scots seems to do, while the other speaks to the rational mind where the undeniable attraction of raising one’s status calls to her. The need to choose is partly taken away from Chris, as when her mother poisons herself and the youngest children Chris is forced to take on her mother’s domestic role, and while at first Chris accepts her newfound role as the caretaker of Blawearie out of societal pressure she eventually embraces the life she had once thought to leave. This is at least implied when the bodies of her mother and siblings are laid out and Mistress Munro says: “You’ll be leaving the College now... You’ll find little time for dreaming and dirt when you’re keeping the house at Blawearie” (71, italics in original). Eventually Chris learns to love the land and the way of the crofter, particularly when she comes to the realization that while the life of people are fleeting moments in the grand scheme of things, the only thing that truly endures is the land.

The past and the future represent another form of duality in Sunset Song, and for good reason. Since the industrial era, the social makeup of the British Isles was changing rapidly, and the turn of the twentieth century saw more changes as soon the First World War swept across Europe. Chris Guthrie can be said to be of the new generation, although perhaps it is more fitting to say that she is between generations. Long Rob of the Mill, Chae Strachan and even Ewan Tavensdale represent the old Scotland, and with their deaths in the war comes the death of the old way of life, or as Reverend Colquohoun says at the end of Sunset Song: “With them we may say there died a thing older than themselves, these were the Last of the Peasants, the last of the Old Scots Folk” (254, italics in original). The names of the men of Kinraddie who died in the First World War are inscribed upon a standing stone that stands on a hill, a befitting place for the names of the last of a particular kind of folk, as the standing stones are remnants of a time long passed. Wittig sees the standing stones as symbols of a time “before kings and culture and classes” which “perverted the natural disposition of man” (331). From Gibbon’s writing, he concludes that “we must regain [those] essential innate, unspoilt roots of life before [they] are able to find a way out” (ibid.). While this is an attractive reading of Sunset Song, it is contradictory to the view Chris has of the past and particularly of the people of the past:

And then a queer thought came to her there in the drooked fields, that nothing endured at all, nothing but the land she passed across, tossed and turned and perpetually changed below the hands of the crofter folk since the oldest of them had set the Standing Stones by the loch of Blawearie [...] sea and sky and the folk who wrote and fought and were learnéd, teaching and saying and praying, they lasted but
as a breath, a mist of fog in the hills, but the land was forever, it moved and changed below you, but was forever, you were close to it and it to you, not at a bleak remove it held you and hurted you. (122-3)

This sentiment is repeated throughout *Sunset Song* and it emphasizes the fact that the people of the past are gone and dead, and that in order to continue the process of progression and improvement of life in Scotland it is not beneficial to lament over the past. The only thing that truly endures from the past is the land.

The Scottish Literary Renaissance aimed to banish the romanticism of the past, and the troubling effect it might have had on the Scottish people. Baker says that *A Scots Quair* as a whole “raises the specter of a Golden Age, known in part through fiction and romance, only to question its validity in the present” (45). In the prologue to *Sunset Song* Gibbon shows the reader the history of Kindraddie and its inhabitants, blending historical accuracy with fictional stories. This blending of fact and fiction certainly seems intentional, as it suggests that while the history might be mostly accurate it is tainted by a fantastical narrative that is endeared by those in the present. In his discussion on the Scottish Renaissance writers, Valdes-Miyares says that the Renaissance “was precisely about not being trapped in national myths, such as Calvinist determinism, Rabbie Burns or Jacobitism: it was rather about criticising them and moving forward” (138). This view is reflected in Chris; she recognizes that the past has gone, and that while the stories still exist it is not worthwhile to dwell on them too much. Chris’s observations in *Sunset Song* reinforce the view that there is a need to let go of the past. In the case of Kinraddie, the past is in the beginning of *Sunset Song* still alive within the crofting community, and in the end it has finally died with those who went to war and did not come back. Chris recognizes that not only will things change in the future, but they need to change. During Chris and Ewan’s wedding there is a discussion on the progress of farming, and while Chae sees the machines as man’s friend because of its potential to free the working man from dirty work, Long Rob is skeptical, as he calls out “that he’d like right well to see the damned machine that would muck […] a pigsty” (157). Chae is another character who sees the benefits of the future and of change, rather than choosing to keep to a past that is rapidly going out of date. In an essay Gibbon wrote with MacDiarmid he wrote that “the ancient, strange, whirlimagig of the generations that enslaved the Scots peasantry for centuries is broke” (qtd. in Tange, 249), which Tange sees as “encapsulating [the] process of inevitable change” (ibid.). While characters like Long Rob might seem wary of the changes that are taking place, characters such as Chris and Chae reflect a view that
change is inevitable, and if the aforementioned quote is anything to go by, they reflect Gibbon’s view that change, while perhaps difficult or suspicious, is instrumental in positive social change.

_Sunset Song_ deals with the crofting community, which is mostly composed of lower or working class people. While there are not many prominent characters of the higher class, the issue of social status and inequality is recurrent throughout the novel. This issue has many different manifestations, from the use of language to the budding socialism. In _A Scots Quair_ as a whole there is a strong contrast of classes, and while arguably it receives more attention in the latter two novels in the trilogy, issues revolving around class, and the contrast of the classes, is present in _Sunset Song_. Language and class are intimately connected in _Sunset Song_, seen in the struggle Chris has between her Scottish and English identity, as well as in the Gordons, one of the many families living in Kinraddie. The Gordons are a family in Kinraddie who clearly aspire to ascend in class, marked by their use of English. Gibbon makes it clear that their efforts to use English are somewhat artificial, and that at the very least Mistress Gordon is putting on a false mask. When she is speaking to Chae about her son, who has been wounded, both mentally and physically, in the war she weeps “uncovered, her braveness and her Englishness all fair gone” (203). However, despite the fact that they are clearly not fully English, by the end of the novel there is a permanent change in Mistress Gordon and her husband. In the Epilogue to _Sunset Song_ the Gordons were “fell gentry and all” and one could not “get within a mile of the Upperhill without [hearing] a blast of English, so fine and genteel” (245). There is a tone of discontent with their development, as those not working on the Gordon lands would receive questions about their clothing and whether they all go to the academy. It is implied that the Gordons are seen as pretentious, not only because of the fact that they put on English airs following their upward movement in class, but also because of their use of English, and Tange emphasizes that the Gordons are “seen as outsiders to Kinraddie” (“Condition of Scotland”, 249). Because of their wish to elevate their social status, the Gordons are opportunistic and are able to capitalize on the war and move upwards in the hierarchy. Their image is further blighted when it is revealed that old Gordon dissolved the ploughmen’s Union, which he was “right proud” of (245). Of course with changing practices in agriculture, ploughmen were perhaps increasingly obsolete at the time; yet it seems tasteless to dissolve one, especially while they are still being employed.

The association with class and Englishness is accentuated with the Gordons’s daughter, Maggie Jean. Unlike her parents, she has “no English airs” (246) and when there is
a general election, Maggie Jean works against her parents and tries to garner votes for a Labour party member in a General Election, much to the chagrin of her parents and brother. It appears that Gibbon associated the Labour party with being Scottish, at least considering the fact that Maggie’s family, with their English airs, are vexed by her efforts to gain them votes. If the Labour party’s position in Scotland’s politics is considered during the time *Sunset Song*’s epilogue takes place, the association between Labour and Scottishness is strengthened. Lynch asserts that in 1918 “Labour fought the election in Scotland on two distinctively Scottish planks: ‘The Self-Determination of the Scottish People’ and ‘The Complete Restoration of the Land of Scotland to the Scottish People’” (433). While the Labour party candidate does not win the election like Maggie Jean hopes, she rebels against her parents by deciding to marry a Labour doctor. While her father is against the marriage, Maggie implies that she is with child, and to avoid public shame she manages to coerce her parents into rushing a marriage. It is the Scottish Gordon, Maggie, who comes out victorious and seems to have a better chance at a good life, at least in comparison to her other sister, Nellie who “for all her English [would] sleep cold and unhandled, an old maid all her days” (247). Perhaps Gibbon is suggesting that if it is impossible to win outright, it might at the very least do the Scots good to find their way to even the smallest of victories. Scots who are loyal to themselves, rather than choosing the identity that is associated with higher status, might perhaps enjoy a greater life satisfaction than those that put on English airs.

Education is continually associated with class in *Sunset Song*, and even within the education institutions students receive different treatment depending on their status. Chris’s drawing teacher, Kinloch, shows clear favoritism towards students who are better off in terms of socioeconomic status. Chris resents this, as she notes that one of the girls favored by Kinloch has “a voice like a nail on a slate,” that her drawing is not really worth the favoritism and that it is “her father’s silver” that has more to do with it (52). Kinloch is not the only teacher who favors the children from better off families, and Chris notes that despite their tendency to seek elevation in social standing the teachers are mostly “sons and daughters of poor bit crofters and fishers themselves” and that they felt “safe and unfrightened, far from that woesome pit of brose and breet and sheetless beds in which they had been reared” (ibid.). While Chris shows distaste for the teachers’ behavior, she also shows a keen understanding of their favoritism. Perhaps it is because she herself has dreamed of getting away from the crofting life, to get away from the toil of working the earth and the coarseness of the people. Unlike the teachers, however, Chris does not continue down this path in *Sunset Song*,
although the deviation from the path is not her choice to begin with. Through the depiction of education and the teachers Chris encounters there is a display of how people are treated differently based on their socioeconomic position. Those who are well off, or enjoy greater privileges in general, receive special treatment and while the most striking example is made in a drawing class, where Chris does not excel, the reader gets the sense that this is likely the case in all of the classes. Gibbon contrasts the treatment of different classes, and here the duality manifests itself in the different experience of the upper and lower classes.

Chae Strachan is one of the characters who have a strong socialist voice. If there is anyone who is committed to the betterment of society and to equality between people, it is Chae. His strife for equality even stretches into his intra-familial relations as he has his daughter, Marget, call him Chae instead of father or dad. This is an “unco-like thing to do” (53) but Chris speculates that the reason behind it is his socialism. There is a sense that Chae treats his daughter not quite as a child that needs to obey him, but as the budding future. If his view of the changes that are underway in *Sunset Song* and Chae’s opinion on them, it is possible to see him as representing the past, and by extension Marget as a symbol of the future. He envisions a future where the rich and poor are equals, and he sends Marget to be educated in an effort to prepare her for that future. His choice to send his daughter to school while wanting equality between the rich and the poor is questioned a couple of times in the novel by characters who represent the farming community and the peasantry class. The characters who question him are aware of the fact that those that get education are at the very least tempted to turn their backs on the life they come from, as exhibited in the teachers that Chris encounters at the academy, but Chae sees things in a different light: “*Education’s the thing the working man wants to put him up level with the Rich*” (91, italics in original). Here is perhaps another example of duality, albeit not the most striking or obvious case. Education not only plays a role in educating the working class and giving them better ammunition for their fight for equality, but it can also be used by the poor to elevate their status so that they eventually turn their backs on the life they once lived in order to live a more comfortable life.

The theme of duality does not only cover class, language, or the past and the future, but it stretches into the differences between male and female. In *The Empire Writes Back* it is pointed out that there are interesting parallels between postcolonial and feminist theory: “both seek to reinstate the marginalized in the face of the dominant” (Ashcroft et al. 173). When we consider *Sunset Song* this view appears to hold some truth. One of the things that is often praised in regard to *Sunset Song* and the trilogy in general, is the realistic and powerful
depiction of a woman in early twentieth century Scotland (Flood). While Chris Guthrie’s experience is that of a rural Scot, it is also reflect the realities, and position of a woman in rural Scotland, and *Sunset Song* offers what feels like a realistic representation of what a woman’s life would have been. The reader is made aware of the differences between being a man and a woman, the freedom which one offers and the obligations that both roles entail. There is no possibility of one becoming another, at least not in the times that Chris Guthrie lives in, and while the two genders are able to coexist peacefully, it is made clear that there is a rift that separates them, one that continually creates friction.

The reality of being a woman in early twentieth century rural Scotland is accentuated with the case of Chris’s mother, who ends up poisoning herself and her youngest children when she realizes that she is once again pregnant. It is made clear to the reader that she does not want any more children, but her position as a wife during a period where women were still expected to be for the most part subservient to their man renders her powerless against her husband’s sexual advances. The power distribution in the relationship between man and woman in *Sunset Song* is not dissimilar to the relation between a colonized country and its colonizer. Throughout history wives have generally been expected to obey their men, look to them for guidance and permission, effectively becoming a possession upon marriage, and the same could be said for a colonized country. Following the Union of Parliaments in 1707 it can be said that England gained a considerable amount of control over Scotland, and the Scottish people have been forced to bend to the wishes of the English government (although with varying results). There was little opportunity for a Scotsman to rise to power in politics if he did not favor English ways, and Keith Brown points out that the “underlying English agenda at court was that for the Scot to be acceptable they had to become more like Englishmen” (548). Women who wanted to take on a man’s role in any capacity were often disregarded because of their gender, since being a woman was to be inferior, just as Brown points out that for a Scot to be acceptable he had to become more English, since England’s northern neighbors were somehow inferior. Even Chris feels the need to be more English when she wishes to escape the life of a crofter, to be educated and become a teacher, although ultimately, she chooses to remain a Scot.

If *Kidnapped* can be seen to follow the adopt phase of post-colonial literature, then *Sunset Song* can be seen to follow the adapt phase. There is no universal moral to be found in the novel; it is the story of a nation coming to terms with its situation, coming to terms with its history which is precisely that: history. In the discussion on *Kidnapped* Fanon was quoted
saying that early “in a national liberation struggle the native writer is addressing primarily the colonizer” which seems to be the case in *Kidnapped*, and Fanon found that “the moment when the native writer begins to address ‘his own people’ is an important break” in the struggle for liberation (qtd. in Goulimari, 282). It is not impossible for readers across the globe to find a message in Gibbon’s work, since after all every country has a past that may be idealized and anyone can find themselves struggling with finding an identity that feels true to their heart. However, considering the fact that *Sunset Song* was written during the Scottish Literary Renaissance about a Scot, dealing with issues that are particular to Scotland, it is reasonable to assume that *Sunset Song* is intended to carry a weightier message for the Scottish people. However, Gibbon did simplify and limit his usage of Scots considerably, so it is evident that he is not just addressing Scots. Gibbon acknowledges the struggle the Scottish people face, and he empathizes with having to choose between identities. In the case of *Sunset Song* it is clear that there is no possibility of both identities existing within one simultaneously: while there is an English Chris and a Scottish Chris they are often at odds and sometimes contradictory to each other, and in the end Chris chooses the Scottish Chris, leaving the English Chris nothing but an occasional voice.

*Sunset Song* has been heralded as a relatively realistic and moving depiction of Scottish life in the first third of the twentieth century although there is much more to it than just realism. Gibbon effectively brings to the surface the duality that follows the Scottish people, whether it be through the languages that they speak or the struggle between a glorious past and a bleak present. Yet there is no real hope for these opposing aspects to reconcile fully, as it seems in *Sunset Song* that one side will always take precedence over the other. There is more than one Chris, but in the end, she settles on a single identity, preferring to be Scottish rather than English. Even though the two identities Chris struggles with exist within one person it does at times seem like they will never fully understand each other’s position. The theme of duality in *Sunset Song* is generally that there is a fundamental rift between the opposing sides, where one side will always take priority over another, a position which is relatively understandable given the social and political climate of Scotland in the 1930s. The depiction of duality in Scottish literature has shifted since the late nineteenth century, and by the 1990s it has morphed once more, making duality into a more mobile concept.
5.1 Irvine Welsh
Irvine Welsh is known as the “poet laureate of the chemical generation” (Morace, 1). His novels often revolve around the darker sides of life: drugs, addicts, and the ugliness of lowlife existence. Welsh was born 1961 in Leith, a port area of Edinburgh which would become the scene for his first and most successful novel *Trainspotting*. However, when he was four years old his family relocated to Muirhouse. Up until 1978 Welsh worked as a television repairman and other menial jobs before making the move from Edinburgh to London where he would pursue his interest in punk music.

In London Welsh was acquainted with aspects of life that could be classified as low: he “occupied various squats and bedsits, experimented with drugs, got into trouble in a small but persistent way, and sang and played guitar in […] bands” (Morace, 8). Given these experiences it is no surprise that he has managed to effectively depict a life of drugs and debauchery. However Welsh did not stay in this life for long, and Morace states that he went on to become a budding entrepreneur, eventually leading him to an opportunity to pursue an MBA degree.

Welsh began to notice that many of the people he knew in Leith and Muirhouse were using heroin, some dead from AIDS related causes while others were HIV positive. In an interview with *FEED Magazine* Welsh said that he “began [Trainspotting] as a way of trying to figure out the puzzles of drug dependency and the explosion of HIV in Edinburgh” (qtd. in Morace, 10). This becomes evident when one reads through the book, particularly when a chapter is titled “Scotland Takes Drugs in Psychic Defense”. Although this refers to a change Iggy Pop makes to his lyrics during a concert it is worth noting since Welsh chose it as the chapter’s title.

Morace emphasizes that every work of literature is “more a cultural product than an autonomous aesthetic object” but he argues that “few works are quite as rewarding when read from a cultural studies approach as *Trainspotting*” (19). Beyond Welsh’s experience with drug culture and general delinquency, he also brings forth issues of poverty and difficulties in the areas he writes about. The massive unemployment in Leith leads to bored and frustrated youth who have little better to do with their time than drink, do drugs, and commit crimes. There is a sense of general discontent, much of which could be seen as a byproduct of Thatcher’s conservative government. Hearn points out that during the Conservative government’s rule, from 1979 to 1997, “the Scottish Office was increasingly perceived as the
administrative arm of a government [...] imposing often unwanted social and economic policies” (756) and Morace agrees, stating that “Thatcher’s economic policies continued to affect Scotland adversely, further marginalizing it” (19). In his discussion on the politics of Scotland when Thatcher was in power, he asserts that “the Thatcher government had failed to grasp the opportunity to recast a new, wider British politics” (448, italics in original) and he emphasizes that “to many Scots, it seemed like a little Englander administration” (ibid.). In light of the social and political situation of Scotland in the latter half of the twentieth century, the underlying reason for the discontent becomes clear. The Scottish voice seems to have been ignored under Thatcher’s government, and while it is a source of dissatisfaction it is impossible to ignore the disconcerting truth that it was Scots that got them into this underprivileged position to begin with, via the Union.

5.2 Trainspotting (1993)
In 1993 Irvine Welsh published his debut novel, Trainspotting. It centers on Mark Renton and his friends, giving a glimpse into the life of heroin addicts and the low culture of Edinburgh. Trainspotting was a massive success, and before long it was made into a play and in 1996 the movie came out. It might be tempting to read Trainspotting solely as a product of the punk culture that emerged in the mid-1970s, especially considering Welsh’s involvement with the punk music scene, yet when gleaned carefully it is possible to see the familiar theme of duality in the novel. Duality is manifested in various forms in Trainspotting, from a state of soberness to addiction, and between English and Scots. Mark Renton, the main protagonist of Trainspotting, continually moves between these dualities, exhibiting a certain fluid identity where he is capable of being in both categories depending on what the situation calls for. The dualities in Trainspotting are not only external, as they are in Kidnapped, nor is there a definite need to choose one or another as in Sunset Song. Trainspotting embraces duality, encouraging Scots to make use of the dualities available to them in order to lead a more successful life.

Much like in Gibbon’s Sunset Song language plays a crucial part in Trainspotting although arguably language is far more prominent in Trainspotting. About two thirds of the novel’s chapters are narrated in Scots, usually from the first-person perspective, leaving ten chapters where the narrative language is Standard English. The chapters that are narrated in Standard English are usually narrated from a third person perspective, creating a certain distancing experience for the reader compared to the other chapters in the novel, not only
because of the change in perspective but also because of the change in language. By using these trends in the use of language in narration, Welsh creates a sense of otherness with his employment of English: the reader has the sense of being outside looking in, while the chapters that are narrated in Scots give the feeling of being inside looking out. Williams points out that some of the chapters written from the third person perspective contain characters who are removed from the low life that Renton and his friends live. Specifically, he cites the chapters where Nina, Renton’s cousin, and Stevie, a former friend, are the main focal point of the chapter. Williams states that “while the thoughts of both characters are rendered indirectly in Standard English, they speak in Scots, as if their distance from their surroundings were paralleled by an inner division, a part of them having gone south to England never to return” (228). Stevie may have literally gone to England and left a part of himself behind, but Nina is still a teenager who is not heading in any particular direction. However, it is possible to see Nina and Stevie existing on opposite ends on a scale alongside Renton. Stevie is living a post-lowlife existence, one which has isolated him from people he once thought of as friends and was able to relate to, while Nina, on the other hand, can be said to be in a pre-lowlife phase. Whether or not she will go down the same path as her cousin is unclear, but her position as being outside the lowlife existence of Renton and his mates can be somewhat reflected in the use of Standard English.

David Mitchell, or Davie, is the only character whose chapters are narrated from the first person point of view while maintaining a predominantly Standard English vocabulary (except when he speaks). The reader does not feel like Davie is as much a part of the core group and this, coupled with his university degree and steady job, sets him apart from the rest of his friends. He does not condone the use of heroin, and when he contracts HIV he is noticeably annoyed that he was infected while Renton had somehow managed to escape despite his precarious habits. Davie’s two chapters do not give the same sense of outside-looking-in as do the chapters told from a third person point of view; however, they do create a certain distance between him and the other characters in the novel. If Nina and Stevie’s chapters are written in Standard English because they do not quite share the same repellent lifestyle as Renton and his friends do, then it makes sense that Davie’s narrative voice is to a large extent in Standard English. After all, Davie has a university degree, and Scots is associated with the unsophisticated and uneducated (C. Matheson and D. Matheson, 217). However, his language gives a sense of detachment, particularly in the chapter “Bad Blood”, where Davie aims to seek revenge against the man who infected a former girlfriend with HIV.
through rape. The distance is only strengthened by the fact that the only times Davie resorts to using Scots, this is in connection with emotions; when he refers to his parents he sometimes uses “auld man” or “auld girl”, or when he recounts Donna’s story to her rapist. While Standard English seems to be Davie’s choice in general he still falls victim to the idea that English is the language of the rational, while Scots is the language of the heart, much like is seen in *Sunset Song*.

In the final chapter of *Trainspotting* Renton and friends head off to London to sell off drugs they have acquired. While most of the chapters involving Renton and his main group of friends are narrated from the perspective of some of them, the final chapter is not. This evokes a similar sense of detachment as the other chapters that are told from the third person point of view. On the spur of the moment, Renton decides to take the money and leave his friends, knowing that as long as Begbie is around it would be precarious for him to return. This chapter may easily have been written in the first-person without disrupting the flow of the novel; however, in choosing the third person perspective coupled with the heavy use of English, Welsh not only manages to create a sense of distance between the reader and the characters, but he also gives a sense of distance between the characters. In the first half of the novel the majority of the chapters are told from the first-person perspective, with only an occasional chapter narrated in Standard English from an outsider’s point of view, but towards the end of the novel it is either Renton narrating or simply the third person perspective. The reader is distanced from the other characters, and any sense of harmony within the group of friends that may have been present earlier in the novel dissipates as the perspective shifts. It is possible to view Renton as going into a post-lowlife phase, not because he is turning his back on drugs or crime, but because he is removing himself from the life he had known in Leith. The shift between English and Scots in the various chapters is perhaps the most obvious use of language in *Trainspotting*, its effect being rather palpable.

Considering the heavy usage of Scots, and the few exceptional chapters where Standard English is the main language, it seems fitting to deduce that *Trainspotting* follows the transition Barry mentions. The last phase of the transition is the *adept* phase, where Barry says that the writers “remake the form to their own specification” (193). Arguably *Trainspotting* is not innovative in its narration, as after all it is not the first novel to be written unscrupulously in Scots, but it is still an incredibly successful novel considering the fact for anyone unfamiliar with Scots might at first struggle with understanding the language. It is also noteworthy that there is no glossary of Scots provided, while this can often be found in
Scottish novels where Scots appears (whether prominent or occasional). Ashcroft et al. assert that “the choice of leaving words untranslated in post-colonial texts is a political act, because while translation is not inadmissible in itself, glossing gives the translated word, and thus the ‘receptor’ culture, the higher status” (65) and Welsh cements this idea in an interview with *FEED* where he says that writing in Scots is both a stylistic choice and a political one (O'Shea and Shapiro). In the with *FEED* it is mentioned that the American edition of *Trainspotting* came with a glossary of Scottish terms, and Welsh said that he felt it “was a bit patronizing” and that even if it was difficult to understand what exactly is meant, it is possible to figure out through context. Ironically, Welsh points out in the interview that Scots have trouble with understanding *Trainspotting* to begin with as well. Welsh utilizes Scots not only as a way to give the characters’ voices that feel authentically Scottish to the reader, but he also uses it to create distance. Perhaps this might not be an innovative technique, but it does feel fresh and Welsh is successful in using language to create a sense of detachment. The choice to have the last chapter narrated in Standard English, from a third person perspective when Welsh could have easily narrated it from Renton’s perspective, is likely a conscious choice, reflecting the fact that Renton is moving away from the low life he has known and into another stage.

On more than one occasion Mark Renton demonstrates his ability to shift easily between English and Scots. When speaking to authority figures, such as judges or potential employers, and even tourists, Renton speaks in English, either ridding his speech of Scots entirely or using it sparingly. Renton is not only bilingual, but in a sense, he is bicultural. He demonstrates a keen understanding of the position of Scots in the social hierarchy and he uses his linguistic capabilities to ease his navigation through social spheres. Renton is capable of even fooling the reader: while it is obvious that he is not as simple as some of his other friends, in the beginning Renton manages to maintain an image of a relatively uneducated junkie with perhaps a rather acute understanding of society. Yet Renton proves that he is not just an empty-headed junkie when he exhibits his understanding of the philosopher Kierkegaard in front of a judge and manages to escape a jail sentence while Spud has to spend ten months locked away. Spud’s mother lays the blame on Renton, yet it is clear to the reader that Renton manages to avoid a sentence by deploying his knowledge about people and power structures. He demonstrates his knowledge, but stops himself from rambling on because “[authorities] hate a smart cunt…” and he reminds himself to “think deference” (208). Renton understands that the authorities want to hear English, or at least there seems to
be some notion that speaking in Scots in a courtroom would hurt one’s case rather than help it. Renton’s strategic choice works, and he gets off with just having to report on his situation and seeing social workers, while Spud goes to jail. Contrary to Renton, Spud on the other hand answers the judge’s questions with honesty, putting no thought into whether he is speaking Scots or English, or what effect his words might have. On the surface this scene portrays two characters needing to choose between registers, one failing to do so while the other is successful in navigating social hierarchies, but it also runs deeper into the issue of identity. The reader sees the man who chooses to stick to his Scottish identity, or does not think to alter his presentation of self or choice of language in the very least, punished, while the man that moves freely between the two identities is able to shrewdly reduce his punishment. This suggests an interesting idea; that perhaps the Scottish should try and reconcile the double identity, or at the very least recognize that there is little possibility that the two will ever be fully separate given how entangled the Scots and their southern neighbors have become.

Renton is not the only character who switches between English and Scots to his advantage, although he arguably makes better use of it than other characters. Sick Boy alters his speech with women, depending on what he deems necessary for each woman he meets. When he deals with a young prostitute he speaks Scots unabashedly, and when he deals with tourists, such as the backpacker the friends come across on their way to London. Renton makes note of not only a change in language but “voice modulation and accent […] change” (419-20). Like Renton, Sick Boy shows an understanding of how people’s perception of him depends not only on how he looks, but on how he speaks as well. Both Renton and Sick Boy are capable of adapting to different situations which ultimately makes them more successful than their friends.

Often when the characters of Trainspotting speak in Scots, they are met with the disapproval of those around them. For instance, during the bus ride in the final chapter Sick Boy notices two old women who are regularly “looking around with disapproving expressions and making clucking references to ‘the language’” (418). It could be that they are referring to obscenities, as Renton and his friends generally have no qualms with using expletives; however, considering the prominent role of language in Trainspotting it would be no surprise if they were referring to Scots. After all Scots is associated with the unsophisticated, the uneducated: in general, it is associated with people who are in some way undesirable if one wants to maintain a middle-class respectability. During a train ride, Renton
and Begbie take seats that are reserved for ticket holders, and when the owners finally board the train Renton speaks in English, avoiding any Scots words and using a relatively formal vocabulary, a performance which Begbie enjoys. However, Renton’s ability to switch between languages is not successful in this instance: the ticketholders refuse to defer to Renton’s language and it is Begbie and his abrasive Scots that allows them to keep their seats.

Renton’s hybrid identity extends beyond his fluidity between English and Scots, and throughout *Trainspotting* he goes between two cultures. When Renton is sober he is bored out of his mind, and when he is using he is able to look at the inane existence of life in Leith without annoyance. Despite his ability to go from one state to another, Renton is never fully a part of any group. When he is sober he is separated from his family because of his past addictions and from his friends because of his sobriety, and when he is using he becomes an outsider from general society while never having a fully valid place amongst his group of friends because, as stated early on in the novel, there are “Nae friends in this game. Jist associates” (7). Even within his own family Renton is caught between two cultures: his mother comes from an Irish Catholic family while his father’s family are Scottish Protestants. Renton does not declare himself to be Irish at any particular point, but it is made clear that he does not identify with his father’s family at all. When Renton’s brother, Billy, is being buried his father’s family praise the fact that Billy died in service of his country, which Mark sees as “servile […] crap” (265). While Renton obviously prefers his mother’s side, the reader gets the sense that being torn between the two is unpleasant and even detrimental to both one’s sense of self and one’s relationship with others, and in this particular instance the need to choose between either side results in a rift between Mark and his brother, one which is never fully reconciled.

The dynamic between Renton and Billy is worth a second look. The two brothers have never had a good relationship, Billy often antagonizing Renton when they were children. At one point Renton recounts a memory of being held down by Billy and forced to say that the Hearts are the better team. While this might seem like simple sibling antagonism, it is worth noting that the Hibs, or the Hibernians, is a football club founded by Irish immigrants, while the Hearts of Midlothian are a club formed in Edinburgh. Hearts, according to FIFA, is an “establishment side” while the Hibs are “supported by the city’s poor and largely Irish working-class immigrants” (“135 years of Edinburgh enmity”). It is perhaps tempting for anyone reading *Trainspotting* to gloss over the football rivalry as a petty
dispute, but considering the associations that follow each club, and the characters who support each of them, it becomes clear that here is another example of duality. Most of the Hibs supporters in *Trainspotting* are, while not wholly good, more sympathetic. Renton and his friends might abuse substances and commit crimes, but they are a product of a bleak and depressing environment. The choice of two identities within Mark’s family is akin to the choice of two identities Scots have to choose from: Scottish, or British. There are those that would argue that British identity includes Scottish identity, but as Reid points out it was an entirely new identity to the Scots at the time of its introduction, and as the politics of the United Kingdom would increasingly ignore the Scottish voice (Hearn, 755) it comes as no surprise that Mark would reject the British identity. However, Renton does not only reject the British identity, but the Scottish one as well: “Ah’ve never really felt Scottish either, though. Scotland the brave, ma arse; Scotland the shitein cunt. We’d throttle the life oot ay each other fir the privilege ay rimmin some English aristocrat’s piles” (284). Mark and Billy have two identities to choose from due to their parents’ heritage, and they each choose separate sides. MacLeod sees this as a metaphor for Scotland’s condition, where Billy aligns himself “with the hegemonic power, Mark with “rebel” values” (99). Then it comes as no surprise that Billy would join the army or support the establishment club Hearts while Mark is inherently against most of the dominant culture prescribed by what might be called the hegemonic power. Mark’s contempt for Scotland is understandable when he has the Irish to look up to, since after all the Irish “hud the bottle tae win thir country b’ack, or at least maist ay it” (240-41). Mark is bothered by Scotland’s national image, as it is based on stories long passed while ignoring the less admirable sides of its history.

Throughout the novel Welsh also highlights another darker side that is often ignored, particularly by outsiders, and that is the less desirable parts of Edinburgh. MacLeod points out that *Trainspotting* is “a tale of two cities, Leith and Edinburgh” where Welsh repeatedly “imagines this relationship through Edinburgh’s tourist industry, problematizing the competing claims of Edinburgh’s wealthy residents, Edinburgh’s wealthy tourists, and Leith’s marginalized population” (90). When Begbie and Renton come across two women from Canada on a train ride, the tourists begin to talk about their experience of Edinburgh, much to Begbie’s chagrin: “These burds ur gaun oantay us aboot how fucking beautiful Edinburgh is, and how lovely the fuckin castle is oan the hill ower the gairdins n aw that shite. That’s aw they tourists cunts ken though” (146-7). This brings attention to a very obvious truth: tourists mostly only see the desirable part of a country, and are ignorant of the
darker realities. Begbie recounts a story of a woman who came over to Edinburgh, knowing mostly Gaelic. When asked where she wanted to live she mentioned the Princes Street, but she was simply laughed at and then put in some substandard housing facing the factory. The poor have little or no choice as to what they get, at least not in the Edinburgh that Welsh writes about. The romanticizing of Edinburgh sickens the lads of Leith, as they are all too familiar with the less desirable parts of the city. Leith was not always a part of Edinburgh, but in the early twentieth century it was merged with Edinburgh, against the wishes of the inhabitants (“Timeline”). The merge did not benefit Leith, as the central train station was eventually shut down following it, and the area would eventually begin to lack opportunities. Welsh hints at this throughout the novel, not only through his portrayal of Renton and his friends’ habitual unemployment, but also through the unemployment of some educated characters, such as Renton’s cousin Geoff who was “on the dole” following his recent graduation.

The two sides to Edinburgh, the beautiful city that the tourists and wealthy know, as opposed to the impoverished area of Leith, result in tension between the main characters and the various outsiders they come across. Most of the characters are either downright hostile to tourists or the wealthy, and if they are not they still harbor a general sense of suspicion. One of Renton’s friends, Kelly, works at a restaurant where she encounters a diverse range of customers. A group of men come in who Kelly can tell “by their accents, dress and bearing that they are middle to upper-middle-class English [...] white-settler types” (377) but she retracts her judgment. The men are rude and patronizing, eliminating Kelly’s will to treat them with kindness. The wariness and dislike that the main characters have towards outsiders, whether wealthy residents or tourists, is understandable especially when the political climate of Scotland at the time is considered. Crawford points out that during the Thatcherite government, Scots felt “acutely disenfranchised” and that the most striking voices in recent Scottish writing come from “people who in terms of class, health, gender, nationality, race, language, age or other factors, seem socially marginal, apparently ignored” (658). The citizens of Leith, and the junkies that Trainspotting revolves around are certainly likely to be a part of that marginalized group. If their groups are continually marginalized by the ruling government it comes as no surprise that they will actively resent and dislike the groups that are heard or tended to. Here the duality is not just between the two sides of Edinburgh, but two sides in terms of political worth. Kelly is at first wary of succumbing to blind disdain towards those deemed more worthy politically by the government, but once they prove themselves to be as prejudiced as Renton and friends claim, she allows herself to revolt against them by mixing various bodily fluids into the food she serves them.
There is also an interesting contrast of characters in *Trainspotting*. Begbie and Spud are a part of the same social circle, both speak Scots unabashedly and neither of them adjusts their behavior in social settings in an attempt to manipulate their position, but that is the extent of their similarities. When it comes to violence, they are complete opposites. Begbie is a violent man, who is always looking for a reason to start a fight or get worked up. He shows little regard for the life of others unless he can use it as an excuse to resort to violence (e.g. standing up for his friends), and he even assaults his pregnant girlfriend because she insists on knowing where he is going. He even goes as far as putting the blame on her, saying: “It’s her fuckin fault, ah’ve telt the cunt thit that’s what happens when any cunt talks tae us like that” (140). Despite his violent nature the group of friends tolerate him, partly out of fear and perhaps in part because as long as they do not set him into a fit of rage he is a man you would want to cover your back if things get tough. Spud, on the other hand, can be better described as a gentle oaf; for the most part he detests violence, even going so far as sulking when Mark and the other guys attempt to kill a squirrel. The only time Spud is willing to fight is when he feels that there is injustice, such as when his uncle, who is colored, is berated and attacked. The idea of a spectrum mentioned earlier is applicable here as well: Begbie is hyper violent while Spud is as averse to violence as he can be, and neither one of them seem inclined to change their position in the slightest. Renton is neither particularly violent, nor peaceful. He is one of the guys who wants to kill the squirrel, showing a higher capacity for violence than Spud, but he does not display the same thirst for violence that Begbie has. Renton is in between on the spectrum of violence, exhibiting a similar sense of flexibility and fluidity as he does with language.

As can be seen, Renton is often situated between two extremes, moving from one to another whenever it benefits him. Throughout the novel, he is either sober or using, speaks English or Scots, takes part in low culture or exhibits proficiency in high culture. He is the most mobile character in *Trainspotting* and it is this flexibility that allows him to successfully navigate through life with minimal trouble. While the dualities in *Trainspotting* are mostly internal, they also exist in an external sense. The perception of Edinburgh for instance is an external duality, where dissimilar social groups experience two different cities based on their socioeconomic situation. Likewise, the use of language is arguably both internal and external, as English is used more in situations when the reader is locked outside from the characters’ minds while Scots is used in a more intimate setting where the reader is in the character’s head.
6. The Manifestations of Duality

The idea of duality in Scottish literature has persisted for a near century, if Gregory Smith’s term of Caledonian Antisyzygy is considered to be the root. It may seem like an overly simplified way to examine the literary heritage of a whole country, but considering Scotland’s history and its geographical division into the Highlands and Lowlands it is at the very least worthy of examination. These three novels, *Kidnapped* by Robert Louis Stevenson, *Sunset Song* by Lewis Grassic Gibbon, and *Trainspotting* by Irvine Welsh are products of different political and cultural climates and yet duality in one form or another is present in all of them. The three novels use opposition and duality to reflect different aspects of Scottish society and culture, however, the novels vary in their treatment and depiction of duality. While it is precarious to assume that the presence of dualities in these works is a result of a conscious choice on the authors’ behalf it seems likely that the concept at the very least exists at a subconscious level.

The manifestation of dualities in these three Scottish novels has been examined and picked apart. The earliest novel, *Kidnapped*, was published in 1886 during a time when Scotland was still benefitting from the Union with England. The nineteenth century was a prosperous time for Scotland as the industrial revolution fueled the economy. It was a time for improvements and progression, and while there was still some commotion in regard to the Highlands and its inhabitants, it seems like the nineteenth century was the period where Scotland and England enjoyed their union to the fullest. It is possible to see this reflected in *Kidnapped*. The Lowlander David Balfour and his Highlander friend Alan Breck are two very different people, who hold different ideals. David is curious about the exotic Highlander at first, but it is only when his morality is offended that he sides with Alan. In the face of mutual enemies they come together and act as an effective duo. After the shipwrecking of the *Covenant* David travels through the Highlands and finds that its inhabitants, who are still suffering from the consequences of the second Jacobite Rising, which ended only six years before, are not at all the sort of people he has been led to believe.

There is an underlying suggestion from Stevenson that one should not make assumptions about someone else, especially if those assumptions are based on stereotypes. Stevenson contrasts the life that David Balfour, and by extension the life most of his readers would identify with, to the life of the Highlanders. He does not suggest that either side should change, but he does indicate that both sides have qualities that are exemplary. David and
Alan are opposites in many ways, seen, for example, in David’s aversion to violence as opposed to Alan’s proficiency with weapons, and in David’s careful treatment of money as opposed to Alan’s carelessness with it, but they do not let these differences end their cooperation. They see the benefits of their collaboration as far more valuable than the extent of their difference. If the situation of Scotland and England at the time Kidnapped was written is considered, this seems a relevant message to its readers. The Union might not have been a popular solution, and the Scots and English might disagree on various points, but if there was more good than bad to be had from their union it would benefit them to set their differences aside and cooperate.

By 1932 Scotland’s position in the Union had changed drastically. The glow of the industrial revolution had receded and Scotland was suddenly faced with economic hardships. While the Union may have brought about a period of great prosperity for Scotland in the nineteenth century, the twentieth century saw a rapid decline in fortunes. Sunset Song is the first book in Lewis Gibbon’s trilogy A Scots Quair where he leads the reader through the changing social landscape of Scotland and how its people, particularly the protagonist Chris Guthrie, cope with it. In Sunset Song the theme of duality takes on many different forms, although perhaps the most striking difference between Gibbon’s novel and Stevenson’s is that the manifestations of duality are not solely external. In the first half of the novel Chris Guthrie struggles with her own personal identity, reflected in her clashing desires. The ‘English Chris’ wishes to pursue education, to move away from the farming life and elevate the comfort of her life. Conversely the ‘Scottish Chris’ longs to work the land, to speak the language her parents and the people around her deploy, and most of all it seems she wishes to remain connected to the only thing that has been constant throughout Scotland’s history: the land. In the end, Chris has to choose between the two, as being both is seemingly impossible in her situation.

The other types of duality are mostly external. There is the question of the past and the future, a suggestion that perhaps it is best to stop idolizing the stories of glory long gone, and instead focus on moving forward. To refuse to move with the times, or a reluctance to do so, does not work. Symbolically, Gibbon kills the past when the men of Kinraddie who fought in the war do not return. Gibbon also brings to light the difference in the realities of men and women, highlighting their experiences. However, since the protagonist of Sunset Song is Chris Guthrie, a young woman, the emphasis is on the female experience, although Gibbon effectively contrasts her experience with the men around her. In general, the
opposing aspects within dualities seem to have a difficulty being mutually comprehensible. That is, while the opposing sides might have some thread in common there is a fundamental difference which sets them apart. Even with the English and Scottish Chrises there is this problem. They hold opposing views and the voices take turns, sometimes informing each other while at other times competing for the position of Chris’s main voice.

By 1993 Scotland had endured decades of being ruled by a Conservative government elected in Britain, while the dominant power in Scotland was Labour (Crawford, 658). The most captivating voices were those who were marginalized, and therefore it is understandable that Irvine Welsh produced Trainspotting. Here the most striking image of duality is found within a single character. Mark Renton does not represent one aspect of a dual whole, but instead consists of a duality where he drifts from one side to another. Renton is a hybrid; he utilizes the double identity available to him so that he can thrive in the chaotic world that he inhabits. Of course, duality is manifested in other aspects of Trainspotting as well. Duality is at times used to highlight that what is seen is usually not the whole story, as in the case of the Edinburgh that the wealthy and the tourists see as opposed to the Edinburgh that Renton and his friends are familiar with. Duality in Trainspotting is not only found in the events and characters of the novel, but also in the narrative method. Welsh, like Renton, utilizes what is available to him by using both Standard English and Scots in his narrative, employing them to create a sense of either distance or closeness. In Trainspotting, it is hybridity and fluidity that helps contribute to a successful existence. Welsh has admitted that “duality’s always been part of [his] character” (qtd. in Crawford 670), and this seems evident when Trainspotting is examined.

Despite being written decades apart these three novels, Kidnapped, Sunset Song, and Trainspotting still share common themes, and tackle similar issues. All three cast light on the situation of the marginalized. Sunset Song and Trainspotting for the most part focus on the experiences of the marginalized (women and the peasantry in Sunset Song, drug addicts and the working class in Trainspotting). Chris Guthrie is a part of a community which changes drastically in the early twentieth century, and she sees the demise of an old way of life as the tides of change wash over following the First World War. Gibbon brings to life the experience of the crofting community and the struggle the Scottish crofters endured. Trainspotting brings to light the troubles of the community of Leith, and perhaps by extension of other communities that suffered hardships in the twentieth century due to great social and political changes. It is not just the inhabitants of Leith who are the marginalized in
Trainspotting. Renton and his friends are a part of another group that has been marginalized, and still is today (albeit to a dwindling extent): drug addicts. As Welsh stated in an interview, he began Trainspotting as an exploration of “drug dependency and the explosion of HIV in Edinburgh” (qtd. in Morace, 10) and he arguably does elicit a more sympathetic perspective on the plight of addicts. It is also evident that Kidnapped casts light on the situation of the marginalized, although there is a slight difference in how this is achieved. Instead of the central character being a part of the marginalized group, the protagonist instead befriends someone from it. David Balfour is a Whig and Lowlander, perhaps not well off to begin with but still in a better position than Alan Breck. Through Alan Breck the experience of the marginalized Highlanders, and Jacobites, is brought to light in Kidnapped. Following the Jacobite risings, and well into the nineteenth century, Highlanders were looked down upon, either as uncivilized or as simply inferior. David befriends and learns to trust Alan, and he sees that life in the Highlands is not quite the wild barbaric existence that he expected. In fact, at times David even sees that the marginalized Highlanders have qualities that the Lowlanders (David’s own people) could benefit from adopting.

The shift from David Balfour encountering marginalized communities through Alan Breck to characters like Chris Guthrie and Mark Renton, who are a part of these disregarded groups, can in part be explained by the relationship between Scotland and England. As mentioned earlier, Scotland was still enjoying a relatively prosperous period when Stevenson wrote Kidnapped where there was less discontent with the Union, at least from the perspective of those who were benefitting from it. Stevenson may have wished for his readers to see and understand that the Highlanders were no worse than their southern neighbors, but perhaps to better appeal to them he chose to have a character more relatable to them as the protagonist. Following the First World War, Lynch states that the theme of “a rich south and poorer north” began to dominate “much of Britain’s social history for the rest of the twentieth century” (423). The economic difficulties, coupled with massive loss of Scottish soldiers in World War I (Lynch, 422) appear likely culprits for growing discontent with England and the Union. In the 1920s and 1930s there were a series of “concessions offered by Westminster to Scotland; each seemed to grant a measure of devolution but in reality, made its embrace all the tighter” (Lynch, 435). By the time Gibbon wrote Sunset Song it is easy to imagine that the atmosphere was tense, and with the rise of the Scottish Literary Renaissance it seems that this was very much the case with the prominent writers of the time. A shift from a more privileged character looking at the disadvantage to the voices of the marginalized being heard
is notable in Scottish fiction in the twentieth century. If Scotland was being increasingly marginalized in British politics it seems natural that this would be reflected in Scottish literature.

While all three novels therefore have a common thread, *Sunset Song* and *Trainspotting* are certainly closer to each other in regard to their treatment of duality and its manifestations, which can be in part explained by the shift in the benefits of the Union that took place following the First World War, along with the rise of Scottish nationalism in the twentieth century. Both *Sunset Song* and *Trainspotting* examine and bring forth the struggle between the dominating and the dominated, although as Menikoff points out, in *Kidnapped* Stevenson explores “the loss suffered by the indigenous culture, focusing on how the law of the state was utilized for ends that had nothing to do with justice and everything to do with the preservation of power,” even though Stevenson was writing for a “predominantly English audience” (3). If *Kidnapped* shows some sensitivity to its English readers in its depiction of the British government maintaining power over the Highlanders, *Sunset Song* and *Trainspotting* can be said to show little regard to the sensibilities of Scotland’s southern neighbors. Certainly it is possible to argue that Gibbon’s restraint in his use of Scots, and his Anglicization of it, is in a way an accommodation for a wider audience, but he still evokes the pain and confusion of being both British and Scottish at once.

The concept of duality may be a tired topic for some admirers of Scottish literature, but it is evident that it has been present in Scottish fiction for quite some time. At the very least, it is present in these three works. *Kidnapped, Sunset Song,* and *Trainspotting* are all relatively well known and admired works of Scottish fiction. Not only do they contain interesting stories, but within these stories are embedded clues to the Scottish psyche at the time of their writing. As Wittig points out, literature reflects the climate of the “particular period to which is belongs” (3), and, in the case of Scottish literature, it is also capable of giving a glimpse of not only the time the work was written into but also of the complex history of the nation that the author and their work were born into.

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3 See Neil M. Gunn’s *Silver Darlings* (1941), Robin Jenkins’s *The Changeling* (1958), Jeanette Winterson’s *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985), and Jackie Kay’s *Trumpet* (1998), amongst others.
7. Conclusion

If there was any question to the validity of attaching the term “duality” to Scottish literature, the examination of Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Kidnapped*, Lewis Grassic Gibbon’s *Sunset Song*, and Irvine Welsh’s *Trainspotting* lends credibility to the association. The Caledonian Antisyzygy is a persistent term in the discussion of Scottish literature and it seems for a very good reason. The potential issue of identity is evident when the history of Scotland is considered, particularly when it comes to language and national identity. There is an indication in many academic texts that Scots have increasingly felt disenfranchised in British politics, particularly in the twentieth century onwards. The Act of Union of 1707 was meant to help Scotland raise itself from the depths of debt so that the Scots could regain their footing, but over time it seems that the Scots gained little while their Southern neighbors gained considerably. There is a certain irony of trying to save one’s footing and end up losing more power than one ever intended, which is seemingly the case with Scotland. It is natural for a nation’s psyche to leak out into literature, and as Scotland has morphed in politics and the general mood of the people so has the literature.

The three Scottish novels discussed in this thesis exhibit not only similarities in terms of the theme of duality but also differences in how duality is presented. While Scotland was still in the prosperous glow of the Industrial Revolution *Kidnapped* was written, and there was a sense that despite differences there was a possibility of opposing sides being able to reconcile their differences. Following the First World War and the hardships that arose, the duality of Scotland began to manifest itself in a crisis of identity, which is depicted with compassion and keen insight through the character of Chris Guthrie in *Sunset Song*. Throughout the twentieth century British politics continually ignored and marginalized some Scottish communities, resulting in massive unemployment and discontent in the working class, a situation which would eventually lead to the circumstances in which Irvine Welsh would pen *Trainspotting*. There is no denying the dual aspect of the Scottish nation and Mark Renton is an adept Scot, not because he is able to shift between language registers but because he understands that it is necessary for him to successfully navigate through life.

The theme of duality has persisted in Scottish literature, and these three novels, *Kidnapped* by Robert Louis Stevenson, *Sunset Song* by Lewis Grassic Gibbon, and *Trainspotting* by Irvine Welsh, are all demonstrative of its evolution over a period of more than a century. These titles present duality, and by examining and comparing them it becomes
evident that the treatment of duality has evolved to reflect the era and experience of the authors, and by extension the experience of Scotland. However, an important point to keep in mind is the fact that these three titles are all written by male authors, therefore giving an incomplete picture of the evolution of duality. The next step in understanding duality in Scottish literature, and how it is depicted, would be to examine the works of notable Scottish women writers.
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