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Portrayal of the Scottish Working Class in Alasdair Gray's Lanark
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Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Studentka se ve své práci bude věnovat otázce sociální identity skotské pracovní třídy. Nejprve tedy bude charakterizovat terminologii z oblasti kulturních identit, zaměří se na otázku skotské národní identity a její propojení s identitou pracovní třídy. Dále se bude věnovat kulturní a historické analýze období 80. let v Británii, zmíní především politiku M. Thatcherové a její dopad na městskou kulturu skotského Glasgow. Právě Glasgow hraje v Grayově románu zásadní roli, a proto se autorka bude věnovat jeho tradici a symbolismu. Všechny tyto aspekty pak budou součástí literární analýzy románu Lanark.

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Annotation

The main purpose of this bachelor thesis is a literary analysis of Alasdair Gray's novel, Lanark. Firstly, topics such as identity, class-ridden society, Margaret Thatcher's policies are explained. There is also a description of the city of Glasgow. Afterwards, these topics are applied to the novel itself.

Key words

identity, working class, Thatcherism, Glasgow, Lanark

Název

Vyobrazení skotská dělnické třídy v díle Alasdaira Graye, Lanark

Anotace

Hlavní náplní této bakalářské práce je literární analýza románu Lanark od Alasdaira Graye. Nejprve jsou v teoretické části vysvětleny základní pojmy jako identita, třídní společnost, politika Margaret Thatcherové a také je popsáno Glasgow. Následně jsou tato témata aplikována na samotný román.

Klíčová slova

identita, dělnická třída, thatcherismus, Glasgow, Lanark

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Introduction

There are many factors that influence one's characteristics, behaviour, and consequently his approach to life. One of them is of course identity and its subcategories, individual and collective one. This topic could be analysed from a number of different points of view, however, one thing that should certainly be analysed into depth is the collective identity. It includes various subtypes including regional, cultural, national or social.

The last two mentioned play an important role not only in a life of an individual but it also affects the behaviour of a certain group of people, leading to the problems of class-ridden social system and the clash between Scotland and the British government. Political background of the time is quite important as it influences people to act certain way.

All of the above can be applied to the main characters of Alasdair Gray's novel, *Lanark*, Duncan Thaw and Lanark as they struggle to maintain the relationships with others and find their place in society. The novel quickly became a success as it addresses many relevant topics in a creative way. Moreover, it depicts the city of Glasgow in an innovative way as it is shown as a contemporary place but also as its somehow twisted version called Unthank.

Lanark: A Life in Four Books has been in making for decades, therefore it comes as no surprised it consists of so many different stories, places, and characters. The novel starts with book three and the main protagonist Lanark. He proceeds to escape his world in the end and the story moves to book one and two as he discovers his previous life as Duncan Thaw through the oracle. After Duncan's tragic end, the novel goes back to Lanark's story line in book four and epilogue.

In the words of Eleanor Bell, "Alasdair Gray's *Lanark* has played a seminal role in aesthetically mapping the social and political nature of Scotland, acting as a catalyst and inspiration for many other contemporary Scottish writers."¹ This indicates that the novel is, indeed, one of the most influential works written by a Scottish author. By writing *Lanark*, Gray has given people a place where they can escape from their everyday lives, get to know complex characters and discover Glasgow in a creative way. It has been celebrated and labelled as a pivotal piece of literature in the Scottish history. The novel proved to be truly influential and important and remains to be until today.

¹ Eleanor Bell, *Questioning Scotland: literature, nationalism, postmodernism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 100.

1. Scottish Identity

To understand somebody's behaviour, it is essential to focus on identity in general. There are many theories on personal identity as well as a collective one. Both are deeply complex as they are indicated by so many features. As explained by A. D. Smith, the idea of self is composed of various identities and roles, for instance familial, class, religious or gender. He also shows that these identities can be easily modified or set aside.² This statement, indeed, indicates that one's character is a complex picture created by a range of factors. It depends on vast range of factors not only on a personal level, but also on a general one.

In response to the last paragraph, it can be, therefore, said that there are two main kinds of identity which are individual and collective. This chapter is going to explore both of these alongside with the question of Scottish identity and nationality.

Firstly, the idea of self and other aspects of identity should be focused on. According to Mark R. Leary and June Price Tangney, the term self has been a unifying construct not only within psychology but also among other social and behavioural sciences since the 1970s. There have been hundreds of thousands of books, chapters, and other published pieces mainly focused on this issue.³ This shows that many became interested in this topic, writers supposedly included. However, another idea can be added to the previous statement. As stated by Ryan Ray, "the deconstruction of myth and the interrogation of essentialist cultural identities are standard and necessary postmodernist tactics."⁴ This indicates that many deal with the topic, but it is also important to find ways to approach it differently. One should not stigmatize identity in any way, neither should he help the stereotypes to prevail, whether it is on a personal or collective level.

Another interesting view concerning the personal identity has been brought up by David Shoemaker & Kevin Tobia. In the paper they explore the idea of intuitions about individual identity being theorized as reliable trackers for truth.⁵ It shows that there are, indeed, more layers to one's identity, even if it is talked about only on the personal level. Not only that, but some of the layers are not visible at first, as indicated by Shoemaker and Tobia's use of the word 'intuition'. As it is known that one cannot control instincts, it is rather interesting that this

² Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 13.

³ Mark R. Leary, June Price Tangney, *Handbook of Self and Identity* (New York City: The Guilford Press, 2011), 1.

⁴ Ray Ryan, *Literature and Culture, State and Nation, 1966-2000* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2002), 5.

⁵ David Shoemaker, Kevin P. Tobia, "Personal Identity," *Oxford Handbook of Moral Psychology*, Forthcoming (June 2018): 16.

kind of element comes into consideration when talking about one's personal identity. This reveals that this type of identity can be studied deeply, more than it was thought in the past, one might say. Furthermore, Shoemaker and Tobia state that memories are crucial when it comes to the topic of identity. An experiment was carried out where the participants were asked whether they would consider their future self to be them if it was not for their memories. 80 per cent of them disagreed.⁶ This shows that not only elements that are fixed in a brain are important, but things like memories that people gain throughout their life can play an important role in the terms of identity.

Moving to the second major type of identity, the collective one, it needs to be said that there are also various subtypes to it. Many can be named among these, for example, regional, cultural, religious, national or social. The social identity is essential in helping create people's identity. There can be a high amount of inequality between the social classes and it has enormous impact on one's status and position in society and the world in general. For instance, when someone has a lower social status (e.g. is a part of a working class), they might not have the same access to education or it is at least very limited compared to people coming from the middle or upper class. A few may be able to work their way up in the social structure, however, it is only a small selection of people. Many people belonging to the working class end up feeling isolated and unable to change their situation.

Another significant subtype is the one concerning the culture. Cultural identity is how a person sees his place in a certain group of people. Returning to Leary and Tangney's *Handbook of Self and Identity*, they mention that there is an intimate link between self and culture. Therefore, it can be said that it has characteristics of the individual identity to a certain point. In their words, "Culture plays a pivotal role in the construction of self-beliefs and identity."⁷ The sense of belonging to culture might have a great effect on a person. One's identification with certain cultural background can have a profound benefit for them.

A very important topic when it comes to identity is also a person's gender. According to Anthony D. Smith, the most fundamental and obvious is the category of gender. The classifications are universal and ubiquitous. Everyone is defined by their gender in many subtle ways which projects itself into life as many of their opportunities and rewards. However, at the same time it is hard to create a base for collective identification and mobilization because of the universality of gender differentiation. Another category, which plays a major role for this essay, is the one of territory. It appears to have the cohesive quality that gender differentiation

⁶ Shoemaker et al., "Personal Identity", 19.

⁷ Leary et al. *Self and Identity*, 13.

lacks, though the appearance can be deceptive since the regions can be easily fragmented into separate localities and settlements. Therefore, unity can be difficult to be found.⁸ This is reflected in the behaviour of individual people rather a lot. However, when there is one element that can divide the collective identity, there is also one that helps people find connections between themselves and others. National identity is very helpful in bringing people together.

Therefore, generally speaking, gender was pointed out as the first and most important, however, the most crucial type for this thesis is national identity. In the words of Smith, national identity is still one of the most crucial and widespread in today's world.⁹ To understand the question of one's nationality, important question must be asked; what exactly is nation? Generally speaking, it is a community of people who have language territory, ethnicity and economic life in common. It is shaped both by culture and politics in a certain area.

As demonstrated in Smith's book, there are a few elements that come into question when thinking about nationality. The western model of the nation is predominantly territorial. According to this statement, a nation must possess well-defined territory.¹⁰ However, this might be problematic since not every nation has this luxury. There are countries with more than one nationality when looking at it from the historical point of view. The United Kingdom is certainly one of them, as it went through the processes of connecting parts of the kingdom throughout its history.

A second element is the thought of so-called patria, which is, in other words, "a community of laws and institutions with a single political will."¹¹ It is not hard to find where lies the problem with this statement. Illustrated on the UK, Scotland has its own parliament and therefore a political will of its own, however, it has to constantly come to terms and agreements with the British parliament and its competence has been questioned a number of times. Consequently, this question arises from that remark; is it really a single political will if its repeatedly questioned by other institutions? It is obvious that the Scottish nation has existed for hundreds of years, thus, it might be for the best if this statement was re-evaluated.

To conclude, from all the assumptions and statements discussed in Smith's publication, "a nation can therefore be defined as a named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members."¹² This definition is rather suitable for

⁸ Smith, *National Identity*, 4.

⁹ Smith, *National Identity*, 8.

¹⁰ Smith, *National Identity*, 9.

¹¹ Smith, *National Identity*, 10.

¹² Smith, *National Identity*, 14.

Scotland too. Although, there are many common features and events in history that are shared by both, Scotland and England, hence, it might be difficult to differentiate what historically is exclusively Scottish and when it blends with the history of the country as a whole.

Scottish identity might be a complicated topic to discuss. It can be said that the Scottish tend to be very proud of their identity, nationality, and where they are coming from in general. However, there is a sort of duality since the Scots might feel sorry for being technically stateless, but not much is done about it. Of course, there have been attempts to break free and leave Great Britain, nonetheless, it has never been executed. According to Ryan, the lack of statehood was communicated through culture rather than politics, specifically in the last twenty-five years of 20th century.¹³ A nation's ability to express itself through culture is, of course, very important, however, it might not be sufficient to communicate all the aspects of nationality.

A topic related to this is discussed by David Goldie. He claims that the Scots had created a role within British culture for themselves and have managed to mix in Scottish elements.¹⁴ This may cause more harm than good though, because it can be difficult to distinguish between a Scottish work and a British one, which brings a problem of the Scots not being represented on their own. According to Goldie, there is a sense of Britishness rather than specifically Scottishness in popular culture.¹⁵ This comment supports the statement about Scots not being represented enough.

Moving from the area of culture, Bell explains that for many critics the Scottish identity is a product of historical linearity, therefore, the majority of contemporary identity is widely dependent upon events of the nation's past. This narrow perspective can be shown as sort of a false nostalgia. Many distinguished critics have a tendency to generalise the nationhood and its characteristics while depicting Scottish literature and culture.¹⁶ This may be truly problematic, as it helps to build the ever-present stereotypes that are made about Scotland. Thus, it also contributes to the accepting of these stereotypes and other odd statements as national truths. In the words of Bell, there is "the need for more diverse representation of Scotland and Scottishness, which take into account the shifting patterns of the global world."¹⁷ In accordance to this statement, authors should be able to adapt to constant changes, and consequently, apply it to literature to help cast aside the prevailing stereotypes of Scottish nature.

¹³ Ryan, *Literature and Culture, State and Nation, 1966-2000*, 39.

¹⁴ Gerard Carruthers, David Goldie, Alastair Renfrew, *Beyond Scotland, New Contexts for Twentieth-Century Scottish Literature* (The Netherlands: Rodopi, 2004), 41.

¹⁵ Gerard Carruthers et al., *Beyond Scotland*, 51.

¹⁶ Bell, *Questioning Scotland*, 51-52.

¹⁷ Bell, *Questioning Scotland*, 52.

In her book, Bell introduces Tom Nairn's journey from his early text, *The Break Up of Britain*, in which he writes from a Marxist position, as he tries to explain the growth and persistence of nationalism in the modern world. His claims that Scottishness can be regarded as a kind of curse: it shows an accurate image of the impotence and national nihilism which strongly affects the national self.¹⁸

On the other hand, Bell presents Beveridge and Turnbull's ideas essentially opposing those of Nairn's. According to them, he apparently criticises cultural nationalism as he writes bitterly about the Scottish culture. They view him and his position as anti-nationalist. Beveridge and Turnbull think that "Nairn's commitment to nationalism is pragmatic and conditional rather than principled". There is also a suggestion made that his book is a call for socialists to accept the dominance of nationalism. For them, Nairn's position on this topic is a obstacle to cultural forms of nationalism.¹⁹

Although both of these opinions are right to a certain extent, the views and beliefs of Beveridge and Turnbull seem better executed. Nairn appears to help to spread the stereotypes about Scotland since he said that "the national self has been lobotomised and placed in cold storage since 1707."²⁰ It appears to be rather illogical to indicate that the nation has not changed since the Act of Union when others are trying to bring diverse representation into people's minds.

In conclusion, it can be said for sure that there are many factors that come into the view when one thinks of identity and one of them is, of course, the social class someone belongs to.

¹⁸ Bell. *Questioning Scotland*, 69.

¹⁹ Bell. *Questioning Scotland*, 70-71.

²⁰ Bell. *Questioning Scotland*, 69.

2. Class System in the UK

Just like any other European country, the United Kingdom has always been hierarchically divided into several different social groups within the system. As Selina Todd states, the beginning of the class system as we know it today can be dated back to the Industrial Revolution. According to her, class has divided but also united Britain as it is widely viewed as the most typical British way of identifying someone's social status.²¹ Many people would disagree with the statement that class unites the country as well. It may be true that it is deeply rooted in the society, however, many people still see it only as a matter which divides.

Despite this, a similar approach to the class system is described in an article by Elizabeth B Silva, who says that the British consider their 'class society' as a privileged case. The public views their society as highly class-ridden. This viewpoint applies mainly on England, but it resonates with the people of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland just as well.²²

Silva's article focuses on two topics, one of them is the experiment of the BBC-academic partnership of the Great British Class Survey (GBCS). According to her, the survey stresses the fact that there are many different elements which influence the formation of class, such as education, age, and region. It also examines underlying connections between economic, social, and cultural features.²³ This shows that the society is presumably divided into more groups than it was at the beginnings of formation of Britain's class system. In the article, Silva describes the claim of GBCS researchers. They believe that due to rising social polarization and fragmentation that occurs in the middle class, there is a need of new analysis that would be up-to-date.²⁴

It is, therefore, necessary to point out, that even though history traditionally speaks of only three classes, there have, indeed, been more than that. According to Louis Doré, as many as seven different classes have existed in England at the time.²⁵ As the GBCS from 2013 is rather recent, it can be said that this statement is still applicable to reality. Doré explains that there are, indeed, seven classes even at the present time starting with the wealthy elite at the top which score highly on all three capitals (economic, cultural, and social), going through

²¹ Selina Todd, *The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class, 1910-2010* (London: John Murray Publisher, 2014), 1.

²² Elizabeth B. Silva, "Class in contemporary Britain: comparing the Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion (CCSE) project and the Great British Class Survey (GBCS)," *PubMed Central*, June 12, 2015.

²³ Silva, "Class in contemporary Britain"

²⁴ Silva, "Class in contemporary Britain"

²⁵ Louis Doré, "There are the seven social classes of Britain," *Indy100*, November 3, 2015.

structured middle class and traditional working class, and ending with precariat (i.e. precarious proletariat) which score low on all three capitals.²⁶

Generally speaking, it seems that many of the sources, both online and printed ones, are of the same opinion when it comes to the topic of classes in British society. They differ in the level of severity and impact it has on the public as a whole. What one describes as something that divides it but also unites and as something that is generally accepted as a fact, others see as something with a grave impact.

In his book, Arthur Marwick introduces letter from December 1976 by the novelist Lynne Reid Banks which says that class is so deeply ingrained in the national subconsciousness of the British that it is harming every aspect of their lives. Banks describes the situation as a kind of civil war fought on a daily basis.²⁷ This indicates that there are, perhaps, as many opinions on the topic as there are people who delve into the politics of social division in the society. As it is discussed in the book, Banks' view on the topic is much more ardent than Todd's almost mellow description of class.²⁸

To understand how it all came to its current state, it is important to know the historical development of class – how it all started, evolved and (at least partly) dissolved in the 19th and 20th century. As was already mentioned, historically, the public was split into three classes – upper, middle, and lower.

As stated by Stephen Liddell in his article on history of social classes, the upper class is closely attached to the monarchy.²⁹ This indicates it has existed ever since the introduction of the feudal system in the country, perhaps maybe even beforehand. Liddell claims the upper class has such strong position in Britain as a result of the country not undergoing any internal revolutions or wars. For instance, in France, people nearly got rid of its upper class during the revolution.³⁰ One of the big problems with the division into classes in the UK is also the fact that the rich own around 90% of all the capital in the country. Which only makes the gap between the upper class and lower classes seem even worse.

According to Liddell, the Industrial Revolution gave birth to the middle class with all the Industrialists setting up their businesses and people making their names.³¹ One can presume that all three classes came into existence around this time. Although, however true this

²⁶ Doré, "There are the seven social classes of Britain".

²⁷ Arthur Marwick, *British Society since 1945* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 167.

²⁸ Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, 167.

²⁹ Stephen Liddell, "History of social classes and does class matter?," *Stephen Liddell, Musing on a mad world*, April 6, 2013.

³⁰ Liddell, "History of social classes."

³¹ Liddell, "History of social classes."

statement can be, the workers did not identify themselves with the term working class up until the end of 19th century. As reported by Liddell, the working class did not get together as one unified force until the 1920s.³²

It is crucial to mention that most important for this paper is the lower part of the class spectrum, especially the working class. It traditionally consisted of people working labour jobs who left school as soon as legally possible. These individuals scored poorly on all three capitals and are almost incapable of social mobility in a larger number.

As it was said, the term working class came into the broader use in the late 19th century. In her article, Liza Picard explains that the people of the Victorian era liked to have the classes in the society clearly defined. She states that the working class was divided into three layers with ‘labourers’, ‘intelligent artisans’ and ‘educated working men’.³³ Of course, it was not as clean-cut as described in the article. The lines were much more blurred, and it was hard to identify into which category a man falls. One could work in the factory, another kind of business, or on the street. Picard’s description shows that even in such conditions people could earn money by selling newspapers, fast food, or sweeping the pavement in front of a person from a higher class.³⁴

Moving from the Victorian time into the beginning of the 20th century, the working class was met with great not only social but also political transformation. Selina Todd explains that the working-class people had to always rely on each other and their families because there was no universal way of helping people in need at the beginning of the century.³⁵ People were not unified to fight for their rights and even when there was some kind of protest, they were often quickly silenced by an authority. What really helped was a creation of trade unions. Originated in the second half of the 19th century, modern trade unions began to grow. As stated in an article on Encyclopaedia Britannica, unionists were resented by the employers and often prosecuted for their actions. That, however, did not stop them from fighting for better working conditions and by going towards political activism, the Labour Party was formed in 1906.³⁶

However, the establishment of the party was not the only major turning point for the working class. According to Todd, there were two significant critical points for this class in the 20th century. The first one of them was the Second World War. The need for people’s work to help to win the war and rebuild the country afterwards gave the working class a new significant

³² Liddell, “History of social classes.”

³³ Liza Picard, “The working classes and the poor,” *The British Library*, October 14, 2009.

³⁴ Picard, “The working classes and the poor.”

³⁵ Todd, *The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class*, 1.

³⁶ “Trade union,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified October 4, 2018,

position in the society.³⁷ Together and through the trade unions, the working people began to demand more, from better working hours to wage raises. Overall, their place in the general public improved quite a lot and they were rather prosperous in the years after WWII. That being said, it does not necessarily mean that everyone gained economical capital and moved into higher social class.

In the words of Todd, the second important point in history of (not only) the working class was, naturally, the election of Margaret Thatcher and her Conservative government. Even though the government was more supportive of the employers during the 1970s before her election, it was during her term in the office when the gap between the rich and the poor started to widen quickly.³⁸ Everything the people from poor backgrounds were working towards crumbled into pieces right in front of them, and the country witnessed the largest fall of the working class yet. This, of course, led to many strikes and uprising in the working communities not only in England but all over the country, Scotland included. Thatcher, her actions, and the reaction to them will be discussed in the next chapter of this thesis.

According to Oxford Companion to Scottish History edited by Michael Lynch, although the views of the class system in the country are usually very similar to one another, there are two major and in many ways opposite perspectives in Scotland. On one hand, some claim that the Scottish history is based on class conflict, as even before the industrial revolution, there were struggles between landlords and tenants, landowners and peasants, etc.³⁹ However, these kinds of disputes might not be seen as the dispute between the classes as they are primarily on a minor scale and mostly between the individuals. The conflict between the capitalists and workers is on a completely different level though. As Lynch states, the social politics in Scotland depended heavily on said conflicts. The most famous one is, without a doubt the phenomenon of 'Red Clydeside' of the 1920s.⁴⁰ It was an era of political radicalism that took place in Glasgow and surrounding areas, alongside the riverside.

When there is one view arguing that Scottish society is the class-ridden one, there is another perspective that suggests quite the contrary. As stated by Lynch, the second viewpoint puts emphasis on different Scottish cultural traditions and the apparent absence of barriers to social mobility in Scotland.⁴¹ Whether one believes in the first or the second view, one thing is for sure; the existence and struggle of the working class cannot be overlooked and written off

³⁷37 Todd, *The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class*, 1.

³⁸38 Todd, *The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class*, 1.

³⁹39 Michael Lynch, *Oxford Companion to Scottish History* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2001), 583.

⁴⁰40 Lynch, *Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, 583.

⁴¹41 Lynch, *Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, 583.

as something diminutive with no importance whatsoever, not only in Scotland but in Britain in general.

While Lynch talks about the connection between politics and class, David McCrone claims that politics are nearly exclusively about class. He suggests that the 'Red Clydeside' phenomenon stresses this view on the situation.⁴² Some may believe it but there is also counterargument to this statement, in the words of McCrone, that class has been losing its political power since the 1950s. By the 1970s Scottish nationalists reinforced the idea of class as a fading force in politics. The rise of Scottish National Party added a new approach to Scottish politics so far controlled by the 'class politics' of Labour versus Tory.⁴³ At the beginning of the 1980s, Thatcher won the elections and a new chapter was about to start for not only Scottish politics but Scotland and the whole country too.

⁴² T. M. Devine and R. J. Finlay, *Scotland in the 20th century* (Cambridge: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 102.

⁴³ Devine et al., *Scotland in the 20th century*, 103.

3. Thatcher and her Policies

Margaret Thatcher was a British statesperson who was a first woman in the history of Britain's politics elected as a Prime Minister in 1979. She is known for a variety of things, especially her policies commonly known as Thatcherism. In Arthur Warwick's words, she appealed to the middle class as she herself was of an upper middle-class background. 1979 election results implied that, in general, the middle-class was going away from sympathising with Labour back to supporting the Conservatives.⁴⁴ It is, therefore, safe to say that she came into the liking of some, particularly the middle class. Nonetheless, there were some who were and are not afraid to show how negatively they feel about her at all.

To illustrate the attitude, of Glaswegians in particular, towards Thatcher, here is an extract from a book *Glasgow, The Autobiography* by Alan Taylor: "When Thatcher died in 2013 some Glaswegians regretted no statue had been erected to her so that they could tear it down, while others held street parties."⁴⁵ Thus, it may be safely said that, while some might respect and even like Thatcher and her politics, there are those who definitely do not feel the same way.

To understand why she was such a controversial figure in the Britain's modern history, it is necessary to explain the cultural and political background from the 1970s and beforehand. Everything started changing after the Second World War. Right at the beginning of the war, food rationing was introduced. According to Rory Tingle, it would continue for another fourteen years and, interestingly, the rations would be even more reduced. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that when the limitations were lifted in 1954, it was met with nothing else than people's joy.⁴⁶ This may be understood as a slow start for materialism and consumerism which prevailed especially in the 1960s. As the country escaped the years of austerity and entered the era of prosperity, people did not hesitate in purchasing items that were foreign for them previously.

The 1960s, also known as the Swinging Sixties, was a time of freedom in general. The Victorian values gradually retreated from the society and people, the youth especially, started living in the way their parents and grandparents could not even dream of. As demonstrated by Marwick, everything the Victorians tried to conceal under shame were entering the public on main. Divorce, homosexuality, and information on abortion and contraception were becoming

⁴⁴ Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, 172.

⁴⁵ Alan Taylor, *Glasgow The Autobiography* (Edinburgh: Birlinn Limited, 2017), 6.

⁴⁶ Rory Tingle, "75 years on from rationing, what did we learn?," *The Independent*, January 8, 2015.

more and more common among the people throughout the decade.⁴⁷ The British society abandoned the routine life and conformity at last. Of course, there were still some who stood behind the values from the past but the society as a whole was far more open than it was in the first half of the century. Furthermore, it is essential to stress that these changes affected principally the middle class. The upper and the working class were in the picture as well, but the rich did not have to care about the change as much as the class below them and the workers did not have the means to join the collective enthusiasm.

Following the decade known for its lightened mood and all-around public well-being, the 1970s are sometimes described as ‘the Sombre Seventies’. In his work, Kenneth O. Morgan argues that the decade may be said to be the bleakest since the war. Memories of this period include public blackouts reminding people of the WWII blitz, however, there was no such thing as a sense of national pride and historic perseverance this time.⁴⁸ This supports the statement that the 1970s were, in fact, quite the opposite of the previous decade.

The general unease and class war in industry were at a peak. The society was experiencing the decline of the country and it was clear that it had become more vulnerable than before. Britain was heading into the years of depression and the general public could do nothing more than witness its downfall. According to Morgan, such a mood was echoed in literature and academic papers as well. Works with names such as ‘Is Britain Dying?’ and ‘Goodbye Great Britain’ came into the existence as the consequence of the events of the decade.⁴⁹ This illustrates the fact that the overcast of despair can be also seen in the literature of the late 1970s.

In addition to the inner vulnerability, in the words of Diane Coyle, the country needed to borrow money from the International Monetary Fund in 1976, an act which is regarded as one of the deepest scars in the history of economic crises.⁵⁰ All of these events had a deep impact on the country, all escalating at the end of the decade.

To retreat a little bit, it is also important to observe the situation in Scotland in relation to the domestic affairs. It was rather similar to the rest of the country, dare to say maybe even worse. In his work, Marwick focuses on the fact that the amount of optimism that had been in Scotland in the late 1940s had rapidly gone down throughout the years leading up to the 1970s.⁵¹ It is presumably safe to say that it was rather similar during the 1970s in England, Wales and

⁴⁷ Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, 119.

⁴⁸ Kenneth O. Morgan, “Britain in the Seventies – Our Unfinest Hour?,” *Revue Française de Civilisation Britannique* 12 (December 2017): 1.

⁴⁹ Morgan, “Britain in the Seventies”, 1.

⁵⁰ Diane Coyle, “Review – ‘When Britain Went Bust’,” *The Financial Times*, January 9, 2017.

⁵¹ Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, 154.

Northern Ireland too, nevertheless, the uncertainty of further progress in Scotland lingering in the air made the region more prone to pessimism and negativity.

Also, returning to Scotland's class and industrial history, David McCrone states that the similarity between Scotland and the rest of the country still remained, however, the number of manual workers was higher than average.⁵² In saying so, the implication that the working class in Scotland was of higher numbers is crafted. Consequently, that means the unemployment in the region had a tendency to be above the national average. The fact is confirmed by Marwick as he states that the percentage of the unemployment progressively rose during the 1970s from 4.5% to 8.2% in five years.⁵³ This indicates that the amount of people leaning towards strikes and protests was also higher than in the rest of Britain.

To go back to Thatcher and the 1979 elections, it is important to mention one of the events that definitely work in her favour; the so-called 'Winter of Discontent'. As said by Tom Mills, even with inventive strategies of campaigning and the support of a greater part of the press, the Conservative party still fell behind the Labour party in the polls.⁵⁴ This illustrates that the Tories still did not win the public over to their side. However, a major event that would change everything came into the picture, the aforementioned 'Winter of Discontent'.

As explained by Tara Martin, the event was a train of more than two thousand strikes across the country focusing on the wage limits. The workers had never been better organized in history and the trade unions seemed almost unbeatable.⁵⁵ This was highly beneficial for the Conservative party as many people were disillusioned and distrusting of the Labour party which was in the lead and swung towards voting for Tories instead. Martin explains that thanks to this shift the Conservative party was in a favourable position and seized the opportunity to win the elections.⁵⁶ In accordance with Martin's words, Mills states that people who supported Thatcher criticized the prime minister of the time, James Callaghan, claiming his government was under the overly strong influence of trade unions.⁵⁷ Tories then proceeded to win the 1979 elections with majority of 43 seats. Thus, the era of so-called Thatcherism began.

According to Andrew Gamble, the General Election of 1979 witnesses the birth of the government that was determined to end the crisis of state authority and Britain's downfall. Thatcherism as a whole was a vision of a brand new social and economic order. However, the

⁵² Devine et al., *Scotland in the 20th century*, 107.

⁵³ Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, 154.

⁵⁴ Tom Mills, "The death of a class warrior: Margaret Thatcher (1925-2013)," *Open Democracy*, April 9, 2013.

⁵⁵ Tara Martin, "The Beginning of Labor's End? Britain's 'Winter of Discontent' and Working-Class Women's Activism," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 75 (2009): 49.

⁵⁶ Martin, "The Beginning of Labor's End?," 50.

⁵⁷ Mills, "The death of a class warrior."

term Thatcherism has always been a profoundly controversial term.⁵⁸ Thatcher did manage to get the country out of its international debt and helped it to persist as one of the world's global powers in terms of politics. However, there was a price to pay.

One of the most important decisions of her government was the privatisation of public industries and services. As described in the case study published on the Centre for Public Impact website, the privatisation played only a minor part in the party's programme during 1979. However, as the time progressed it became a central part of their agenda. Many industries previously owned by the state were made into private companies including the areas of industry, steel, railway, airways and of gas, electricity, water etc.⁵⁹ A comment by John McDonnell can be added to this statement. He states that the public was promised it would help increase productivity and widen share ownership. However, the businesses are nowadays held by large corporations, many of which are based in tax havens across the globe.⁶⁰ All of this commentary on the events surrounding the privatisation clearly show that the impact of this decision has lasted until today and many are still influenced by it. The government handed many of the branches of the industry, services included, to the holdings of the private sector, giving them too much power over the general public as a consequence.

Another policy of the Conservatives that should be mentioned is the so-called Poll Tax. As stated by Robert Wilde, "The Community Charge ("Poll Tax") was a new system of taxation introduced in Scotland in 1989 and England and Wales in 1990 by the then ruling Conservative government."⁶¹ This system would bring disastrous consequences, particularly for the working class and poorer population in general. Wilde states that while students and unemployed individuals were rather well protected and did not have to pay large sums of money, bigger families living in small houses had to pay charges notably higher than they were before.⁶² The act impacted significant part of Britain's public which, of course, was met with yet more protests coming from a number of communities. As mentioned by David Allen Green, a number of 27 million households could count their losses compared to 8 million who profited from the bill. Not only were there riots, but the failure to actually collect the money was in the picture

⁵⁸ Andrew Gamble, "Privatization, Thatcherism, and the British State," *Journal of Law and Society* 16, no. 1 (1988): 1.

⁵⁹ "Privatising the UK's nationalised industries in the 1980s," *Centre for Public Impact*, last modified April 11, 2016.

⁶⁰ John McDonnell, "The privatisation of our public services has been national failure – it's time to take back control," *The Independent*, June 6, 2016.

⁶¹ Robert Wilde, "Understanding the Poll Tax of Scotland and Britain," *ThoughtCo.*, March 2, 2019.

⁶² Wilde, "Understanding the Poll Tax."

too.⁶³ Although, it may look good in theory, when it came to practise, it was rather disastrous for both sides, the government and the public in the end.

The last topic that needs to be addressed is, for sure, the government's interference in the industrial economy as the Tories came up with a plan to close a majority of the mines. The coal industry in the country was on its way to the end for decades by the time Thatcher became the PM, and there are many that claim there were much higher losses for the industry before. However, as reported by Kevin Meagher, 80 per cent of jobs were lost during the time Thatcher was leading the government. This makes up to the number of circa 420,000 people who were suddenly jobless with very few alternative job options.⁶⁴ This brought another grave consequence for the public, especially the working class, who did not hesitate to show their disagreement with the government's verdict.

Naturally, her policies were met with people revolting all over the country. It could be said with certainty that the most powerful weapons of the workers were strikes. As Thatcher's government took over the country, the strikes gradually became a part of day-to-day life. Britain was essentially paralysed in its functioning. One of the biggest protests was, of course, a reaction to the closure of the mining industry; the miners' strike of 1984-85. In the words of Meagher, the protesters were labelled as 'the enemy within', with the security system keeping an eye on them.⁶⁵ This means that when it came to the end of the strike, many were arrested and tried for various degrees of criminal action. It is important to state the situation in Scotland during the protests. As reported by Ian Swanson, approximately 500 Scottish miners were imprisoned which was 30 per cent of the overall arrests, even though there were only 10 per cent of the country's mining workers in Scotland.⁶⁶

Thatcher did lead the country out of the crisis, but she remains one of the most hated figures in Britain's modern history to this date. And even though she resigned as Prime Minister in November 1990, there is no doubt that the consequences of her actions have had an influence on many people and cities throughout the country, one of which is, undoubtedly, Glasgow.

⁶³ David Allen Green, "Of the Poll Tax and of Brexit," *The Financial Times*, June 23, 2017.

⁶⁴ Kevin Meagher, "Tory spin on coal masks fact that 80 per cent of coal jobs were lost under Thatcher," *Left Foot Forward*, April 19, 2013.

⁶⁵ Meagher, "Tory spin."

⁶⁶ Ian Swanson, "Breakthrough in Scottish miners' strike policing review," *Edinburgh Evening News*, June 7, 2018.

4. City of Glasgow

Glasgow is the largest Scottish city and the third most populous in Britain. In the words of Alan Taylor, it is also the greatest city in the world without a shadow of a doubt, at least in the eyes of many Glaswegians.⁶⁷ The city, also known by its nickname Dear Green Place, is famous for a variety of things, industries such as shipbuilding in particular. However, the city witnessed a transformation from a heavily industrial city to the one full of art and tourism-oriented places and events right at the end of the 20th century.

As it is described by Michael Lynch, the beginnings of Glasgow can be linked with an establishment of a monastery founded by St Kentigern, sometimes also known as St Mungo. Some argue that the monastery subsequently became the seat of a bishopric.⁶⁸ It is also mentioned similarly by Piers Dudgeon who claims that the religious centre was founded in the 6th century not even a mile north of the River Clyde. Thus, the roots of the ‘second city of the Empire’ were planted.⁶⁹ However, both of these sources also state that it cannot be proven to be true as it is more of a legend rather than a fact that could be verified in a written form from the period. Moreover, Dudgeon states that there was most possibly some kind of settlement long before the arrival of St Kentigern,⁷⁰ although the city did not start really developing beforehand.

The city continued to grow long after the first appearance of St Kentigern. In the words of Dudgeon, the Church had a pivotal role in helping the city to expand, as not only a cathedral, but also a university was built. Furthermore, it secured the status of burgh which made the city an independent trading centre.⁷¹ Glasgow might have been known for its Church and university in the past, however, that has changed with the arrival of the industrialisation of the city. As reported by the editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, Glasgow began to change into a highly industrialised centre with the Industrial Revolution. Rather a few branches of industry were founded, especially coal mining, chemical manufacturing, and shipbuilding. The latter started developing right at the beginning of the 19th century and is also argued to be the most important one.⁷² These changes helped the city to build up its reputation and become one of the most prosperous cities of the Empire.

⁶⁷ Taylor, *Glasgow The Autobiography*, 1.

⁶⁸ Lynch, *Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, 266.

⁶⁹ Piers Dudgeon, *Our Glasgow: Memories of Life in Disappearing Britain* (London: Headline Publishing Group, 2010), 1.

⁷⁰ Dudgeon, *Our Glasgow*, 3.

⁷¹ Dudgeon, *Our Glasgow*, 3.

⁷² “Glasgow,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified April 5, 2019,

This course of actions continued right until the first half of 20th century when the first obstacles began to arise. Claimed by Lynch, the shipbuilding industry was in an irreversible crisis by the 1960s, even though many tried to avoid its decline and tried to preserve the business. Furthermore, Glasgow went through a massive downfall of industry in general during the 1980s and onwards.⁷³ Undoubtedly, it can be at least partially credited to Thatcher and her government's policies as the city was also affected by them, the poll tax in particular. Lynch states that against the odds the city did manage to reform in favour of culture, architecture, and tourism. Glasgow was successful in re-inventing itself, despite the persistence of serious problems such as deprivation and unemployment.⁷⁴ All of this is a proof that the city had to undergo a massive changes throughout the century to survive, especially in the second half of it. It shows that, even though the changes were kind of forced upon the city, Glaswegians prevailed and managed to adapt to newly altered industry. However, many outsiders still see the city as the industrial one and do not know that Glasgow changed enormously at the end of the 20th century and continues to until nowadays.

Speaking about Glaswegians, in Taylor's words, "people are what makes Glasgow."⁷⁵ The Scots in general are often described as having a strong and fighting spirit, the population in Glasgow and its surroundings included. According to The Scottish Catholic Observer, Glaswegians do not hesitate to come together and help others stay alive which is, for sure, something one can be truly proud of.⁷⁶ This statement can be supported by Taylor claiming that even in the worst of times, which there have been quite a lot over the years, people in Glasgow tend to stand tall and accept what comes their way.⁷⁷ However, this does not include everyone in the city. Just like in other parts of the kingdom, the society is, indeed, divided into classes and there have been times when they inevitably clashed.

As was mentioned, Glasgow did not avoid the class divide just like the rest of the country. Following the Industrial revolution, people who managed to get themselves a place towards the top of the social hierarchy continued to thrive, unlike the working class who have often struggled to make a living and afford a place to live. Together with the decline of the industry in the previous century, there came people losing jobs and inevitably moving to slums that continued to grow around the city. Then the housing estate appeared, and many thought it

⁷³ Lynch, *Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, 271.

⁷⁴ Lynch, *Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, 272.

⁷⁵ Taylor, *Glasgow The Autobiography*, 1.

⁷⁶ "The 'fighting' spirit of Scots, especially Glaswegians, is something to be proud of," Scottish Catholic Observer, last modified December 6, 2013.

⁷⁷ Taylor, *The Autobiography*, 1.

was a perfect solution for people to start a new, better life. According to Chris Leslie, everything went well at first, however, slowly the programme started failing and the high houses around the city were given a nickname 'Towers of Terror'. Living conditions were getting worse and the criminality and drug usage were on the rise.⁷⁸ This shows that there are serious problems with the housing of the poorest and it should be dealt with promptly.

On the other hand, the city can be described as a rather prosperous if one focuses attention on the city centre in particular. In the words of Michael Meighan, the sculptures, art and culture in Glasgow is rather astounding. To name a few of the sites that caught his eyes, he includes Glasgow Cathedral, the Necropolis, Art Gallery and Museum.⁷⁹ It is, therefore, apparent that the city has a variety things to offer to not only the rest of the country but the rest of the world as well.

To conclude, in the words of Meighan, the scale of problems is still lingering in the air and Glasgow should pay attention to them, however, it is, generally speaking, a strong city that managed to redefine itself after years of self-doubt.⁸⁰ Saying this, it is clear that there are two sides to the city and even though it has its weaknesses, Glasgow is a city heading in a good direction in general.

⁷⁸ Chris Leslie, "Disappearing Glasgow: documenting the demolition of a city's troubled past," *The Guardian*, April 22, 2015.

⁷⁹ Michael Meighan, *Glasgow A History* (Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing, 2013), 1,

⁸⁰ Meighan, *Glasgow A History*, 1.

5. Characters of Duncan Thaw and Lanark

As it was mentioned at the beginning of the paper, according to Bell, “Alasdair’s Gray *Lanark* has played a seminal role in aesthetically mapping the social and political nature of Scotland.”⁸¹ This quote alone proves that *Lanark* is, indeed, a work carrying high importance, not only in a field of literature but in Scotland in general. This statement is also supported by Janice Galloway who claims that *Lanark* was labelled as a modern classic shortly after its publishing. She writes that the novel is much more than just another story. The thing which is compelling is the voice that tells the story and the way it is viewed by the reader.⁸² It is clear that *Lanark* was met with recognition and overall praise from the critics and the public as well.

What is interesting is the fact that the life of Duncan Thaw is, indeed, based on Gray’s own life. As stated by Rodge Glass, Alasdair Gray once said that the events from his younger years inspired him while writing *Lanark* and it, subsequently, helped him to remember his childhood as the truth and fiction started merging.⁸³ This is also supported by Tom Toremans’ statement in the preview of an interview with Alasdair Gray and James Kelman. He claims that the narrative in the book one and two is strongly based on Gray’s working class background and his time at Glasgow School of Art among other things.⁸⁴ For example, as it is described right at the beginning of book one in *Lanark*, Duncan draws a picture in a certain way and, apparently, that is how Gray used to draw when he was little.⁸⁵ This indicates that Duncan’s life is a reflection of what life in Glasgow really looked like at least to a certain degree. It being partly autobiographical makes the story of Duncan more organic and authentic.

A number of elements could be discussed when it comes to *Lanark*. A selection of them will be observed in this chapter, all somewhat related to Scottishness, politics, and class system in the UK to a certain extent. One thing that does not change throughout the book is the fact that the story revolves around one main character. He may change in some ways of course, as the story does not follow a linear construction, however, it still resembles certain continuity. Therefore, everything will be applied to the life and relationships of either Duncan Thaw who plays the major role in books one and two, which are on the naturalistic side of story-telling, and Lanark who is the main character in the rest of this piece of literature.

⁸¹ Bell, *Questioning Scotland*, 100.

⁸² Janice Galloway, “Glasgow belongs to us,” *The Guardian*, October 12, 2002.

⁸³ Rodge Glass, *Alasdair Gray: A Secretary’s Biography* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), 22-23.

⁸⁴ Alasdair Gray, James Kelman, and Tom Toremans, “An Interview with Alasdair Gray and James Kelman,” *Contemporary Literature* 44, no. 4 (winter 2003): 567.

⁸⁵ Alasdair Gray, *Lanark: A Life in 4 Books* (London: Pan Books Ltd, 1991), 121.

One of the topics that is addressed in the book is related to Scottishness. It can be seen particularly in the book one. As it was mentioned in chapter one of this paper, the Scots might regret the fact that they are, in fact, a stateless nation but they do not actively act on it. The lack of statehood is communicated rather through culture than politics. Saying this, there is a parallel between this remark and Duncan Thaw's behaviour in book one. Generally speaking, he has troubles with authority throughout the whole duration of his part of the story. This is demonstrated for example in chapter fifteen. Instead of listening to his maths teacher, he works on his new story and also draws on the cover of his book. His teacher scolds him for it and makes him feel ashamed. Moreover, he gets into a disagreement with his English teacher, Mr. Meikle. Although, his teacher is supportive of him at first and wants him to write an article for a school magazine, when Duncan hands in said article, Mr. Meikle rejects it. Both of these encounters have a great impact on him as he either tries not to listen or he feels stunned and resentful.⁸⁶ This may have been the start of all his school related problems. Without anyone supporting him in his ambitions, he slowly turns away from school to his art, be it writing or drawing. This would only lead to more problems when he is older.

Fast-forward to his studies at Glasgow School of Art, he keeps on having problematic relationships not only with the teachers but his fellow students as well. As described in chapter twenty-five, he is confronted by Mr. Watt, one of his professors. Here is a little excerpt of what he has to say: "I've just been talking about you to Mr. Peel. I told him that you rejected my advice, were a disturbing influence on other students, and that I didn't want you in my class."⁸⁷ This has a profound effect on Duncan, however, he does not let it show. As stated in the book, "Thaw took a moment to digest this, then gave his teacher a look of such delight, affection and pity that Mr. Watt stirred impatiently."⁸⁸ There is also an implication that he, in fact, does not know what he should do with his life. Without any guidance in life, he starts heading towards his self-destructive ending he meets at the end of book two.

All of his problems related to school escalated with him moving to church to work on his mural paintings. As it is described in chapter twenty-eight, he is confronted by the professors who warn him that he is going to be expelled if he keeps on ignoring their advice and flouting their authority. However, instead of doing something about it and trying to correct what he has done wrong, he keeps on working on his art, ignoring all the consequences it has for him.⁸⁹ This

⁸⁶ Gray, *Lanark*, 154-155.

⁸⁷ Gray, *Lanark*, 281.

⁸⁸ Gray, *Lanark*, 281.

⁸⁹ Gray, *Lanark*, 322-323.

also correspond with the statement that the Scots communicate their ideas and dissatisfaction through culture, rather than through politics which may actually result in a success.

Another topic related to Scottishness is discussed by Nairn, also mentioned in chapter one, when he claims that “the national self has been lobotomised”. There is a connection between this claim and Duncan’s behaviour as he sometimes can come across as himself being lobotomized prior to his actions. Throughout the books one and two, Duncan deliberately sabotages his life. What exactly are the causes of his behaviour is, however, quite unclear. The most plausible explanation is the fact that there are probably more of them. In connection to previously discussed topic, the fact that there is nobody who would provide Duncan with any kind of help and guidance, he struggles to find his place in society. Moreover, the conditions he lives in and with may have a grave effect on the way he acts as well. Being ill most of his life on both, physical and mental level, to various degree and losing his mother is something that cannot be taken lightly as such topic have great impact on one’s life. If these are the causes or something else, it cannot be said with confidence, however, Duncan certainly acts against his overall well-being, to say the least.

There is and evidence of Duncan sabotaging his life in the chapter eighteen. Since he was feeling rather unwell, a doctor was called to examine him. The doctor asks him if he masturbates and after admitting to it, the doctor claims that there might be an evidence that it aggravates nervous illnesses. After this information, he advises him to cut it out. Duncan agrees to do so, however, when the night comes, he does it again. At first it is against his will. As the days progress he continues to do it despite his promise to the doctor.⁹⁰ This also demonstrates his rather absurd behaviour. Although, now the reader cannot be sure whether it is also his rationally decisions to behave in a certain way or if it is, for example, mental illness he is acting on and simply cannot do anything about it.

His self-destructive inclinations are also shown in chapter nineteen. As it is stated in the book, while everyone is preparing for Higher Leaving Examination, he watches them with the passionless regret. Instead of getting ready for the exams just like everybody else, he either write or sketch in the classes and devotes his free time to art in general.⁹¹ This illustrates not only his passive defiance but his self-destructive tendencies. It all escalates with Duncan sitting the exams. As it is described in chapter nineteen, “in the invigilated silence of the examination room he glanced through the mathematics paper and grinned, knowing he would fail.”⁹²

⁹⁰ Gray, *Lanark*, 186-187.

⁹¹ Gray, *Lanark*, 192.

⁹² Gray, *Lanark*, 195.

Another explanation for the way how Duncan acts is given by Markéta Gregorová. She claims that “political and social institutions have been effectively employed to these ends, as a result of which they came to be identified as the embodiment of the English oppressor in the Scottish mind.”⁹³ Such interpretation of his behaviour points out the problematic relationship between Scotland and England and its metaphorical reflection in *Lanark*. Duncan not following his teacher’s orders and focusing on other things he finds undeniably more important. This is clearly a metaphor for Scotland trying to defy the indisputable social and political power of England over the Northern part of Britain.

In Gregorová’s words, “Duncan spends the bulk of his short life stubbornly fighting against authority, be it his father or the director of the art school and struggling untiringly to find his own way.”⁹⁴ This corresponds with previously discussed topic. His struggles to resist the system may have desired results, nevertheless, he still undermines his own well-being by fighting the authority and going his own way. It is evident that showing his disagreement with the system, the education one in this case, is of a great importance to him.

Another prominent social problem that is addressed in *Lanark* is persisting class-ridden system. The prominent role of class in society can be seen especially in book two, after Duncan meets Kenneth McAlpin in particular. However, the pervasive existence of the classes and their clashes can be seen throughout the whole book. In chapter fifteen, when the Thaw family comes back to Glasgow after the war, it is evident that Duncan’s father struggles in finding a job. As stated in the book, Mr. Thaw spent quite a few months writing letters and sending them to various places in hopes to land a job. He usually gave the letters they sent him back to Duncan as every one of them was of a rejecting nature. At last, Mr. Thaw gets a job. It is certainly not what he had hoped for but, as said by Mrs. Thaw: “It’s better than nothing.”⁹⁵ This is, of course, one of the many problems of the working class, constant struggle to find and proceed to keep a job.

All of his father’s problems have a great impact on how he treats and speaks to Duncan. As it was discussed in chapter two, the working class traditionally consists of people working labour jobs who left school as soon as legally possible. This is exactly Mr. Thaw’s case as, as described in chapter fifteen, he was forced to leave at fourteen and find any job he could get

⁹³ Markéta Gregorová, “Compliance Versus Defiance: The Characters’ Response to Social Structures in Alasdair Gray’s *Lanark* and 1982 *Janine*,” *Moravian Journal of Literature and Film* 2, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 79.

⁹⁴ Gregorová, “Compliance Versus Defiance,” 91.

⁹⁵ Gray, *Lanark*, 147.

because he was needed in supporting his mother and sister.⁹⁶ Obviously, he does not want Duncan to have the same fate as him and that reflects on the way he talks to him. It usually has to do with education. He must have at least an inkling of the fact that it is almost impossible for the social mobility in a larger number, but he is hopeful that Duncan could be one of those who manages to get higher in the social hierarchy.

This kind of approach to Duncan's studies can be pinpointed in a several moments in the novel. It is mentioned in chapter fifteen right after the part describing Mr. Thaw's struggles. Duncan's father is making sure that his son is aware of the importance of him scoring high on his qualifying exam as if he passed it and proceeded to successfully finish a senior secondary school, his chances to find a well-paid job would be much higher.⁹⁷ It is apparent that he pushes Duncan to do his best right from the beginnings. He tries to be supportive, however, it may be perceived by his son as him being manipulative. Duncan might not appreciate his father's efforts to paint a future for him and as a result he might rebel even more against his ideas.

Nonetheless, Mr. Thaw never stops being supportive. It is also illustrated in chapter twenty. When Duncan reaches the end of secondary school and starts looking for a job, Mr. Thaw persuades him to go the art school and ask if he could join the life class. His works are, however, so impressive that the registrar offers the possibility to start attending the school as a full-time day student. When Mr. Thaw is phoned the news, he is hesitant at first because he is not sure if going to the art school is the right direction for his son. Needless to say, he allows Duncan to join the school in the end.⁹⁸

All of the situations described above illustrate Duncan's roots. It is obvious that he does not come from a wealthy family and, moreover, he is constantly aware of it. The fact that he feels like not belonging comes in great importance when he starts attending the art school. As described at the beginning of chapter twenty-two, "Everyone seemed friendly; lightly chattering currents of emotion flowed easily between them and Thaw stood in the flow feeling as dense and conspicuous as a lump of rock."⁹⁹ Even this little insight into his daily life clearly illustrates his feeling of unease when he is supposed to socialize with others.

The clash of social classes is undoubtedly shown within the relationship between Duncan and his fellow student Kenneth McAlpin. As described in chapter twenty-two, right after they meet each other, Kenneth does not hesitate to explain that he comes from a rather

⁹⁶ Gray, *Lanark*, 147.

⁹⁷ Gray, *Lanark*, 147.

⁹⁸ Gray, *Lanark*, 214.

⁹⁹ Gray, *Lanark*, 240.

well-off family and that he belongs to a group who were all snobs just like him. Moreover, when Duncan visits him, Kenneth's mother seems to do the same when she informs the guest of the house that the family used to be rather wealthy.¹⁰⁰ Seemingly, this does not appear to have any effect on Duncan.

In the contrast to the situation at Kenneth's home, he feels out of place when parties and excursions are planned by his fellow students. Since he spends time with them quite often, they plan these in front of him never bothering to ask him if he wants to join them. As illustrated in chapter twenty-two, he sits hoping to be invited and envy anybody who actually is. However, that does not lead him to ask whether he could come.¹⁰¹ This indicates how deeply insecure and out of place he actually feels.

One of the main events that shows the importance of social classes is Kenneth's birthday party. One would assume that since he and Duncan spend a lot of time together that he would invite his friend to the party, however, it is quite on the contrary. At first, Duncan overhears the other talking about the party. As stated in the book, he is then asked by Macbeth, one of the snobs, if he was invited. When his answer is negative, Macbeth becomes cheerful with the words: "No? That's queer. You and Kenneth are always about together. I thought you were friends." To which Duncan replies that he thought so too.¹⁰²

Afterwards, he refuses to speak with Kenneth and tries to avoid him for a while. However, he cannot resist asking why he was not invited after all. As described in the book, Kenneth explains that there was a limited number of tickets and he had to give them to people who had previously asked him or his girlfriend to come to their parties.¹⁰³ This clearly shows how hard it can be to cross certain borders in class-ridden system. The group around Kenneth is based on exclusivity. The way the invitation to parties circulates only between a certain number of people shows that they are not interested in anyone coming from a different background than theirs.

Even though, he manages to escape the realistic part of the story and subsequently Glasgow filled with class-ridden society, it is not much better in Unthank. In the words of Gregorová, "Lanark focuses more on the complexities of another common social ill related to work: the corrupting effects of unemployment."¹⁰⁴ This is a proof that the class related problems accompany not only the character of Duncan but also Lanark, only if in a different kind of way.

¹⁰⁰ Gray, *Lanark*, 241.

¹⁰¹ Gray, *Lanark*, 242.

¹⁰² Gray, *Lanark*, 250.

¹⁰³ Gray, *Lanark*, 252.

¹⁰⁴ Gregorová, "Compliance Versus Defiance," 85.

Moving to another topic that is addressed in the story, escapism is a theme that is weaved into the story throughout the whole book. Although, the form of it changes drastically. In the realistic part of the story, Duncan tries to escape the world through his art and when not, successful he achieves his goal of escaping by supposedly committing a suicide. However, it is not explicitly said so. Towards the end of chapter thirty, Duncan seems to slowly lose his sense of self and detaches from the world around him. As described in the book, “Thaw shuts his eyes and dimply sees his father and sister in a grey filed.”¹⁰⁵ This clearly indicates that he is experiencing some sort of illusion or hallucination as he did not have any encounters with them towards the end of the book. Their location is uncertain at the time of this event.

Encouraged by the pills he is taking, he sets off on the journey. As stated towards the end of the chapter, Duncan finds some sense or reality after he falls while descending the slope as he thinks that he is sore, and he does not like it.¹⁰⁶ He tries to solve his discomfort rationally, however, because of his delirious state he walks into the sea and subsequently drowns. In the book, it is described as him walking towards the waves, going into the deep end and not feeling a need to breathe. He starts tumbling and meets his end which is described as something that is comforting for him.¹⁰⁷ It is discussed in various sources whether the death was accidental or not. It is mentioned, for example, by Taylor who describes Duncan as troubled young man who struggles to find a balance between his artistic ambitions and his relationships with others. He says that it is, indeed, unclear whether his death was suicidal or unintentional.

In contrast to this, Lanark’s escape from the world he had found himself living in is completely different, almost incomparable to Duncan’s. Even though, there is a number of fantastic elements in this part of the story, it may still come as surprise when Lanark encounters a disease of one of his friends. In the book, it is said that while he had been struggling with his dragon skin, Gay reveals that unlike him, she has a mouth on her hand. It starts attacking Lanark with accusations to which he reacts with proclamation that it is hell and runs away from the scene.¹⁰⁸ Even this may be described as him trying to escape his surroundings, however, Gray proceeds to give the story even more surrealistic feeling. As stated in the book, after he stops running, a mouth appears in front of him stating that it is a way out. Surprisingly, he is not afraid of it, rather the contrary, he feels excitement running through him as his heart starts beating faster.¹⁰⁹ This positively illustrates his need to escape. Similar to Duncan’s situation,

¹⁰⁵ Gray, *Lanark*, 352.

¹⁰⁶ Gray, *Lanark*, 353.

¹⁰⁷ Gray, *Lanark*, 354.

¹⁰⁸ Gray, *Lanark*, 45-46.

¹⁰⁹ Gray, *Lanark*, 47.

sense of reality overcomes him, and he questions the mouth where it will lead him. However, when it refuses to answer and becomes to disappear, he shouts that he will come and proceeds to obey the mouth instructions which lead him away from his current world and situation. As described in the book, “blackness closed over him with a clash and he fell.”¹¹⁰

That is, however, not the last time his character tries to escape his surroundings. Although, he might have felt comfortable and content to certain extent at first, he grows tired of the Institute, where he fell through the mouth, quite quickly and after finding Rima, who would accompany him on his journey, he sets off to seek better place once again. Their journey is difficult and full of obstacles, but they prevail and manage to get to Unthank relatively safely. All of this clearly indicates that even though his surroundings and situation changes, he still feels the need to escape his state at certain moment and heads in the direction to a better life. The situation he is in might be of a terrible kind, however, he still believes there is a place where he could feel content and happy. Therefore, he continues to seek such place throughout the whole book. It is also evident that the escapism can be and is depicted in many ways, each completely different from the others.

All of this is a proof that the book plays a pivotal role in many individuals’ lives as the plot of the book is constantly accompanied with a character’s desire to escape his current situation. The readers may sympathise with Duncan/Lanark and escape their situation together with them, in Lanark’s case in much more imaginative way.

The book came out a couple of years after Thatcher claimed the post of Prime Minister and started, together with the government, steer the country towards what it was believed as better days. With the privatisation of state-owned businesses plus more, and closing the mines, the despair across the country began to rise. According to Bell, it is important to mention that in the time of Lanark’s release, it was concluded that Scots struggles for independence have been rather unsuccessful. The feeling of despair kept lingering in the air and many Scots felt as like there was the sense of the end.¹¹¹ Therefore, it is no wonder that people wanted to escape, even though, it may be only through the pages of the book and story of someone else.

In her book, Bell present the idea of Cairns Craig about the prevailing existence of apocalypse in the book. On one hand, it can be interpreted as an escape from the extensive mood when there is an option to head towards the possibility of a renewal.¹¹² This approach

¹¹⁰ Gray, *Lanark*, 47.

¹¹¹ Bell, *Questioning Scotland*, 103.

¹¹² Bell, *Questioning Scotland*, 106.

would heavily correspond to previously described escapism that accompanies the main characters throughout the whole book.

On the other hand, Bell states that Craig implies that the apocalypse can be understood as a sort of echo of ‘the end’. Said end would represent pessimism within the political life in Scotland.¹¹³ This statement indicates that the general mood in Scotland was overall unpleasant. Not only did they not leave Britain thanks to the referendum of 1979, the Thatcherism came and with it changes in the economy, culture, and society which were truly unfavourable for Scotland. According to Bell, the concept of apocalypse in the book can be seen as a representative picture of the political situation in Scotland.¹¹⁴ It is quite well described in the chapter forty-two in the conversation between Lanark and character called Gloopy. The latter explains to Lanark that their era is full of collapsing social values. That the times they find themselves in are based on alienation and non-communication. In his words: “The old morals and manners are passing away and the new lot haven’t come in yet.”¹¹⁵ This is sort of a reflection of the country in the time it was written and also published.

In Bell’s words, Gray providing a well-thought-out exploration of Scottishness, but he never provided a clear answer to problems that the Scottish identity faces. However, when this kind of vagueness might be alarming for some, other might find it joyfully productive.¹¹⁶ It is apparent that the novel is not perfect in all aspects. Although, that being said does not mean that Gray did not publish the book that would influence the public immensely and leave a great foundation for other authors and their literary works, rather on the contrary.

In conclusion, *Lanark* was and still might be liberating for a high number of people. It encourages everyone to try and remove the stereotype about Scottishness. By writing *Lanark*, Gray manages to showcase that there are more possible ways to look at Scotland, the Scots and Scottishness. Although, some argue that he also unnecessarily points out flaws which accompany Scottishness. Nonetheless, the book offers people the option to manage their desire to escape their situation in a creative way by reading such story. It also played significant role in addressing the political situation in Britain, especially Scotland’s relations to the parliament. Moreover, it has influenced and inspired other authors greatly.

¹¹³ Bell, *Questioning Scotland*, 106.

¹¹⁴ Bell, *Questioning Scotland*, 107.

¹¹⁵ Gray, *Lanark*, 522.

¹¹⁶ Bell, *Questioning Scotland*, 111.

6. Portrayal of Glasgow

It could be said that Gray's portrayal of the city in the book is a sort of a tribute to it. As he situates his story in the city itself, he shows how important of an element it can be. He was one of the first authors who depicted the plot of his book in its environment. By doing so, he showed people that Glasgow is and can be an amazing city. The problem is that no one actually sees Glasgow as a place that could be enriching for anyone in any way.

What is interesting that there is not only one depiction of the city. While, Gray sets the story of book one and two into contemporary Glasgow, there is another version of the city in the book three and four. This twisted form is called Unthank and it is a place where Lanark finds himself to be living in. The comparison between these two will be discussed later on in this chapter.

Firstly, the attention will be put on contemporary Glasgow. In the words of Galloway, Gray illustrated the city as a breathing and many-layered, showing people that it is not only this industrial centre but a city that could represent the whole nation.¹¹⁷ By choosing this kind of environment, Gray challenges people to see the city in a different light. As it was mentioned in chapter four, many outsiders still have a tendency to see the city as purely industrial one without taking in notice the changes it went through. Gray set on the path to change this kind of view. He calls for more imaginative approach when it comes to the depiction of the city.

Probably most discussed passage of the book is the one when Kenneth McAlpin claims that Glasgow is a magnificent city. It is possibly the most quoted part of the book as it attracted attention of many. As described in *Lanark*, Duncan and Kenneth, stood under an electric pylon overlooking the city, ponder on the question asked by Kenneth who wonders why they hardly ever notice that Glasgow is, indeed, an amazing place. Duncan's explanation is rather simple. He replies that it is because nobody ever imagines living there. Cities such as London, Paris and New York are visited by people through books, paintings and movies, therefore, when one visits them it is more like returning to the city. He claims that whenever Glaswegians need to exercise their imagination, their mind tends to turn to aforementioned cities. Nobody really imagines Glasgow as anything more than the house they live in, pub they visit, or place they work at.¹¹⁸ This indicates that Duncan regrets the fact that his hometown is represented only in a certain way, which means mostly its contribution to the country as an industrial city.

¹¹⁷ Galloway, "Glasgow belongs to us."

¹¹⁸ Gray, *Lanark*, 243.

Among many this topic is also addressed by Bell. She suggests that one of the reasons *Lanark* was written in the first place might actually be Gray trying to overcome the imaginative lack. In her words Duncan feels overwhelmed with the way how static Glasgow has become. He sees its stagnation and loses hope that it could ever be revitalized.¹¹⁹ Even him being an art student does not directly correspond with him addressing the lack of imagination when it comes to Glasgow. The way he approaches the problem is well illustrated in chapter twenty-two of *Lanark*. When asked by Kenneth if the reason he paints is to give the city more imaginative life, he replies that it is only an excuse to paint. He states that he feels purposeless when not creative.¹²⁰ His feelings towards the city might be one of the reasons why he falls into the spiral of sabotaging his life which occasionally leads to his apparent suicide. According to Bell, by witnessing his bitter end, “we are given a powerful insight into the consequences and potential hazards of living in a city which lacks imaginative figuring.”¹²¹

Also addressing this topic, Galloway speaks of the perception of Glasgow that has been somewhat enforced over time. In her schooling, Scotland, and consequently Glasgow as one of the main centres, has been shown as a small, cold, bitter place with nothing to offer. It has been implied multiple times that the city does not have any cultural heritage and it is full of people with nothing to provide to the world when it comes to art.¹²² This statement corresponds with Bell’s description of the stagnation of the city. Coming from Scotland herself, Galloway describes deficiency of Scottish authors in general, let alone those who would write about Scotland in a creative way. Moreover, prior to Gray all authors appear to be male and most of them dead.¹²³ That is why Gray comes as such an important figure for modern literature. Not only he decided to set the story to the urban environment of Glasgow, he also approaches the topic in a creative and exiting way. He shows that it is possible to write about Glasgow in many ways while using metaphors and other means of figurative language.

As it was previously mentioned there are more versions of Glasgow described in the novel. Gray chooses inventive approach when it comes to describing surroundings of the characters of Duncan and Lanark. In the words of Taylor, Gray creates a mythical city called Unthank which vaguely resembles contemporary Glasgow.¹²⁴ While Glasgow how Duncan knows it is described in a realistic way as a rather ordinary city slowly recovering after the

¹¹⁹ Bell, *Questioning Scotland*, 101.

¹²⁰ Gray, *Lanark*, 244.

¹²¹ Bell, *Questioning Scotland*, 101.

¹²² Galloway, “Glasgow belongs to us.”

¹²³ Galloway, “Glasgow belongs to us.”

¹²⁴ Taylor, *Glasgow The Autobiography*, 245.

Second World War, Unthank, according to Taylor, is a kind of lightless Limbo where people are exposed to strange diseases which leads to their disappearance in the end.¹²⁵ A topic related to light is relevant especially at the beginning of the novel.

As stated in chapter one, Lanark is asked by Sludden, who is one of the main characters and could be thought of as an Unthank based alter-ego of Kenneth just like Lanark is Duncan's alter-ego to certain extent, if he found it. At first Lanark is surprised by the question as he does not understand what he was supposed to find. Recovering quickly though, he proceeds to explain that he is looking for daylight and reasons why it is important to him. Sludden does not seem to share a same view on the world but lets Lanark speak and express his opinions.¹²⁶ This can be compared to the conversation between Duncan and Kenneth when they speak about Glasgow in chapter twenty-two. Kenneth may not fully understand Duncan or agree with him however, he allows him to express the opinion.

It seems like Lanark is the only person who understands that the existence of daylight might be of a great importance to not only him but others living in the city as well. Not fazed by the lack of light, other people around him continue to live their lives seemingly to the fullest. If they are concerned or uneasy about the lack, they do not let it show unlike Lanark. Such approach is illustrated in chapter two through Lanark's conversation with Rima. While he becomes excited by dawn in the sky, she does not seem to share his enthusiasm. He forgets about her momentarily only because she is completely indifferent to the light.¹²⁷

This can be viewed as a parallel to Duncan realizing the importance of imaginative conception of Glasgow, while nobody else ever discuss such topic. However, neither of the characters actively do something about their knowledge in the end. Both of them prefer to escape the place where they feel strained and isolated.

Moving to another interpretation of the depiction of Glasgow, as stated by Bell, by broadening the concept of the nation, Gray proceeds to puzzle readers with new opportunities how to approach a story. The readers find themselves on the boundaries between fantasy and reality of two contrasting worlds.¹²⁸ Even though, it is not hard for them to understand the concept of Glasgow in the part of the novel that is based on reality, in the fantasy-based part, Glasgow is defamiliarized and it may appear completely illogical to them. It can be illustrated on a several different parallels. For example, it is obviously fairly easily understood what it

¹²⁵ Taylor, *Glasgow The Autobiography*, 245.

¹²⁶ Gray, *Lanark*, 4-5.

¹²⁷ Gray, *Lanark*, 11.

¹²⁸ Bell, *Questioning Scotland*, 100.

means to suffer with eczema, however, it is surely harder to grasp the concept of dragonhide, even though it is explained in the story that it is sort of a skin disease. It is understandably difficult for the readers to grasp the fact that Lanark is turning into some kind of dragon. Portraying different aspects of living in Glasgow and Unthank challenges people to change their patterns of thinking and see things from another point of view.

What is interesting is the development of Unthank throughout the story. As described by Bell, it is turning into a place where the society is highly space-time compressed and consumerism is on the rise. One can buy themselves time, some days are 25 hours long and they cannot be measure by sunlight as natural light is slowly disappearing from the world.¹²⁹ Living in Unthank becomes more challenging with every day passing as it is nearing its end. Moreover, the physical appearance of the city changes drastically. When Lanark returns from the place called the Institute, he is not able to recognize Unthank at first. As stated in the book, “Rumours from the council corridors had made him expect much the same place, only darker and more derelict, but below a starless sky this city was coldly blazing.”¹³⁰ Lanark is forced to adapt to new environment and so are the readers.

This part of story is challenging in yet another way. As it was mentioned before the concept of time becomes particularly important. Time cannot be measured by ordinary means anymore, as it becomes twisted. Days can have more than 24 hours, anybody owning large sum of money can buy time, and it also influences people differently. In chapter thirty-seven, Rima, now Lanark’s wife, gives birth to a boy. Everything seems to go smoothly except for one thing when he starts to grow. Even though being born only eight pages prior, he can already speak, and his teeth are growing. As described in the book, “Lanark put a finger in the small mouth and felt tiny bone edge coming through the gum. He said uneasily, ‘We age quickly in this world.’”¹³¹ It is perfectly justifiable, Lanark feels distressed by the progression of events, as it is complicated to understand time working completely differently than before. By putting Lanark together with the readers in such position, Gray once more pushes them to their limits to try and perceive things differently.

In conclusion, Gray’s portrayal of the city is truly remarkable as nobody has ever truly written about it in such way before. Not only did Gray situate the story in contemporary Glasgow, he also created another version for it which shows how creative and imaginative one can be when it comes to depicting the city. By doing this, he truly became an inspiration for

¹²⁹ Bell, *Questioning Scotland*, 103.

¹³⁰ Gray, *Lanark*, 398.

¹³¹ Gray, *Lanark*, 428.

many authors, artists, and public in general. Thanks to him they have an option to see Glasgow in a different light than they used to. As it was mentioned in chapter four, the city managed to redefine itself after years of self-doubt and by writing *Lanark*, Gray may have contributed in shaping Glasgow into a place as it is known now.

Conclusion

As it was already implied there are many that come into question when contemplating one's character. After discussing topic such as identity, social classes in society, and politics, it is clear that many of these are incorporated in Gray's *Lanark*, be it in books one and two which are based on reality or in the rest of the story that is full of metaphors and surrealistic features.

Throughout the book the characters of Duncan Thaw and Lanark represents the working class and problems it faces. The struggles they are forced to endure are a reflection of the situation in the country of the time. Lanark failing to find a job so he can get out of the situation when he has no money left, Duncan failing to fit in the society as he comes from the working class and tries to climb the social ladder unsuccessfully, Duncan being purposely left out of the group, both, Duncan's and Lanark's desires to escape their environment; all of these are either a reflection of contemporary society oppressed by the government, or a picture of the working class restricted by upper classes, which, actually go hand in hand.

In Duncan's time line, the clash of Scotland and the British government is also included in the story through a metaphor of Duncan rebelling against various authorities, e. g. his father or the art school. This is clearly a depiction of the struggles the Scots have faced throughout history.

Through the story, readers are encouraged to perceive things in a different way than they used to prior to reading the book. Not only Lanark provide means of escapism, it also shows Glasgow in a completely new, creative way.

To conclude, the last statement which seems to fit right at the end of the paper comes from Taylor's *Glasgow, The Autobiography*. According to Taylor, Scotland produced the greatest poet of the century in Hugh MacDiarmid. In his words, "it was time Scotland produced a shattering work of fiction in the modern idioms," and *Lanark* is just that.¹³² This statement might be a little bit exaggerated in the eyes of some, however, many people believe so even when they might not use such words as 'shattering work of fiction' when it comes to description of the novel. Needless to say, *Lanark* has had an enormous impact on many. Not only it inspired aspiring authors to write in a new kind of way and be more creative with their stories and settings, it also challenged people to think differently when approaching a story.

¹³² Taylor, *Glasgow The Autobiography*, 246.

Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce je zaměřená na literární analýzu díla Alasdaira Graya s názvem *Lanark*. Jedná se o průlomové dílo v dějinách skotské literatury, které bylo již brzy po vydání chváleno nejenom literárními kritiky a po krátké době bylo navíc prohlášeno za jedno z nejvýznamějších děl za celou historii země. Mělo a stále má významný dopad nejen na autory knih, ale také na širší veřejnost vzhledem k tomu, že se jedná o velice inovativní a kreativní román.

Kniha byla psána během několika desetiletí. Není se tedy čemu divit, že dílo obsahuje nespočet různých příběhů, vedlejších dějových linií, míst a postav, kterých je vedle hlavních postav Duncana Thawa a Lanarka také mnoho. Hlavní dějová linie je nejprve zaměřena na Lanarka a jeho život ve městě Unthank. Poté se děj přesouvá do první a druhé knihy, kdy se čtenář společně s Lanarkem dozvídá, že byl dříve někým jiným (t.j. Duncanem Thawem, jeho alter egem). Po druhé knize následuje kniha čtvrtá a epilog, kde se děj soustředí znovu na Lanarka jako hlavní postavu.

Nejenom že je děj rozdělen do několika knih a příběh není vyprávěn lineárně, Gray také na nějakých místech úmyslně zarovná text neobvyklým způsobem, v textu se najednou objevují glosy a také se sám podílel na ilustraci díla, což ho činí vyjímečným. Doposud nebyla vydána kniha, která by se dotýkala tolika témat v obou (t.j. realistické i surrealistické) částech příběhu zkrze různé metafory a jiné literární metody.

Co se týče struktury bakalářské práce, tak jsou nejprve v teoretické části představeny základní pojmy. Hlavní použité metody jsou nejprve analýza použitých zdrojů a následná komparace různorodých názorů, ať už jsou téměř shodné nebo podobné, liší se v nějakých bodech nebo jsou naprosto rozdílné.

První téma, kterým se bakalářské práce zabývá je problematika identity. Je vysvětleno, že existují dva hlavní typy a to individuální a kolektivní. Obě identity jsou velice komplexní a nezávisle na sobě hrají velkou roli v chování jedince. Je důležité je pochopit, aby člověk lépe porozuměl chování druhých. Velký význam pro tuto práci má hlavně kolektivní identita, zejména ta národní a poté přímo skotská. Je popsána pomocí několika knih zaměřených na toto téma. Je vysvětleno, že téma skotské národnosti může být velmi náročné na diskuzi, vzhledem k duálnímu přístupu samotných Skotů k problému a také kvůli stereotypům, kterých se nemohou odprostit.

Další téma probírané v této práci je společnost a její rozdělení do sociálních tříd. Je vysvětleno, že je toto rozdělení hluboce zakořeněno ve fungování britské společnosti. Dříve se

dělila do tří hlavních skupin, nyní jich existuje sedm. Nicméně, ať už jich je jakýkoliv počet, vždy existuje třída na spodních příčkách hierarchie a to ta dělnická. Tato třída se vždy potýkala se spoustou problémů, například zvyšujícím se procentem nezaměstnanosti v druhé polovině 20. století. Ač získala důležitou pozici po druhé světové válce, když byla potřebná při znovuvybudování země, tato pozice rychle ztratila svou důležitost. Vše bylo završeno zvolením Margaret Thatcherové do čela vlády.

Politika Thatcherové zasáhla masy lidí a dopad jejích rozhodnutí je stále na některých místech Británie znát. Zejména velký vliv měla privatizace státních podniků, uzavření mnoha těžebních míst a také vyhláška, která vstoupila ve známost široké veřejnosti jako takzvaná Poll tax. Velké rodiny žijící v malých domech musely platit nepřínosně vysoké daně a velké množství domácností bylo touto vyhláškou ochromeno. Není se tedy čemu divit, že bylo tolik protestů a podobných akcí vedených proti Thatcherové a její konzervativní vládě.

V poslední kapitole teoretické části je popsáno jedno z hlavních center Skotska, Glasgow. Je přiblížena jeho historie, jeho přínos pro Británii a situace, jak vypadá město nyní. V neposlední řadě jsou také představeni jeho obyvatelé a jejich silný, bojovný duch.

Poté se bakalářská práce přesouvá k části praktické. Zdroj, který je v této části citovaný nejčastěji je pochopitelně Lanark, aby úryvky z knihy umožnily snazší ilustraci jednotlivých aspektů, které se v knize objevují.

První kapitola praktické části se zabývá postavami Duncanem Thawem a Lanarkem. Nejprve je ukázána paralela mezi chováním Duncana a zmíněnou dualitou, kdy Skoti sice litují toho, že nemají vlastní stát, ale projevují to pouze skrz umění. Duncan je v mnohém připomíná. Kvůli jeho uměleckým sklonům se i často dostává do konfliktů.

Další téma, které je v kapitole popsáno, je metafora k protestům proti útlaku Skotska Britskou centrální vládou. Duncan v tomto případě opět zastupuje stranu Skotů a sociální instituce, v tomto případě hlavně ty ze školního prostředí, jsou vykreslení vlády. Nedodržováním pravidel a neuposlechnutí nařízení jeho učitelů Duncan ukazuje, že nechce být nikým ovládaný. V knize je také adresována situace týkající se sociálních tříd. Vzhledem k tomu, že pochází z dělnické třídy, Duncan má pocit ostranosti a jako by nikam nepatřil.

V této části práce je také popsán tzv. eskapismus, kdy obě hlavní postavy unikají ze svého světa, Duncan relativně přirozeně, zatímco Lanark uniká zkrze ústa, která se mu zjevila, což je jeden z mnoha surrealistických prvků, které doprovází části knihy zaměřené na Lanarka.

Poslední kapitola je zaměřená na zobrazení Glasgow v románu. Zatímco realistická část knihy se odehrává v současném Glasgow, Lanarkův příběh je zasazen do města se jménem

Unthank. Toto místo se v určitých ohledech podobá Glasgow, ale věci jsou vnímány jinak než v realistickém světě. Gray porovnává tato dvě města skrz metafory a jiné obrazy jazyka.

V kapitole je také kladen důraz na jednu z nejméně citovaných pasáží knihy vůbec. Jedná se o konverzaci mezi Duncanem a jeho přítelem Kennethem. Uvažují nad faktem, že je Glasgow velkolepé město, ale nikdo ho tak ve skutečnosti nevnímá. Duncan má pro to relativně snadnou odpověď. Nikdo si nevšimá toho, že by Glasgow mohlo být skvělé místo proto, že si ho nepředstavuje jinak než místo, kde složí hlavu ke spánku a kde pracuje.

Jak již bylo zmíněno, Lanark hrál důležitou roli v mapování sociální a politické sféry ve Skotsku. Stal se také podnětem pro mnoho autorů, aby se svými díly také více improvizovali a byli celkově kreativnější. Také ukázal nejenom jedincům pohybujícím se v literární sféře, ale i širší veřejnosti, že je možné psát o Glasgow zajímavým, inovativním způsobem. Poskytl lidem dílo, do kterého můžou utéct před světem a zároveň je inspiroval, aby se na věci dívali i z jiného pohledu než doposud.

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