

COMPLIANCE VERSUS DEFIANCE:
THE CHARACTERS' RESPONSE TO SOCIAL STRUCTURES
IN ALASDAIR GRAY'S *LANARK* AND *1982 JANINE*

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ABSTRACT

The article focuses on two novels by Alasdair Gray, *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* (1981) and *1982 Janine* (1984), in particular on the ways in which the characters are influenced by externally imposed social structures and the attitudes they assume in dealing with them. The adverse workings of official institutions, such as education and employment facilities, are received with compliance on the part of the protagonist in *1982 Janine* but meet with resistance from both of the two mirror protagonists in *Lanark*. In the context of the standing of Scotland within the United Kingdom, institutions represent the interests of the powerful English majority rather than the dependent Scottish minority, and therefore any act of rebellion against them is charged with a subversive potential. Besides the political implications, the article explores the social dimensions of the novels and illustrates by means of individual examples the means used by the powerful to exploit the powerless, as well as the strategies the latter employ to defend themselves.

KEYWORDS

Alasdair Gray; *Lanark*; *1982 Janine*; politics in literature; sexuality; twentieth-century Scottish literature

When Alasdair Gray was asked by an interviewer whether the concern with monstrous institutions recurrent in his writing is a “kind of obstreperousness” springing from “a genetic perturbation” of the author, he replied:

My approach to institutional dogma and criteria—let’s call it my approach to institutions—reflects their approach to me. Nations, cities, schools, marketing companies, hospitals, police forces have been made by people for the good of people. I cannot live without them, don’t want or expect to. But when we see them working to increase dirt, poverty, pain, and death, then they have obviously gone wrong. Is it mere obstreperousness to show them wrong? The genetic perturbation you refer to is a sense of justice.¹

Political and social injustice, coupled with the exploitation by those with power of the less fortunate, have indeed been the issues that Gray most often chooses to tackle. Besides being the preoccupation of his polemical treatises, *Why Scots Should Rule Scotland* (1992, revised 1997) and *How We Should Rule Ourselves* (with Adam Tomkins, 2005), these topics also figure

1. Quoted in Mark Axelrod, “An Epistolary Interview, Mostly with Alasdair Gray,” *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 15, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 108.

prominently in his fiction, including the much acclaimed epic *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* (1981) and the controversial work of political pornography *1982 Janine* (1984). Whereas *Lanark* portrays alternately the strivings of a young artist thwarted by the strictures of inflexible institutions and the failure of a common man in the face of an inhuman global syndicate devoted solely to earning profit, *1982 Janine* focuses on a life marred by the less tangible but nonetheless powerful social constructs imposed on a protagonist seeking upward class mobility. As the protagonist-narrator of *1982 Janine*, Jock McLeish, puts it in his drunken soliloquy addressed to God: "I am very sorry God, I would like to ignore politics but POLITICS WILL NOT LET ME ALONE. Everything I know, everything I am has been permitted or bugged up by some sort of political arrangement."²

An original achievement that first announced Gray as a major talent, the monumental *Lanark* stretches the possibilities of incorporating a double plot into a single novel in its innovative juxtaposition of a crudely realistic story and an allegorical narrative. The two major plot lines follow two versions of one and the same character: the novel opens with the protagonist stranded in a decaying metropolis and, having no memories of his former existence, coming to call himself Lanark for the earliest name that he could recall and which happened to be one of a town depicted in a poster. Divided as it is into four books arranged out of chronological order, the novel continues to shift the focus onto Duncan Thaw, an artistic youth whose life terminates in suicide only to be resumed in the physical form of Lanark. Gray's next published novel, *1982 Janine*, cemented the author's reputation as an incorrigible iconoclast while also causing a minor sensation owing to its explicit sexual content. The entire novel is narrated through the disjointed memories of an insomniac fantasist, outwardly an unadventurous man plodding through a dull middle age, who spends his sleepless nights conjuring elaborate pornographic scenarios involving, among other things, bondage, fetishism, and rape. The book takes its name from the protagonist's favorite fantasy woman, Janine, whom her inventor, Jock, forces into assuming a series of humiliating roles according to the various scripts devised by him. Janine and her female fellows are subjected to shameless abuse in a world where human beings are treated as a commodity, which is a characteristic equally applicable to the actual world of Jock, who shares the experience of exploitation. Where Jock appropriates Janine on the grounds of her sexuality, he himself feels violated by a system that purchases his labor without allowing him to participate in its management or exercise any influence on its policies. In the final analysis, *1982 Janine* interweaves the themes of sexual and political abuse to the point of identifying the one with the other; ultimately, it illustrates that whatever form an arbitrary abuse of power takes, it results in a fundamental violation of the human beings exposed to it.

2. Alasdair Gray, *1982 Janine* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), 231–32. Hereafter cited in text as *J*.

A bleak view of the state of human society permeates *1982 Janine* and *Lanark* alike, but it is only in the case of the latter that this quality—assisted by the apparent science fiction elements in the portions of the book set in the apocalyptic city of Unthank and in the city-in-a-building of the Institute—might lead to the easy assumption that *Lanark* takes the form of a dystopian novel. To dismiss the disturbing portrayal of the predatory Institute and Unthank societies as a mere dystopia would, however, be to oversimplify the complexity of the novel's structure and to overlook one entire dimension of its multifaceted text. M. H. Abrams applies the term dystopia to works that forge an "imaginary world in which ominous tendencies of our present social, political, and technological order are projected into a disastrous *future* culmination."³ In other words, dystopias elaborate in fictional terms on the possibility that in a more or less distant future, humankind might experience a regressive development and degenerate to the condition of savage beasts. A series of subtle hints interspersed throughout *Lanark* enables a clear connection to be established between the two protagonists, as much as a strong link to be drawn between their respective settings: the amnesiac Lanark reincarnates the suicidal Duncan Thaw in a similar way to that in which Lanark's nightmarish Unthank reenacts Duncan's post-Second World War Glasgow. What disqualifies *Lanark* from being described as a dystopia is that, despite the surreal fluidity of time and space and the futuristic feats of technology manifested in the sections featuring Unthank and the Institute, the ideological content of the whole of the novel is firmly rooted in contemporary reality. *Lanark* cannot be said to develop a dystopian vision of what might happen in an imagined future; the novel rather prefers a realistic method of observing what is already happening at *present* and then translates the painful actualities into allegorical terms. Thus, the cannibalistic community of the Institute may be read on the literal level as a portrayal of a fictional society that lives on actually devouring its own members, or, even more disconcerting, it can be understood on the allegorical level as a realistic rendering of contemporary conditions under which the energies and efforts of the hapless majority appear to be consumed to accomplish the aims of the fortunate ruling minority rather than aims of their own. The science fiction elements employed in the novel do not rule out the insistent presence of serious social concerns in an allegorical disguise; quite the contrary, as Frederic Jameson suggests, the form in this case reinforces the content: "SF [science fiction] more than most types of literature relies heavily on conceptual schemes (which is to say, on ideological materials) for its construction of future or alternate universes . . . , whereby elements of our own world are selected in accordance with this or that abstract concept or model."⁴ In each of its several settings, realistic or otherwise, *Lanark* does

3. M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 7th ed. (Boston: Heinle and Heinle, 1999), 328. Italics mine.

4. Frederic Jameson, "In Retrospect," *Science Fiction Studies* 1, no. 4 (September 1974): 274.

not conceive a dystopian speculation but issues an outspoken comment on a world evacuated of humanity and dominated by a powerful few who prosper at the expense of the powerless many.

Both the above-mentioned novels deal with subjects of universal resonance; however, they feature explicitly Scottish main characters and substantial parts of the stories take place in the author's native Glasgow, which inevitably invites a more specific reading within the discourse surrounding the question of the condition of Scotland. Three hundred years after the 1707 Act of Union, which joined the previously separate states of Scotland and England into a single unit, Scotland does not seem much of an integral part of the United Kingdom. The status of Scotland could be described as that of a stateless nation: "Politically, Scotland functions as a region, but socially it maintains many of the institutions, especially legal and educational ones, that are characteristic of a nation."⁵ Along with social institutions, the Scottish have preserved their distinctive culture, which, on the one hand, never fully managed to assert its rightful position within the English canon, while on the other hand, it resisted attempts to be forcefully assimilated into and consequently replaced by English traditions. In terms of political rule, major decisions affecting the course of the whole country are forged in a distant capital by representatives promoting the interests of the English majority rather than those of the Scottish minority. A Scot may suspect that "no government need to be moved by the wishes of the northern native, especially not the Gaelic native" (*J*, 134), as the fictional Jock McLeish, an advocate of Scottish home rule, says, commenting on the policies of Margaret Thatcher and her first Conservative government, which manifested little understanding for Scottish (or any other) separatist complaints.

In some respects, the contemporary standing of Scotland resembles a postcolonial condition; "colonizing," after all, is the very word used by an apparently anti-English character in *1982 Janine* to describe the attitude of dominance exercised by the English over the lesser Scottish nation (*J*, 288). It has been argued "that there is, in fact, nothing 'post' about Scotland politically or economically";⁶ this assertion, however, seems to ignore the fact that with regard to politics, the country embarked on a new stage with the establishment of a devolved Scottish parliament effected by the Scotland Act of 1998, and that the last dozen years of development have been accordingly referred to as the post-devolution era. In terms of economics, the Scotland of the last third of the twentieth century could be conveniently labeled as a postindustrial country, a situation realistically depicted in *1982 Janine*, which juxtaposes the comforts of the postwar welfare state with the condition of Glasgow in the early nineteen-eighties, described by William M. Harrison "as an abandoned, late-capitalist, postindustrial locus: a city in decay and on

5. Christie March, "Bella and the Beast (and a Few Dragons, Too): Alasdair Gray and the Social Resistance of the Grotesque," *Critique* 43, no. 4 (Summer 2002): 324.

6. March, "Bella and the Beast," 326.

the dole.”⁷ What relates Scotland most clearly to this postcolonial status is the fact that the nation has been historically subjected to exploitation perpetrated or sanctioned by the English government and that Scottish distinctiveness has been continuously discouraged by a system upholding English values, including the use of Standard English as the official language. 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, notably in the mind of Alasdair Gray.

When discussing literary texts with a strong underlying social message, it seems appropriate to refer to terms employed most commonly by theorists of Marxist criticism. Throughout *Lanark* and *1982 Janine*, the main characters continuously experience feelings of entrapment within an antagonistic sociopolitical system which, they believe, has been tailored to the needs of a small group of the powerful and affluent who pursue private rather than public goals and do so at the expense of society at large. Admittedly, the Marxist approach has been massively discredited and vulgarized in recent decades; as Terry Eagleton, however, helpfully comments, the cause of this decline is not that the issues addressed by Marxism have disappeared and so rendered the theory redundant—obviously, social problems still persist.⁸ Far from arguing for the simplified solution of a socialist revolution, both *Lanark* and *1982 Janine* revolve around the conflict of an individual with what Marxist theory labels “ideology” and characterizes as a set of “definite forms of social consciousness’ (political, religious, ethical, aesthetic, and so on)” whose primary purpose “is to legitimate the power of the ruling class in society.”⁹ The abstract concept of ideology materializes in the physical presence of institutions founded in order to enforce established norms to which each member of the particular society is expected to submit. Neither the ideology nor the social structures set up to promote it should be perceived as inherently evil, but Gray’s novels nevertheless present the perversion of a social system gone astray and invite, if not require, a reading in terms of the abuse of power and a struggle for liberation from oppression. *1982 Janine* offers a view of a society which, for example, refuses to grant social assistance to an unmarried woman who shares a home with her partner, thus, by virtue of a cohabitation law, officially assuming her condition to be that of “a self-employed whore” (*J*, 242). *Lanark* in turn features an atrocious system which literally feeds on the deaths of its members, putting into service advanced scientific knowledge to recycle dead bodies into nutritious food. Both novels center on protagonists who recognize the inadequacies and inhumanity of the degenerate ideology sustained by their respective societies and both equally

7. William M. Harrison, “The Power of Work in the Novels of Alasdair Gray,” *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 15, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 163.

8. See Terry Eagleton, “Was Marx Right? It’s Not Too Late to Ask,” *Commonweal*, April 8, 2011: 9.

9. Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (London: Routledge, 2002), 5.

examine the consequences of the characters' choice as to whether to comply with or to resist their own dehumanization.

Unlike some of his contemporaries, such as his fellow-chronicler and celebrator of Glasgow James Kelman, Alasdair Gray has decided to address his audience mostly in Standard English, and yet he remains aware of the subversive potential of the vernacular and deploys it at strategically selected points in his novels. *1982 Janine* presents a protagonist haunted by the traumatic experiences of his past, among them the painful memories of a tyrannical English language teacher appropriately dubbed Mad Hislop, who, when not busy making boys into men by exercising his lochgelly on their outstretched hands, devoted his energies to pouring euphonious English poetry into his pupils' ears. Not Robert Burns, however, for Hislop despised the Scottish poet, and this detail renders him all the more suitable as a representative of English-centered educational practices. Hislop clearly realizes the implications of his role in a system promoting English culture and language, which shows, for example, in his accusing a boy who uses his native dialect of "either a conscious or unconscious effort to destroy communication between the provinces of a once mighty empire" (*J*, 84). What the authoritarian teacher carries out in his classroom can properly be called a "cultural invasion," described by Paulo Freire as a form of violation which "implies the 'superiority' of the invader and the 'inferiority' of those who are invaded, as well as the imposition of values by the former, who possess the latter and are afraid of losing them."¹⁰ Hislop serves as a loyal extension of English rule: set on the task of guarding an outpost of culture in what he perceives as barbarian Scotland, he brings to mind the image of a missionary dispatched by an imperial power with the objective of converting the savages and forcing them to comply with an alien set of values.

Before his breakdown, Hislop becomes identified with his institution to such an extent that he ceases to be an individual human being, however whimsical and cruel, and assumes the appearance of a monstrous, inhuman machine. This impression is reinforced by the mechanical, automaton-like movements in which Hislop carries out his curative beating of Anderson, a boy with a lisp, and which he intends to continue until Anderson asks him to stop while pronouncing the word with the correct articulation. In the face of such violent injustice, young Jock McLeish discovers in himself the strength to defy an appointed authority, the strength that he is to lack in his later conformist life, and speaks up on behalf of Anderson. In a wonderful moment of compassion for a fellow creature and rightful anger over the abuse of power, the whole class takes over Jock's chant "You shouldnae have done that" and eventually has Hislop crushed and defeated (*J*, 336). Cairns Craig suggests that Jock's employment of the vernacular stands as "the assertion not just of moral condemnation but of linguistic independence" and notices that Hislop

10. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos, rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 1996), 141.

himself has recourse to his mother tongue when he is delivered from the madness of his pupils by the headmaster and whines childishly: "Oh sir they wullnae lea' me alane, they wullnae lea' me alane."¹¹ The machinery enforcing alien language structures on natural speech breaks down when "[t]he enforcer of the power of the written over the oral, of the standardly typographic, is defeated by the power of the oral, just as Jock himself will be redeemed by the discovery of his own voice and by his—and his author's—refusal to be bound by the conventions of the world of type."¹²

The oppressive figure of Hislop finds its match in *Lanark* in the abusive character of Sludden, the inconsequential self-proclaimed leader of a cafe clique who rises to the influential position of a city provost, apparently by making use of his manipulative powers. The connection between Hislop and Sludden rests on the lasting influence that they exercise over the lives of the protagonists, Jock and Lanark respectively, and on the fact that they operate as parts of an overarching system rather than as independent individuals. Furthermore, both Hislop and Sludden represent institutions professing to benefit those who come into contact with them, but in fact contribute to corruption and cause harm, intentionally or otherwise. Hislop's far-too-frequent resorting to corporal punishment illustrates his perverted belief that "teaching small people to take torture from big people, and crushing their natural reaction to it, was a way of improving them" (*J*, 85). One cannot help noticing that Gray does not refer to "children" and "adults," but to "small people" and "big people," which emphasizes the universal validity of the assertion and suggests that the pattern of the weak being abused by the powerful recurs at all stages of one's life.

Inflicting physical pain and spreading psychological terror serve Hislop as a means of crushing resistance and numbing the spirit of young persons so that they will grow up to accept unquestioning obedience to the system that produced them. In the single purgative night during which *1982 Janine* is purported to take place, Jock seeks to banish the haunting memories of his past by summoning pornographic fantasies but is eventually led to realize that his elementary school teacher has firmly planted in him a version of himself, another Hislop, a "mean snigger at a world ruled by shameless greed and cowardice and which thinks these insanities are serious essential traditional straightforward commonsense business" (*J*, 176). Unlike Hislop, Sludden begins by pursuing his private interests without being affiliated to any official body; however, his patronizing leadership of an assembly of lovers and would-be friends might be considered a mere rehearsal of the public role that he is to assume later in the novel. Sludden views love and work as "ways of mastering other people," an idea which he is clearly bent on putting into practice, particularly regarding the exploitative nature of his relationship to

11. Cairns Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 190.

12. Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel*, 190.

Gay, his fiancée, and Nan, the mother of his child.¹³ As Gay explains, “Sludden never lets go,” a claim reinforced by the description of her straining attempt to get farther away from him, which is prevented by an imaginary “elastic cord fixed to her back” binding her to Sludden and literally pulling her in his direction (*L*, 45). Nan, the woman Sludden has tired of, pictures herself as “being crushed under a whole pile of women with Sludden jumping up and down on top, wearing a crown and laughing” and Sludden as “a frantic greedy child running everywhere looking for breasts to grab and mothers to feed him” (*L*, 361). Whereas the long line of Sludden’s women—reaching from Gay and Nan to Rima, Lanark’s common-law wife—at least realize that they are being taken advantage of, Lanark himself remains unsuspecting when Sludden disposes of him by sending him off to what looks like a conference of world powers with a delegate decree and the misled belief that he has the power to save the city of Unthank from destruction. Unsurprisingly, Lanark fails to achieve anything by his speech at a conference that has already decided to let Unthank go down; nevertheless, he manages to preserve his personal integrity, a comfort denied to the opportunist protagonist of *1982 Janine*. Whereas Lanark consistently acts on what he perceives as a moral imperative and disregards the potentially adverse consequences of his defiant actions for his well-being—such as the prospect of starving himself to death when he refuses to eat the Institute food—Jock prefers the easy way of compliance and throughout his actions he seeks in the first place to benefit himself.

In *1982 Janine*, the enduring normative efforts of Mad Hislop, the pressure to conform on the part of the protagonist’s irreproachably respectable parents, and, perhaps, also the proneness to manipulation manifest in Jock himself all combine to produce a perfect tool in the service of whomever desires it, in Jock’s case, the National Security Installations. As a supervisor of electronic security devices, Jock serves his employer for twenty-five years as infallibly as a cog in the wheel of a well-oiled machine, belonging to “those frequently mocked individuals who are proud to have never lost a day’s work through illness in their lives” (*J*, 322). Jock becomes dehumanized to such an extent that he does not allow any human weakness, no matter how natural, to interfere with his work responsibilities; he ceases both to think and to feel, deliberately numbing his reasoning faculties by continuous heavy drinking and eventually discovering himself incapable of experiencing any kind of authentic emotion, whether positive or otherwise.

Jock’s education and upbringing invariably followed the pattern of what Freire defines as an “antidialogical action,”¹⁴ referring in the context of pedagogy to the mechanical practice of transferring ready-made content to passive recipients and requiring its faithful reproduction in much the same way as one would record and recall data in a computer system. Freire

13. Alasdair Gray, *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* (1981; Edinburgh: Canongate, 2007), 6. Hereafter cited in text as *L*.

14. Freire, *Pedagogy*, 119.

continues to identify the elements of an antidialogical action, including in the foremost place the “conquest,” which “involves a Subject who conquers another person and transforms her or him into a ‘thing.’”¹⁵ Speaking about Jock, as a young person he was subjected to appropriation through a repressive institutional education, as well as a restrictive home environment, the former inhibiting his individuality, the latter suppressing his spontaneity. Jock reports on his parents’ house as “COMFORTABLE BUT DEPRESSED” (*J*, 196); he never heard his mother and father either cry or laugh aloud—with a single exception when he contrived to trick them into openly showing their pleasure over a letter announcing his admission to college—and adopting this model of behavior, he himself unlearned to exhibit his emotions. At the end there remains little to nothing by which Jock can be distinguished from an inanimate object: stripped of his human qualities, he loses the ability to engage in interaction with other human beings and continues to exist as a mere automaton.

Jock’s well-meaning mother, intent on having her only child eclipse the limits of his working-class background, quite physically restrains him from mixing with colliers’ and crofters’ children by sending him to school in an uncomfortable suit which prevents its wearer from moving freely and joining in rough games. Jock’s father brings the boy’s perverse clothing scheme to perfection with his seemingly sensible suggestion to equip Jock with “three jackets and three waistcoats and seven pairs of trousers and two overcoats of the same cloth” because when changed daily, “[t]he fabric will suffer so little strain that with ordinary care it will look continually smart and last him a lifetime” (*J*, 201). The father dismisses the mother’s feeble protests against such suffocating uniformity, pointing out that Jock’s prospective employers will value consistency even in dress, and thus Jock is denied the chance to assert his individuality and is instead turned into a standardized part of a working machine. Jock’s only peculiar distinction is his bow tie, a piece of clothing at the time most probably “worn by professional people in risky businesses like horseracing, the arts and journalism” (*J*, 202), certainly not by a working-class boy enrolled at a technical college. Both the strength and the foolishness of social constructs are humorously illustrated by the first confrontation between Jock and his future father-in-law, who, judging from Jock’s bow tie, assumes him to be an upper-class scoundrel with artistic pretensions, and reacts in an insulted manner when Jock points out that he, too, is wearing a bow tie. Jock’s surprising choice of the bow tie remains an exceptional and probably inadvertent act of challenging the social constructs with which Jock later in his life duly complies, first out of timid cowardice, later with knowing cynicism.

Jock’s uniform appearance contrasts starkly with the flamboyant variety exhibited by some of his more adventurous fellow college students, especially the bohemian Alan, who “dressed like a tinker,” yet wore his randomly

15. Freire, *Pedagogy*, 148.

assembled clothes with an unpretentious dignity that made them “[look] like the improvisations of a Grand Duke who had lost his fortune and valet in a revolution, like the casual wear of a more elegant, more easygoing, more practical civilisation” (*J*, 109). Jock’s reminiscences of Alan truly resemble “at once love poem and threnody,”¹⁶ for Alan qualifies as a complete person, a fully human being who positively fills the space he occupies, and, were it not for his premature death, Alan would “have changed Scotland . . . , he would have set an irresistible example by doing exactly what he wanted in the middle of the back row” (*J*, 108). Eccentric dressing habits alone obviously do not necessarily imply a rebellion against the constraints of social structures, and as far as Alan is concerned, his colorful costumes serve as a mere extension of his versatile personality. Jock characterizes his admirable friend-mentor as “a natural engineer who learned as he breathed,” as a genius who “seemed to know everything in the world but was completely unintellectual,” and, above all, as a man “incapable of caring what a mere boss, a mere professor said, unless he found it useful or entertaining” (*J*, 107, 111). Alan would not be appropriated by either an institution or an individual, which means that he does not feel obliged to attend his mathematics lessons when he deems them irrelevant, but also that he feels free to refuse a request by a friend when it does not suit him to fulfill it.

This friend, or rather acquaintance, happens to be Jock’s future wife, Helen, to whom Jock is offered by Alan as a substitute, and whom Jock later marries by mistake, as well as out of cowardice. Frustrated by her boyfriend’s infidelity, Helen seduces Jock and has a phantom pregnancy, and although she realizes her mistake before the wedding, both the young people prove too cowardly to cancel it. Jock falls prey to the manipulative behavior of Helen’s father, whose looming presence suffices to persuade Jock to agree to the marriage, and to the intrigues of Helen herself, for she resorts to a lie in order to convince Jock of his supposed paternity. Jock lacks Alan’s confidence and courage to defy authority, which renders him an easy target for abuse and exploitation, and eventually turns him into an obedient tool in the hands of his masters. Unlike Jock, Alan “[is] not a coward, not an instrument” (*J*, 106); on the contrary, he is an inspirational figure whose very resourcefulness, according to Harrison, “reconstructs a commonly mythologized Scotland, where the ‘enterprising Scot’ overcomes any number of obstacles.”¹⁷ As has been pointed out, Alan and Jock’s belief in the regeneration of the nation through modern science does not stand the test of time; Alan dies, and Jock’s youthful idealism gradually dissolves, to be replaced by defeatist pessimism.¹⁸

At some points in both 1982 *Janine* and *Lanark* it certainly does seem that “the texts call for a regenerative impulse built powerfully upon the

16. Philip Hobsbaum, “Alasdair Gray: The Voice of His Prose,” *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 15, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 152.

17. Harrison, “The Power of Work,” 163.

18. Harrison, “The Power of Work,” 163.

Scottish work ethic and capability,”¹⁹ and yet at the same time the novels illustrate the potential pitfalls of an unreserved trust in these values. When the middle-aged Jock McLeish opens up his life for inspection, the limited achievement of his having become an exemplary employee is contrasted with the significant failure in his having grown into a miserable person: an abandoned divorcee, secret alcoholic, and insomniac fantasist. In the midst of Jock’s blackly comic suicide attempt, the God conjured up by him enters the page in the margins (“Jumping Jehovah! Is it yourself? How are the mighty fallen!” Jock reacts to the revelation [*J*, 178]) and summons Jock back to existence by the injunction: “Listen come alive for gods sake [*sic*] work as if you were in the early days of a better nation” (*J*, 185). Considering the circumstances of the story, God’s suggestion strikes a rather ironic note because Jock swallows barbiturate pills with whiskey when he comes to the conclusion that he cannot carry on in his job and fails to conceive of any other alternatives. The voice of God represents an exteriorized development of Jock’s conscience, which he has been attempting to benumb with alcohol throughout his professional career (“Shut up you foul little still small voice. Sip. Take that, you stupid stinking turd of intelligent conscience. Sip. Sip.” [*J*, 124]) and which revives in full strength after Jock’s failed suicide attempt, disturbing his asinine complacency, preventing him from the peaceful enjoyment of his violent sexual fantasies, and pressing him to take assertive action (“I INSIST THAT YOU HEAR ME, DID WE RIDE THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH JUST TO LET YOU TICKLE YOURSELF INTO ANOTHER WANK?” [*J*, 321]).

Whereas 1982 *Janine* portrays a man plagued by a sense of betrayal of his own people for giving up his moral integrity and selling out his skills to an apparently foreign-owned company—whose business name, National Security Installations, therefore strikes a rather ironic note—*Lanark* focuses more on the complexities of another common social ill related to work: the corrupting effects of unemployment. Lanark spends much of the novel ostensibly in a search for sunlight, to him more generally associated with the achievement of simple human happiness, a natural part of which is formed by finding fulfillment in a meaningful occupation. Lanark begins the book named for him stranded in the apocalyptic city of Unthank, where jobs are scarce, diseases spread, and people disappear mysteriously. He is diagnosed with dragonhide and discovers that the disease grows worse with the patient’s inactivity, while it miraculously stops spreading when he takes up the task of writing down an account of his arrival in Unthank, and yet he cannot force himself either to accept dubious employment in the weapons industry or to join the army, the only options available. Lanark’s disease embodies his helplessness in the face of a vast sociopolitical system, as it paralyzes the afflicted person in a similar way by encasing their body in an armor of impenetrable, unfeeling skin. After a short spell in the institute, a peculiar

19. Harrison, “The Power of Work,” 163.

hospital establishment staffed by cured patients, Lanark, now with a wife and a son to support, reluctantly condescends to work in a job center which does not specialize in offering employment but in killing “hope *slowly*, so that the loser has time to adjust unconsciously to the loss” (*L*, 439). Social service institutions under the surveillance of repressive regimes often tend to be appropriated for the above-stated purpose, that is, as Freire formulates it, training the oppressed “to adapt to the world of oppression”²⁰ and serving to “adjust them to a reality which must remain untouched”²¹ if the ruling elite is to preserve its superior status.

A labor exchange where no jobs are available stands as but one instance in a series of atrocious institutions portrayed in *Lanark* whose actual activities come in serious conflict with their original purpose. Another powerful illustration of a public service provider striving to benefit itself instead of individuals in need is a hospital where no patients are cured because the system draws profit from letting the diseased die rather than from restoring them to health. Indeed, Lanark’s dragonhide disappears in the institute; the healing, however, occurs somewhere between Unthank and the patient ward, presumably in the giant mouth that swallows Lanark when in extremes of despair he cries for a way out. The only recorded case of a dragonhide patient resuming their human form again as a result of the treatment they received remains that of Rima, who is brought back to life by Lanark’s self-sacrificing attitude to his fellow-sufferer as much as by his breaking the institute’s fundamental rules. Considering the fact that the hospital recruits its staff from surviving patients, some of the sick must actually regain their health during their stay, though this perhaps only extends to those whose disease does not trigger the transformation of men into dragons and salamanders.

An institute doctor hints at the horrendous practices of the so-called hospital when he muses over the body of a man who has just died naturally: “Strange, isn’t it. We can find a practical use for any number of dead monsters, but a mere man can only be burned or shovelled into the ground” (*L*, 56). The casual remark leaves Lanark bewildered and it is only by accident that he learns about the institute’s ingenious devices for recycling the corpses of patients into food, clothes, fuel, and all the other necessities required by the isolated complex in order for it to be self-sufficient. Significantly, the monstrous machinery can only make use of monsters, while those who manage to retain the qualities of human beings even in an inhuman environment resist contributing to the growth of the system, and continue doing so even after their death. The leading representatives of the institute turn out to be closely interconnected with the highest officials of Unthank, the city which supplies the patients, the two parties being united by one of the “mutual assistance pacts based upon greed” (*L*, 80). Regarding the nature of this unsound alliance, George Donaldson and Alison Lee poignantly note

20. Freire, *Pedagogy*, 59.

21. Freire, *Pedagogy*, 75.

that the Unthank citizens “subjected to a political system develop diseases propagated by that system, and when they die, they are literally consumed so that the system might continue in the same way.”²² The motif underlying the whole novel, the menacing statement “Man is the pie that bakes and eats himself” (*L*, 101) uttered successively by different characters, serves “as a persistent reminder that the system feasts upon those who nevertheless participate in keeping it going.”²³ Lanark defiantly refuses to conform to the corrupt system and achieves his dismissal from the institute, which is willingly approved by the authorities because of Lanark’s supposed offenses, among the gravest being his curing a patient in the hospital. Much to his dismay, Lanark finds himself back in the Unthank of job centers devoid of purpose and social security systems which reenact the policy of the institute by distributing among the impoverished “three-in-one,” a substance that “nourishes and tranquillizes and stops your feeling cold”—and “after a while it damages the intelligence” (*L*, 432), thus effectively killing at least a part of a human being.

Where *Lanark* revolves around the cannibalistic metaphor of society as a system whose “ordinary behaviour” is that “the efficient half eats the less efficient half and grows stronger” (*L*, 411), *1982 Janine* elaborates on the outrageous proposition, voiced by the protagonist, that “if a country is not just a tract of land but a whole people then clearly Scotland has been fucked. I mean that word in the vulgar sense of *misused to give satisfaction or advantage to another*. Scotland has been fucked and I am one of the fuckers who fucked her” (*J*, 136). The challenge of *1982 Janine* rests in its idiosyncratic use of language, its bold typographic experiments that make some of the pages balance on the edge of readability, but above all in its iconoclastic fusion of frivolous sexual fantasies and serious social and political concerns. The novel does not employ sexuality and politics as two separate themes; rather it interweaves both into a complex tapestry in which, as Donaldson and Lee claim, “violent sexuality is used as a metaphor for a whole host of political abuses that the strong foist upon the weak.”²⁴ A despicable drunkard though he may be, the protagonist demonstrates a sharpness of observation and an acute sense of injustice which serve him in his devastating analysis of the state of the United Kingdom. Despite his professed Tory loyalties, Jock’s views of Britain, especially the overlooked section north of England which is Scotland, tend to be radical, to say the least. He ventures so far as to draw a link between the five million Jews exterminated in the Holocaust and the population of Scotland, roughly the same in number, which, in a prophetic seizure, he envisions being kept back by British soldiers overseeing that “the inhabitants of the Central Lowlands

22. George Donaldson and Alison Lee, “Is Eating People Really Wrong? Dining with Alasdair Gray,” *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 15, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 160.

23. Donaldson and Lee, “Is Eating People Really Wrong?,” 160.

24. Donaldson and Lee, “Is Eating People Really Wrong?,” 155.

die in their own ditch” when a nuclear war erupts and “the unhealthy bits of Britain will be sliced off to ensure that the healthy bits survive” (*J*, 135). This daring comparison illustrates Jock’s belief that the Scots are either uncomprehending victims of a ruthless power beyond their control or cowardly traitors who willingly collaborate in the destruction of their country. The latter category applies to Jock, of course, who openly admits that he has become “a selfish shit but a comfortable selfish shit” and asserts his refusal “TO FEEL BITTER OR GUILTY ABOUT THIS” (*J*, 136–37), yet the very fact of his bringing up the question of guilt on his own and emphasizing it by the use of upper-case letters suggests that guilty feelings do haunt his mind.

In contrast, Denny, a sparsely educated and poorly paid cafeteria girl, Jock’s first love, represents the large group of those being preyed upon; she feels so little connection to English power that she even “used to think England was a different island from Scotland, like America is” (*J*, 214). The figure of Denny underlies many of Jock’s rambling memories, both cherished and banished, since it is only when he is older that Jock realizes how he mistreated the trustful creature. Walker formulates it succinctly: “McLeish’s guilt comes from recognition that having tutored Denny in the rules of exploitation he has proved them by exploiting her himself.”²⁵ Jock succumbs to the temptation of a whimsical exercise of power over a person vulnerable to abuse, thus reenacting the crude treatment to which he was exposed at the hands of Mad Hislop and further disseminating the harm inflicted on him by the misguided teacher. Freire comments on the ambivalence manifested in the attitude of the oppressed toward the oppressor, observing that the victim as often as not tends to regard the victimizer with a mixture of aversion and admiration.²⁶ In other words, it is natural for men to hate being subjected to exploitation, yet it is also not unnatural for them to degenerate into exploitative behavior themselves when they change places and happen to get into a position of power.²⁷ By taking advantage of Denny on the grounds of his socioeconomic superiority, Jock inadvertently reaffirms the validity of the ruthless social order that produced him.

Ostensibly, Jock abandoned his devoted girlfriend when he found her in the arms of their landlord after he had been absent for three weeks and had satisfied himself as to finding out how many other girls he could have. In fact, Jock had always been actively ashamed of Denny’s lack of taste, manners, and education, to such an extent that he did not even introduce her to his friends, and Denny’s dependency threatened to undermine his aspirations to assimilate into the upper-middle class. Harrison interestingly interrelates two symbolic incidents in the novel: one when young Jock, overcome by feelings of hopeful creativity and visionary optimism, surveys the view of the country from atop Arthur’s Seat and discovers “that Scotland [is] shaped

25. Marshall Walker, *Scottish Literature since 1707* (London: Longman, 1996), 338.

26. See Freire, *Pedagogy*, 44.

27. See Freire, *Pedagogy*, 27.

like a fat messy woman" (*J*, 281); the other about twenty-five years later, when Jock comes across a battered prostitute, "squat and old with a bloated discoloured face" (*J*, 161), who reminds him of Denny and who slips away from him as he does not assent to marrying her.²⁸ Harrison insightfully explains that at this moment Jock "reinscribes, however tragically, the fate of the nation upon a woman's body, one he quite physically desires. But Jock's recognition of the link between his (and the southern capital's) exploitation of nation and woman, be it sexual or otherwise, is not enough to relieve him of his guilt and anguish."²⁹ In accordance with this reading, Denny could be perceived as an embodiment of Scotland, an entity subjected to abuse and exploitation by Jock and his likes, with the prospect of being abandoned when it outlives its usefulness.

What makes Denny a perfect target for victimization is her ignorance and gullibility, conditioned not so much by a lack of mental capacity as rather by an adverse environment which seems deliberately to discourage critical thinking and questioning in the underprivileged class so that it could be more easily steered toward conformity to the goals of the ruling class. In his thorough examination of the ways in which the powerful manipulate the powerless, Jock expresses his suspicion that anarchy would ensue if suddenly "most people tried to act intelligently on their own behalf" because the ordinary course of society is that "politicians do our thinking for us" (*J*, 12). In *Lanark*, the eponymous protagonist encounters very much the same attitude at the international conference held by top powers for the apparent purpose of carving up the world among themselves, where the program proudly presents a contribution exploring "the disastrous impact of literacy on the undereducated" (*L*, 475). The interests of the ruling minority lie in stupefying rather than stimulating the intelligence of the subdued majority, or, as Freire puts it: "From the point of view of the dominators of any epoch, correct thinking presupposes the non-thinking of the people."³⁰ Enabling the exploited to gain an understanding of the vile practices of the exploiters and allowing them to form a critical judgment of their social situation certainly would produce a disastrous effect, though not so much for the oppressed as for the oppressors, for it would inevitably lead to their (self-)appointed authority being challenged.

Besides denying the underprivileged the advantage of adequate schooling, corrupt political establishments seeking to cement their power can cunningly take advantage of the existing educational system and appropriate it for the purpose of propagating their own ideology. Such a twisted education aims to produce pliant puppets rather than independent individuals, and, what in Donaldson and Lee's opinion particularly applies to *1982 Janine*, "the triumph of ideology is clear here in making victims share complicity in, and be grateful

28. See Harrison, "The Power of Work," 163–65.

29. Harrison, "The Power of Work," 165.

30. Freire, *Pedagogy*, 112.

for, their own victimization.”³¹ An obvious instance of a willingly accepted victimization is Denny, who is materially as much as mentally fully dependent on Jock, to whom she looks up with admiration and gratitude, ready to submit meekly to whatever treatment should come on his part. Indoctrination with official ideology, Eagleton observes, “ensures that the situation in which one social class has power over the others is either seen by most members of the society as ‘natural’, or not seen at all.”³² Aware of her ignorance but unable to overcome its limits, Denny counts among those who fail to recognize themselves as exploited; in contrast, Jock clearly perceives the order of society as corrupt, but in keeping with his conviction that only humans “have an inborn capability for intoxication, greed, lust, cruelty and murder” (*J*, 184), he apparently regards this state as natural. Jock morbidly enlightens Denny as to the fact that her lower-class background predetermines her to “live and die in that trap” of spiritual and physical destitution, a trap from which Jock hopes to escape by his treacherous decision “to work for the trapmakers” (*J*, 214–15). Although Jock likes to deceive himself regarding his indispensability to his employer, he must finally admit that he serves his boss merely as an instrument, as readily replaceable as any other part in the great inhuman machinery that his society has become. “The parents and educators of this damned country teach cowardice, herding us toward the safest cages with the cleanest straw” (*J*, 35), Jock bitterly observes, and though he enjoys considerably more comfort in his cage than Denny in her trap, both ultimately fall victim to the same system of restraint and oppression.

Jock manifests an ambivalent attitude to the system that made him and destroyed him: early in the novel, he reflects that if he had a son, he would reinforce compliance to the system in the child; at the end of the novel, under the pressure of God’s reproachful presence, he parts from the system by the act of writing his employment resignation letter. Unlike Jock, Lanark abhors the idea of submitting to a prescribed role in the system and flatly refuses to have his son, not yet born at the moment, exposed to education in the rules of exploitation. Toward the conclusion of *Lanark*, the protagonist’s now adult son briefly appears as a soldier reporting to “movers and menders,” and while rescuing his old father from a collapsing building in an Unthank stricken by a natural disaster, he voices a sentiment akin to Jock McLeish’s lost hope of social progress through everyone’s hard work contributing to the development of modern science: “The world is only improved by people who do ordinary jobs and refuse to be bullied” (*L*, 554). Lanark’s son, named Alexander, and young Jock share the same belief in the regenerative power of work, but only Alexander recognizes that the prerequisite for progress, whether private or public, is acting out of conviction rather than of constraint.

A disdain for and distrust of ready-made contents presented as unshakable truths also characterize Duncan Thaw, Lanark’s alter ego, a troubled teenager

31. Donaldson and Lee, “Is Eating People Really Wrong?” 157.

32. Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, 5.

with artistic gifts growing up in Glasgow after the Second World War. As has been noted, Duncan's story resists the pattern of the conventional growing-up novel in which "the subject is tamed into conformity with constituted authority through education and bruising experience When the subject rails or rebels or fails to comprehend the social order, that act . . . fixes both the central character's still imperfect understanding of order and fixes the seemingly objective nature of that order yet more firmly."³³ 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. Similarly as with *Lanark*, Duncan's defiance against established conventions does little good either to him or anyone else; nevertheless, its disturbing power lies in the vitality of his point of view and the undeniable logic of his arguments. Duncan's strong preference for self-tested knowledge shows already in such apparent trifles as his refusal to wear climbing boots for a mountain hike; an unreasonable decision, perhaps, but defended with a startlingly profound observation, unlooked for in a teenager arguing with his father about the trivial matter of footwear: "There would be no science and no civilization and all that if everybody did things the way everybody else does" (*L*, 136). The sharpness of intellect and complexity of reasoning in young Duncan worries the boy's mother and annoys his father, over whom Duncan achieves a small but substantial victory when he conquers a local mountain on his own—wearing sandals.

Duncan's journey uphill to reach a mysterious female figure in white beckoning him from the top epitomizes his quest for the fulfillment of his artistic vision. On climbing to the hilltop, Duncan discovers with a pang of disappointment that the alluring woman was a sham, that what appeared to be a person is in fact the concrete block of a triangulation point. Whenever he finishes a picture, Duncan feels similarly overwhelmed by a conviction that he has been misled by a false vision and tries to resolve the tension by compulsively repainting his work in a vain attempt to capture the unattainable ideal. Duncan's obsessive pursuit of perfection in artistic expression culminates in a monumental mural which aspires to represent the progress of God's creation of the earth in a static art form, probably an unachievable goal. The enormous task consumes all of the artist's mental and physical faculties and prevents him from devoting any serious attention to his final exams at the art school, to whose authorities Duncan explains before he is expelled: "This exam is endangering an important painting. It would be blasphemy to waste my talent making frivolous decorations for a non-existent liner. But I see your difficulty. You must uphold the art school, while I am upholding art" (*L*, 323). The shocked school registrar dismisses Duncan's honest proclamation as "a display of intellectual arrogance" (*L*, 323), but it is also a proof that Duncan does his thinking for himself and so can enjoy, for

33. Donaldson and Lee, "Is Eating People Really Wrong?," 159.

a short time, the satisfaction of acting in accordance with his internal beliefs rather than submitting to external directives.

"I'm *sick* of ordinary people's ability to eat muck and survive," Duncan declares in a fit of despair over the horrendous crimes of human history and continues to consider that unlike beasts, "human beings have the hideous versatility to adapt to lovelessness and live and live and live while being exploited and abused by their own kind" (*L*, 295). Duncan's announcement sounds all the more appalling when one recalls that the young man actually remains loyal to his principles and finally prefers not to live at all rather than to suffer living in subservience. Duncan's decision to take his own life admittedly follows from a complex of causes, yet a sense of being divested by antagonistic social structures of the right to develop his talents in such ways as he thinks appropriate ranks as one of his strongest motives. Interestingly, the character of Jock similarly contrasts humans with animals and concludes that the laws of nature neither explain nor excuse man's cruelty: "You need ideas to be cruel and only men have ideas. Parts of the universe bump and break each other but storms and earthquakes are not cruelty. Not even animals are cruel. . . . Only man is evil" (*J*, 29). Being a corrupt person but not a hypocrite, Jock realizes that he is denouncing not merely humanity in general but also himself in particular, since his own career offers the sad spectacle of talents wasted for the wrong purpose and intellect misused to multiply vice rather than rectify it. Jock's choice of compliance with externally imposed rules which he knows to be unjust acknowledges his dependence on the system and gives a tacit assent to the system carrying on in its exploits as it does.

On the contrary, Duncan's deliberate death could be viewed as an individually liberating act, as an assertion of independence from an order which Duncan recognizes as wrong and in which he refuses to take part. Having his attempts to alter the rigid rules imposed on him frustrated, Duncan resorts to an act of ultimate defiance: by taking his own life he not only releases himself from his constrained existence but above all prevents his oppressors from molding him in their own corrupt image and exploiting his abilities to achieve their own dubious aims. The story of Duncan shows a private tragedy with a public twist, for Gray adds a political edge even to what at first gives the impression of a completely apolitical narrative dealing with purely personal concerns. Frustrated by the obstacles posed to the free expression of his vision by the stiff rules of the art school, Duncan dreams of proposing a school reform giving the responsibility for their education over to the students and moves on to picture himself as a charismatic politician achieving the establishment of a separate Scottish parliament. His earlier boyish fantasies feature him as an enlightened prime minister of a perfectly harmonious country built up after the Third World War in keeping with the ideals of democracy. Jock calls forth similar images of himself as the founder of world peace, as the torch that illuminates social ills and therewith brings about their reform, and as an upright patriot faithful to his country and his wife, Denny: "The whole world was astonished by my devotion to a plain wee

woman in a Glasgow tenement, but the Scots understood me. They knew I was still one of them" (*J*, 264). The common element present in both Duncan's and Jock's daydreams is being in a position of power from which one can act independently on one's own behalf and has the chance to actually influence events by one's actions. As Jock poignantly puts it when he comments on his vote for Scottish self-government: "Not for one minute did I think it would make us more prosperous, we are a poor little country, always have been, always will be, but it would be a luxury to blame ourselves for the mess we are in instead of the bloody old Westminster parliament" (*J*, 66).

Lanark and *1982 Janine* share the central idea of human beings threatened with the deprivation of their humanity and being reduced to mere standardized parts in a degenerate social system which grows by feeding on the energies of those who are too ignorant to notice that they are being exploited and those who are too cowardly to fight against their exploitation. Duncan Thaw defies authorities which impose dogmatic truths on him, be it the doctrines of the church or the instructions of his teachers, who seek to suppress his individuality and replace his peculiar artistic vision by a uniform expression. Duncan's art school instructors count among the "wee hard men," an insult originally meant for Jock McLeish, who bear the responsibility for the country's mediocrity because they continually "hammer Scotland down to the same dull level as themselves" (*J*, 288). Duncan resists all normative efforts and retains the qualities of a fully human being, unlike, for instance, one of his former schoolmates, who bitterly comments on his experience at a machine shop: "You stop thinking. Life becomes a habit. You get up, dress, eat, go tae work, clock in etcetera etcetera automatically, and think about nothing but the pay packet on Friday and the booze-up last Saturday. Life's easy when you're a robot" (*L*, 216). This benumbed and dehumanized condition is exactly what *Lanark*, who reincarnates Duncan's defiant spirit, intends to avoid when he rejects the idea of joining the army or working at an arms factory.

Lanark preserves his personal and moral integrity even in an environment where parts of persons are processed into food or turned into lifts, such as Gloopy the people lover, who appears perfectly content that his mental faculties can continue serving people, though he has no idea as to what happened to the rest of him. It might seem that neither Duncan nor *Lanark* have achieved anything by their revolt against conformity beyond adding to their personal misery; still, they can both be credited with a minor yet significant contribution to their society. Duncan's gift to the world lies in his imaginative rendering of the most hopeful moment in human history, the moment of its creation, presented in the form of "a complete, perfect, harmonious, utterly harmless thing; something whose every part is the result of intelligent, loving care; something which isn't a destructive weapon and can't be sold at a profit by public-spirited businessmen" (*L*, 336). *Lanark* in turn has engendered a son and, despite some of his flaws as a husband and a father, he has provided his child with what Sludden, the boy's stepfather, could not: a fair example to follow. Leaving something behind, even if it is a work of art in a building that is about to

be demolished or a child to be brought up in a world threatened by destruction, is a comfort that Jock McLeish cannot enjoy. Jock has not lived his life as a human being; rather he acted out his role as “a character in a script written by National Security” (*J*, 333), closely observing an exact whole-life plan which left no place for improvisation and freedom of action or even thought. Although the part prescribed for Jock demands considerably less discomfort and danger than the roles that Jock devises for the females in his fantasies, all the actors are equally bound by the script and powerless against violation, physical or spiritual, on the part of the scriptwriter. Jock manages to disentangle himself from the trap by resigning his post and makes a tentative attempt to grant the same liberty to his imaginary Janine by furnishing her with a magazine story which describes in detail what awaits her at the Cattlemarket to which she is being taken at the moment. Janine appears as puzzled by the knowledge as Jock by the endless variety of steps which he can take next, now that he has opted for freedom; what matters, however, is that Jock abandons his former passive complacency and assumes a newly active stance.

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