

Scottishness in Modern Scottish Detective Fiction

Mona Skjønhaug



In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the MA Degree

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

February 2009

Contents

- CONTENTS..... 1**
- FOREWORD..... 3**
- CHAPTER 1 4**
 - 1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT 4
 - 1.2 SCOTTISHNESS - SCOTTISH IDENTITY 4
 - 1.3 CALVINISM 7
 - 1.4 THE CRIME FICTION GENRE 8
 - 1.5 SCOTTISH DETECTIVE FICTION 10
 - 1.6 METHOD 12
 - 1.7 OUTLINE OF FOLLOWING CHAPTERS..... 13
- CHAPTER 2 14**
 - 2.1 INTRODUCTION 14
 - 2.2 THE AUTHOR..... 14
 - 2.3 CHARACTERS 17
 - 2.4 SCOTTISH ICONS 25
 - 2.5 THE CRIME FICTION FORMULA 26
 - 2.6 SCOTTISH ART..... 28
 - 2.7 CALVINISM 30
 - 2.8 CONCLUSION 31
- CHAPTER 3 33**
 - 3.1 INTRODUCTION 33
 - 3.2 THE AUTHOR..... 33
 - 3.3 SETTING..... 33

3.4	CALEDONIAN ANTISYZYGY	34
3.5	CHARACTERS	36
3.6	THE CRIME FICTION FORMULA	43
3.7	CONCLUSION	46
	CHAPTER 4	49
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	55

Foreword

As a teacher in a “teknisk fagskole”, where the students are mostly men between 20 and 50 from the craft industry, I meet several students who show enthusiasm for detective fiction. I am not an immense enthusiast of this genre myself; nevertheless it will be interesting to find out more about it. There are not numerous master theses on crime fiction. As a matter of fact, I found only one in the Norwegian database BIBSYS. Due to the fact that I want to write my thesis about something “new”, I have therefore chosen the theme of Scottish detective fiction for my master thesis. It has not been easy to find criticism of my chosen novels. However, I have applied criticism of Scottish literature in general, finding that aspects of this criticism can helpfully be combined with, and provide the basis for, my own readings of my chosen texts.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Problem statement

This thesis aims to explore Scottishness in modern Scottish detective fiction. I will try to uncover what Scottishness is, and examine to what extent it is reflected in modern Scottish detective fiction. Are the crime novels Scottish in the sense that they are written by Scottish authors, and do they represent Scottish culture and identity? Can a reader learn something about Scottish culture by reading modern detective fiction from Scotland? I also want to discuss the extent to which Scottish detective novels comply with, or differ from, the characteristics of the crime fiction genre.

In order to examine significant aspects of Scottishness in modern crime fiction, I have selected two detective novels published during the last decade. The novels are *The Cutting Room* (2002) by Louise Welsh and *The Sunday Philosophy Club* (2004) by Alexander McCall Smith. McCall Smith is one of contemporary Scotland's two bestselling crime writers, the other one is Ian Rankin. These two writers can be seen as the Dr. Jekyll (McCall) and Mr. Hyde (Rankin) in Scottish detective fiction. The heroine, Isabel Dalhousie, in *The Sunday Philosophy Club* is located in today's Edinburgh. The story about the auctioneer Rilke in *The Cutting Room* is situated in Glasgow's underworld.

This introductory chapter will discuss aspects of Scottish culture and notions of Scottishness in order to clarify what I will be looking for in the two crime novels subjected to discussion. I will then study the novels separately, devoting one chapter to each and examining how and to what extent Scottish identity and culture are treated in the two texts.

1.2 Scottishness - Scottish identity

One of the problems about defining national identity is that it is extremely difficult to generalize about a people or a culture as a whole. People are individuals and it is in some ways both simplifying and dubious to categorise someone as Scot, Norwegian or Italian. To tell the difference between Scots and Chinese is easier than spotting the difference between Scots and Norwegians, due to the fact that they both among other things belong to Western Culture. This said, we recognize that the notion of national character exists. The term Chinese gives us a definite picture in our head, and Scots give us a different image. However, it is not

certain that everyone fits this stereotype. A national character is a way of trying to encapsulate the way of thinking and preferences of a people. As Stuart Hall puts it, "national identities are not things we are born with, but are formed and transformed within and in relation to representation" (Christianson 27) or as Susanne Hagemann has put it "like genders, nations are constructs" (Christianson 27). A Scottish character may immediately be associated with a red haired, strong man in kilt, placed in a smoke-filled pub. He has a bagpipe on his shoulder and a beer in his hand. However, it goes without saying that it is not certain the reader will face this Scottish stereotype with all these features.

Even though every person is unique, they may have a lot in common. Carol Craig, the author of *The Scots' Crisis of Confidence*, claims that one of the key aspects of Scots is their affection for logical thinking, and that has played a central role in the evolution of Scottish culture and character (Craig xi). Another claim is that the Scots have the feeling of never being good enough. Alan Bold has published his view of the nature of the 'average Scot'. He argues that "the typical Scot is marvellous at making all about him miserable" (Bell 36). Furthermore, he writes "The typical Scot ... is a loser and he knows it" (Craig 8)

Emigration is a real problem: about one million Scots have left Scotland over the last forty years, many of them are talented and educated. During the last ninety years there has only been one year which Scotland has gained from migration, and that is more than seventy years ago (Black 332). One of the reasons for this unfortunate trend may be that the Scots do not have faith in a good future and opportunities for themselves and their family in Scotland; people with academical ambitions and Scots who are striving for economic success tend to move to London. "It is a cast of mind based on the belief that anything Scottish must be second-rate" (Craig 2).

Some years ago WHO (World Health Organization) carried out a research among young persons. They found that, as regards self-confidence, Scottish fifteen-year olds were almost at the bottom of the list of twenty-five other countries (Craig 4). Scottish psychologists said that they were not surprised, pointing out that Scottish culture is designed to cut people down to size and that sarcasm, negative remarks and humiliations are as familiar as rainy days. The Scottish psychiatrist Alex Yellowlees argues that Scots are not brought up to feel confident in themselves, and this fact is worrying him. Their lack of self-esteem lies behind some of their health problems. He requests: "Why should they stop smoking and take care of themselves if they do not think they are worthwhile people?" (Craig 6)

If Scots lack self-confidence and feel useless, they have two choices. One choice is to become a victim; the other is to overcompensate, by acting in an arrogant or bullying way.

Both of these choices may destroy the individual's opportunities to build strong relationships between friends, close colleagues and life-partner. People with a lack of self-confidence may also have a very pessimistic attitude and / or will often be envious of other people's success. The Scottish sportswriter Hugh McIlvanney once argued: "If there is ever a World Cup for self-destructiveness, few nations will have the nerve to challenge the Scots" (Craig 8). In Irvine Welsh's novel *Trainspotting*, one of his characters claims that the Scots are "the scum of the earth. The most wretched, servile, miserable pathetic trash that was ever shat intae creation" (Craig 8). These two claims level severe criticism against the Scots; nevertheless, there are some positive characteristics like Scots have a patriotic feeling and many of them have an intense love of the Scottish landscape. Examples of these feelings can be found in *Being Scottish*, a book where hundred Scots express what Scottishness means to them. Moreover, there are other positive statements about Scotland and the Scottish people, like Scots are "unpretentious hardworking people, who believe in equality" (Craig 9). Craig also argues that the Scots are given the affection for logical thinking. She claims further that this is why the story about Sherlock Holmes, the great master of solving problems by the function of logical reasoning, was written by a Scot (Craig 61). However, I am hesitant to draw a conclusion based on this. It needs more than affection for logical thinking to write this acknowledged classical story and there are several people who have this affection. Nevertheless, it is not totally unexpected that a Scot has written the story due to the well-known fact that they have this affection. These are features I will have in mind when I proceed to study the characters in the two selected novels.

The Scottish crime writer Ian Rankin says in an interview with the Norwegian newspaper *Dagens Næringsliv* that he wants to write about Scotland's soul, its phobias, psychosis and mistakes, and about the people there. Due to the fact that the protagonist Rebus is a policeman, the literary critics call his books crime fiction, argues Rankin. Yet he feels that he writes about the Scottish society, about politics, present time and morality. He focuses on the good and evil in society, including themes like human smuggling, poverty, illegal sale of weapons and also environmental crime among others (Paulsen). This supports Dennis Lehane's claim that "Today's social novel *is* the crime novel" (Murfin 104).

While Scottish literature in the 1980s was regularly concerned *with* Scotland, later literature has been more focused on writing *from* it. This can be seen as a shift away from intro-version (Bell 41). The people in Scotland felt separated from the government in London under Margaret Thatcher's and John Major's Conservative governments. Tony Blair was elected in 1997 and the year after the Scottish Parliament received the freedom to make

primary legislation in limited areas, other policy areas are still reserved for the UK Government. There are various ways this devolution can be discerned in post-devolution crime fiction. One of the possibilities is a delineation of continuity rather than seeking to modernize. Another alternative is a social or geographical shift from rural to urban Scotland and its characteristic problems. Yet another possibility is the option of a generic shift to a more optimistic model of crime writing.

1.3 Calvinism

Calvinism has contributed to the formation of modern Scottish culture. I find it necessary to give a short introduction to how Calvinism has had an impact on literature in order to investigate whether Calvinism is traceable in the two texts. Calvinism has long been practically the only religion in Scotland. John Calvin (1509-1564) was a strong believer in behaving as God wished and immorality was severely condemned. John Knox (1510–1572) led the Protestant Reformation in Scotland. Pre-reformation Scotland was Catholic, and the Catholic Church has been supportive of visual arts, painting and sculpture. Calvinism became and continues to be a core element in the debate as to what constitutes Scottish identity (Dickson 116). Calvinism was a belief which insisted with exclusive strength on certain human interests, and excluded all the rest. It condemned music, painting and sculpture, and reduced architecture to a minimum. Calvinism frowned at prose and poetry if it did not belong to the Holy Writ. Several different individuals and groups have considered Scottish Calvinism to have been a dark, repressive force. Robert Burns became notorious for his anti-Calvinist stance, and exposed Calvinism's inherent hypocrisy. The actual impact of Calvinism on life in Scotland is a peculiarly Scottish phenomenon (Muir 307). Calvinism tries to repress desire and values people's conscience. Bozika Jovic argues in the article *The Place of Calvinism in the Modern Scottish Novel* that the matter of Scottishness is constantly modified and changed. He claims that the Scottish novel is Scottish, first because it is preoccupied with the moral legacy of Calvinism, and second, because of a peculiar way the tradition and ancient times are portrayed in Scottish literature. "On one hand, Calvinism is rejected as a religious doctrine which tries to control human life by imposing an already predestined pattern of life. On the other, Calvinism, such as it is, has helped define the values of the community and humanity" (Jovic 472). I will try to discover whether music, painting, sculpture or architecture are dealt with in the texts. Moreover, try to reveal themes like hypocrisy, repressed desires, people's

conscience or moral legacy. I will now proceed and give a short introduction of the crime fiction genre.

1.4 The crime fiction genre

In order to examine to what extent Scottish detective fiction complies with, or differs from, the characteristics of the detective novel generally, I need to define the genre. John Scaggs gives the following description of detective fiction:

A type of fiction centred around the investigation of a crime that focuses attention on the method of detection by structuring the story around a mystery that appears insoluble through normal investigative methods. For this reason it is also known as mystery fiction. Detective fiction, by focusing on the method of detection, simultaneously focuses attention on the figure of the methodical detective: that is, the detective who follows a particular method. (Scaggs 144)

Scaggs sets the definition of crime fiction as the same as that of mystery fiction (Scaggs 146). *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms* claims that detective fiction is a variant of mystery fiction and that the focus of the crime novel is on the criminal, rather than the detective who is the centre of attention in detective fiction (Murfin 100). As I will study two novels which have the focal point on the detectives, it seems to me that the genre under consideration in this thesis is detective fiction. One helpful definition of detective fiction is “a type of fiction featuring a crime (in most cases, a murder) that is solved by the protagonist, a detective” (Murfin 100). The two novels subjected to discussion are works of fiction featuring murders and other illegal activities, and these are investigated by the protagonists Rilke and Isabel. In order to decide whether my selected novels are crime fiction or not I will give my own working definition of crime fiction genre. I will do so in order to limit the amount of characteristics that can be claimed to decide if a novel belongs to the crime fiction genre or not. I will highlight four groups of characteristics. The first typical feature is the notion of “Fair Play”.

“Fair Play” is the notion that detective fiction should in principle give the skilled and observant reader a possibility to solve the mystery. Catholic priest and crime author Father Ronald Knox made some rules to fill this Fair Play requirement. Ronald Knox wrote ten rules which have to be fulfilled in order to be a Fair Play story. These include the rule that the culprit must be mentioned early on in the story, that not more than one secret room or passage

is acceptable, and that the detective must not commit the crime himself or herself. Twin brothers and doubles generally must not appear unless the reader knows about them (Scaggs 37).

The second representative feature is that detective novels are written upon a formula. The formula for the detective novel is divided into six steps: A Introduction of the detective, B Crime and clues, C Investigation- suspects and false solutions, D Announcement of the solution, E Explanation, F Denouement / Arrest.

The clues follow lines of witnesses and suspected persons. Some of the story lines typically lead the reader in the wrong direction, thus appearing to be false clues. In the classic detective story, the reader gets lost and the detective steps in later and provides, after due rational consideration, the solution. There is first a focus on the investigation and then on the announcement of the crime and the perpetrator, which is the climax of the story. The reader may have been confused, but after having read the whole story he or she will say, yes, yes of course. The reader is meant to be surprised and to admire the detective's knowledge. However, the punishment of the criminal is not paid much attention to in the stories. Classic examples of this kind of detective stories include the Sherlock Holmes stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

The third typical feature is the setting in crime fiction. Typical crime fiction settings are mysterious places, isolated houses, locked rooms and dark passages. One of the most important aspects of the hard-boiled formula is the special role of the modern city as a background. Empty landscapes, corruption and death are classic features of this modern city, which is definitely not a place of exotic and romantic adventure (Cawelti 140-141).

The fourth typical feature I will be searching for is representative characters in a detective story. The characters are mainly the victim, the villain, the detective and those who are threatened by the crime and yet unable to solve it. The reader is not supposed to sympathize with the criminal, since this would break the formula. The culprit is not paid much attention to in a classic crime story. He (and sometimes she) is often the least likeable character in the narrative.

The reader is not supposed to be too emotionally involved with the victim because then the story changes to a tragedy and the victim should therefore be kept in the background. The main character is usually the detective. Why does he or she involve himself/herself in the crime? The detective is usually interested only in solving a mystery due to the fact they have affection for logical thinking. I will in chapters two and three consider the extent to which the

two detective novels follow these typical features of Fair Play, setting, characters and formula based writing.

1.5 Scottish detective fiction

I have now highlighted the detective fiction characteristics I will focus on in the following chapters. I will proceed to give a short introduction of Scottish crime fiction history and also present contemporary Scottish crime fiction authors.

Crime writing is an important part of Scottish literary culture. One reason why Scotland plays an important role in detective fiction world wide is the fact that the Scottish author Arthur Conan Doyle's (1859-1930) short stories and novels made detective fiction a popular form of literary entertainment. It is true that Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) is considered the inventor of the detective-fiction genre. However, the detective story did not become popular before Doyle wrote the two first novels about Sherlock Holmes. He created the prototype for countless fictional detectives to come. Scotland and the Scots deliver almost perfect ingredients for crime fiction. Scotland is a place with a profoundly gothic sensibility and a dark sense of humour – two aspects which are illustrated in its crime writing again and again. The country also has a tradition of books telling tales of the more unsavoury side of life. Edinburgh has always been an important host to Scotland's crime fiction, right from the time of Stevenson and Hogg in the nineteenth century. In their recognized novels we encounter murder, betrayal, religious obsession, bigotry, the supernatural and psychopathic. Scottish crime fiction has its roots in both English and American crime fiction genre, where the American tradition is the more visible. Thus, several critics find Scottish crime fiction has adopted and customized American hard-boiled crime stories (Schoene 132).

Scottish literature has shown a predilection for themes like deception, domination, hypocrisy, duality and two-facedness. We find this as early as in James Hogg's *Private Memories and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), later in R. L. Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) and likewise in Alexander Trocchi's *Young Adam* (1954). Stevenson's narrative is associated with the Scottish people, the Scots' duality, their sense of being stranded between nation and state (Schoene 133). His story is known for its extraordinary portrayal of the psychopathology of a split personality: In mainstream culture the very phrase "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" has come to mean a person who may show a clear contrast within his or her character, or extremely different manners, from one situation to the next, not far from being totally another person. However, Craig claims that this duality

is not typically Scottish (Craig 15). Gill Plain argues that Scottish crime writing builds upon Scottish literary ancestors due to the fact that almost every self-respecting crime novel carries an obligatory reference to the dualism in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Schoene 133). In an interview with the Scottish crime writer Ian Rankin, he confirms Scottish authors' close relationship with their national literary forebears:

If you talk to Scottish crime writers and ask, "What are your influences?", "instead of answering Raymond Chandler or Agatha Christie, they will tend to say "Confessions of a Justified Sinner" or "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" James Hogg and Robert Louis Stevenson, or John Buchan's "Thirty-Nine Steps." We have grown up reading different books and grown up in a different culture," Rankin said (Washington Post, 2008).

There are several acknowledged contemporary crime writers from Scotland. Female writers include Val McDermid, Denise Mina, Manda Scott and Louise Welsh.¹ My choice, Welsh's novel *The Cutting Room* won the John Creasey Dagger Award and the Saltire Society First Book Award. I chose Welsh to represent the American style of detective fiction and it needed a Scottish setting.

Prominent contemporary male crime writers include Christopher Brookmyre, William McIllvanney, Quintin Jardine, Ian Rankin and Alexander McCall Smith.² I chose McCall Smith in order to provide a contrast to Welsh's hard-boiled novel. McCall Smith has a more optimistic model of crime writing.

Scottish urban crime novels ranging from the most provoking horror to the most amusing have come to be nicknamed Tartan Noir. It has its roots in Scottish literature but picks elements from elsewhere, including the hard-boiled genre.³ Many of the main characters in Tartan Noir stories are antiheroes, with whom readers are not automatically being expected

¹ McDermid's stories are often set in England. Her most famous novel, *The Mermaids Singing*, won the Crime Writers' Association Gold Dagger for Best Crime Novel of the Year. The *Scotsman* newspaper has described Denise Mina as a Tartan Noir author. She writes dark psychological dramas. Manda Scott has been hailed as "one of Britain's most important crime writers" by *The Times*. She is famous with her lesbian psychologist amidst grotesque horrors in several novels.

² Christopher Brookmyre has been awarded, to be mentioned *Critics' First Blood Award for Best First Crime Novel* and *Sherlock Award for Best Comic*. William McIllvanney has won several prizes, including the *Crime Writers' Association Macallan Silver Dagger for Fiction* for *Laidlaw* in 1977. Quintin Jardine is the author of two series of crime novels, featuring the Edinburgh policeman Bob Skinner and also a series of crime novels featuring the character Oz Blackstone. Ian Rankin is a bestselling author with stories about Edinburgh with his detective Rebus. Some of these books have been made into films.

³ Social criticism as in Ian Rankin's Rebus detective series is also present in many works of Tartan Noir. He has been called "the king of Tartan Noir".

to identify with. Crawford argues that Scottish Calvinists earlier searched anxiously for signs of grace, however, today the Scottish crime writers snap up disgrace wherever they can find it. In Scottish crime fiction, many authors explore the darker aspects of masculinity. (Crawford 686)

1.6 Method

To analyze my selected novels I might have used aspects of postcolonial theory, queer theory, imagology, and psychoanalytic theory. However, in order to adequately discuss my problem statement I find other approaches more useful.

As indicated already, the theoretical basis for the thesis is textual and contextual, incorporating elements of genre studies and intertextuality. One method I will use to analyze *The Sunday Philosophy Club* and *The Cutting Room* is close reading. Close reading has been absolutely necessary to me when exploring these novels, as both texts are contemporary and have not yet attracted a large body of critical writing. I believe that in order to understand a literary text we need to carefully study how it is presented. Yet I also believe that no novel is a literary island; no cultural utterance occurs in a historical or cultural vacuum. Julia Kristeva has popularized the term intertextuality and suggests that the reader should resist the temptation to see works of literature as separate objects. Fiction is more in the nature of a great web, reverberating with every other novel. Aspects of intertextuality will be considered in this thesis. I will also draw on theories about detective fiction in order to examine to what extent Scottish detective novels comply with, or differ from, the characteristics of the crime fiction genre. To do this I will use John Scaggs, Wystan Hugh Auden, Edgar Allen Poe and Arthur Conan Doyle.

Furthermore, in order to focus on Scottishness – investigating whether, and if so how, the two novels subjected to discussion deal with characteristics known as Scottishness – I will use Carol Craig's, Berthold Schoene's, Alex Yellowlee's, Hugh McIlvanney's, and Irvine Welsh's declarations about what is typical Scottish. Additionally, Douglas Gifford and Edwin Muir highlight the influence Calvinism has exerted on Scottish society and Jovic Bozika argues that the Scottish novel is Scottish, mostly because it is continuously occupied with Calvinism. Thus if I find that the detective novels under consideration have traces of Calvinism this will support my hypothesis that Scottishness is reflected in these modern Scottish detective novels.

1.7 Outline of following chapters

Regarding the structure of the thesis, I will examine *The Sunday Philosophy Club* in chapter two. A more detailed outline of this chapter is provided under 2.1. In chapter three I will then proceed to discuss *The Cutting Room* (see 3.1). In chapter four I will summarise my main points and draw a conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

The Sunday Philosophy Club by Alexander McCall Smith

2.1 Introduction

The Sunday Philosophy Club is the first book in the series about Isabel Dalhousie which consists of five separate stories. In this chapter I will first introduce the author Alexander McCall Smith and his works. I will then present the setting and characters in *The Sunday Philosophy Club*. Thereafter I will focus on Scottish icons which are present in the text. Furthermore, I will discuss how this story fits into the crime fiction genre and focus on important characteristics of the detective fiction genre and discuss whether *The Sunday Philosophy* can be called detective fiction or not. After having shed light on the overflow of Scottish art in the text I will attempt to clarify how Calvinism is present in the narration. Finally, I will draw a conclusion about how Scottishness can be traced in this modern Scottish detective novel.

2.2 The author

Born in Rhodesia in 1948, Alexander McCall Smith is a Scottish writer who moved to Scotland to study law. He became a Professor of Medical Law at the University of Edinburgh and later Emeritus Professor at its School of Law. He has written more than sixty books and has been translated into forty-two languages.⁴

Plain argues that it is the Scottish male who stands as the defining feature in the landscape of Scottish identity and crime fiction has not done much to undermine this. In a response to the changing ‘state’ of Scotland it is expected that crime fiction can rewrite alternatives to masculine modes of investigation (Schoene 135). McCall Smith is one of the few men in Scotland who writes about a female protagonist. The fact that male authors try to

⁴ McCall Smith is known for his award-winning *No.1 Ladies’ Detective Agency* series with setting in Botswana. He has also written two series with setting in Edinburgh, the series about Isabel Dalhousie and *The 44 Scotland Street* series. He has received several awards, including the Waterstone’s Author of the Year, Crime Writers Associations Dagger in the Library Award and British Book Awards Author of the Year.

empathize with women is one of the strongest indications of a new direction for Scottish writing: they challenge conventions of gender differences (Dickson 946). McCall Smith disrupts the traditional relationship between masculinity and detection. There is no aggressive masculinity in this novel. It is a form of crime writing customarily seen as “feminine” (Schoene 139). This novel does not explore the darker aspects of masculinity the way Crawford claims Scottish crime writers take the opportunity to do.

Earlier Scottish crime fiction’s negation of a female identity can also be seen as an index of a lost national identity. Using a female protagonist in a crime story which disrupts the relationship between masculinity and detection disturbs the view of a suppressed nation and the repressed feminine. The protagonist Isabel Dalhousie is very feminine. An illustrative example of her reflections on men occurs in one of Isabel’s inner monologues: “Men were so different: they kept their friends at arm’s length and never admitted their feelings for them. How arid it must be to be a man; how constrained; what a whole world of emotion, and sympathy, they must lack; like living in the desert” (McCall Smith 78). This example illustrates McCall Smith’s attempt to empathize with women, and according to Douglas Gifford this is an indication of the new direction of Scottish writing. Plain confirms that there has been a generic shift in Scottish crime stories and this change can be seen in a more optimistic model of crime writing (Schoene 135). Indeed, this positive approach has been the strategy of McCall Smith.

The setting provides the main backdrop for the detective story. Edinburgh has always been an important host to Scotland’s crime fiction, right from the time of Stevenson and Hogg. In Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* we encounter murder, rape, adultery, religious mania and the supernatural in Edinburgh. Edinburgh is an urban area, and this is a quite typical setting in crime fiction. The importance of setting is probably one reason why the city of Edinburgh is mentioned by name no less than forty-two times. The detective lives in Edinburgh in a district called Merchiston which is a prosperous, mainly residential neighbourhood in the south-west of the city. This region is optimistically known as Edinburgh’s ‘Left Bank’ and is a neighbourhood for the middle class. This is underlined by presenting Isabel as someone who has an academic degree and yet does not have to work because of the heritage from her parents. Furthermore, her last name Dalhousie is an academic name; it is the name of a university in Canada.

The novel opens as Isabel witnesses a man falling from the upper balcony, when she is attending a concert in the Usher Hall in Edinburgh. I would argue that this is an indirect

reference to the title of the old gothic short story written by Edgar Allan Poe “The Fall of the House of Usher.” This story is considered as one of Poe's most famous work. By including an intertextual echo of Poe’s celebrated tale, both the setting in Usher Hall and a fall, the author links this modern crime fiction to the old classic text. Since Poe is considered as the founder of modern crime fiction, this connection serves to give the novel a classical detective fiction identity. In “The Fall of the House of Usher” Poe transformed the central action from an external conflict amidst villain and victim into a psychological struggle within the mind of Roderick Usher. In *the Sunday Philosophy Club* the reader is introduced to Isabel’s internal conflicts within moral dilemmas. This issue will be dealt with when I discuss the characters in the story.

There are references to earlier Scottish crime fiction such as Hogg’s fiction and Stevenson’s stories throughout the text. The protagonist mentions Hogg several times, “All these Hogs” (McCall Smith 59) and his famous role in Edinburgh. The novel has also his namesake, Paul Hogg. Isabel Dalhousie, the detective, meets him first in a gallery and they discuss the possibility of living a life without everyone knowing everything. “What if one wanted to lead a secret life? Would it not be difficult in Edinburgh? [...] Paul thought not. He knew several people, it transpired, who led secret lives” (McCall Smith 54). This episode is reminiscent of James Hogg’s *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* from 1824 which was a psychologically shocking novel. Hogg’s divided story concerns Robert Wringhim, educated in accordance with the tenets of strict Calvinism, who comes to believe that he is a member of the elect- that is, a person God has set aside to be saved. He commits murder and other crime guided by his mysterious friend Gil-Martin. This Gil-Martin is a part of his mind and there are also suggestions that he is the Devil. Robert’s divided self has been cited as an inspiration for Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* which examines the duality of good and evil. As well as Stevenson’s acknowledged story, we also meet his namesake Peter Stevenson, a chairman of the Really Terrible Orchestra RTO who is a friend of Isabel’s. By using Hogg’s and Stevenson’s namesakes as characters in this novel, the author gives the reader an association to these recognized authors of Scottish classic literature. This kind of intertextual link supports Plain’s argument that Scottish crime fiction is constructed upon Scottish legendary ancestors. As Schoene observes, the reference to Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is an essential reference in every self-respecting Scottish crime novel (Schoene 133).

A different yet related aspect of Scottishness within literature is Kailyardism. An illustrative example of this is when a character is inward-looking and cannot see beyond his or

her cabbage patch. Kailyardism is originally given to a genre of nineteenth-century Scottish novels which show Scotland as a land of idealised communities and couthy natives. Literature which can be labelled as Kailyard is deemed insignificant and is used to promote confirmation of Scotland as a cultural remote place: it reinforces another negative illustration of the Scots-as a narrow-minded people. In the novel under consideration here, the reader is presented with a very narrow frame of Edinburgh, to be more exact, Isabel, her few friends and small family. Her personal, wealthy life and her class in Edinburgh provide the main focus. The fox which lives in her garden is a part of her “kailyard”. This gives a strong feeling of Kailyardism. This character is not concerned with Edinburgh’s underworld but with her own “small” world which seems to be idealised. However, she is concerned with ethical enquiries, which exceeds her own personal “garden”. One example is her interest in insider dealing which gives her an insight into other Scots’ life outside her middle class neighbourhood. This gives this novel a wider perspective beyond her “cabbage patch” and in this way the novel reaches a higher significance than typical Kailyard novels do. Even though the novel cannot be claimed to be Kailyard, some of the characteristics of Kailyardism are present.

2.3 Characters

Isabel Dalhousie is the protagonist and the detective. She is the daughter of a Scottish father and an American mother. They are both deceased and her family today consists of only one younger brother and his daughter Cat. Isabel is a single, wealthy, literary woman in her forties with a strong interest in moral behaviour. She collects art and is a regular guest at art galleries. She is a philosopher and the editor of the *Review of Applied Ethics* and also host of the Sunday Philosophy Club and very fascinated in manners and moral of the people around her. She likes to be with people like herself. “It was so easy dealing with people who were well-mannered” (McCall Smith 140). “Jamie has good manners. Paul Hogg has good manners” (McCall Smith 140). She finds her mechanic having perfect manners but when she reflects on Toby, she thinks he has bad manners. With the help of inner monologues she educates the reader on correct phone manners: “a call before eight and nine it was an intrusion; thereafter calls could be made until ten in the evening, although anything after nine required an apology for the disturbance” (McCall Smith 138). Isabel’s trust in manners can be summed up in one of her inner monologues: “international law, after all, was simply a system of manners writ large” (McCall Smith 140). Plain argues that this passage “returns us to the world of Miss Marple, where everything under the sun can be understood through

reference to the microcosm of village life” (Schoene 139). The reader follows Isabel’s inner monologues and her daily routines until the mystery is solved. Isabel is attending a concert in the Usher Hall when she witnesses a man fall to his death. She wants to investigate whether this was caused by an accident or the result of a crime. During her investigation, she discovers insider dealing in Edinburgh, and she also follows after Toby and discovers that he is unfaithful to Cat. This is something she has experienced herself. Isabel was earlier married to an Irishman, John Liamor, who proved to be a liar. She wants to tell her niece about her untruthful fiancé, but is faced with a moral dilemma whether she should involve herself or not. She is curious and tries also to discover the truth behind business affairs in Edinburgh. All these small concerns take the reader’s focus away from the investigation of the murder – something which does not conform to Poe’s view of composition. In his article *The Philosophy of Composition* (1846) he argues: “It is only with the *denouement* constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation” (Leitch 742). The narrative in *The Sunday Philosophy Club* consists of many issues, not only the mystery about Mark. Even though this is not in accordance with Poe’s view, I argue that Isabel’s inner monologues and the story about her daily life are just as important for the novel as the mystery plot.

Isabel is worried about children’s lack of Scottish identity. Comic strips in newspapers are one of the cultural markers in the text. The reader is introduced to Oor Wully. This is a Scottish comic strip first published in 1936. Isabel remembers well this comic strip for children and feels that this is a part of their Scottish identity: “every Scottish child used to know about Oor Wullie and his friends Soapy Soutar and Fat Boab, but did they now? Where do the images of Scottish childhood come from now?” (McCall Smith 90). This question illustrates Isabel’s anxiety for the new generation’s lack of Scottish identity. Comic strips can be one of the many important tiny bits that build up a strong Scottish character at some stage in a child’s upbringing. The cartoons are in the newspapers and Isabel differentiates between serious and lower papers. She frequently refers to serious newspapers: *The Scotsman*, which is Scotland’s daily newspaper with coverage of Scottish daily life, *The Herald*, Glasgow’s quality newspaper and *Sunday Post* that claims to be a decent read are referred to. She refers to these as serious papers and other Scottish papers as lower papers. The narrator expresses: “Nothing more about the incident appeared in what Isabel called the ‘lower papers’ (well, they are, she would defend herself: look at their content); and what she referred to as the ‘morally serious papers’, the Scotsman and the Herald, were also silent on the subject” (McCall Smith 48). Isabel does not give any examples of what she calls lower papers.

However, I will argue that she refers to Scottish tabloid papers like *Daily Record*, *Scottish Daily Mirror*, *The Scottish Sun* or *Daily Star of Scotland*. This is also a kind of dichotomy. The reason why she is so focused on which paper she should read and not, is because she is an intellectual, wealthy woman and prefers serious papers to more working class papers. The novel's focus on the Scottish papers gives the reader even more information about Scottish culture.

Isabel's professional title is a criticism of England's domination of Scotland. She is a philosopher. Traditionally, philosophy is the word that sums up the difference between English and Scottish education systems. The Scots believe that to be properly educated, a student needs knowledge of philosophy. Craig claims that before the Scottish universities were forced to adopt the English system, philosophy had a central position in the university system. They believed it was good for the students to get a broad philosophical education before they studied other subjects. However, the English have a system where the student can start his or her studies without introduction courses in philosophy, and England forced the Scots to adopt a similar one. The result of this use, or abuse, of power is that Scotland has lost their place in the intellectual centre of the world. Scotland has earlier made a major contribution to philosophy (Craig 68). Isabel Dalhousie's academic title is therefore not chosen by accident. This is the novel's way of shedding light on the importance of philosophy, thus giving one example of the consequences of being an under-dog. This feature of the text presents a criticism of England's impact on the Scottish educational system.

One aspect of being a philosopher is that you like to reflect and it is not easy to distinguish between philosophy and problem solving. Where does *philosophy* end and *problem solving* begin? Isabel likes problem solving. One example is her interest in crosswords, "the crosswords would start the day" (McCall Smith 16). Another reason for her investigation of the young man's death is Isabel's interest in moral issues. "We can't have moral obligations to every single person in the world. We have moral obligations to those who we come up against, who enter into our moral space, so to speak" (McCall Smith 70). Later she explains why she has to solve the case with the young man who fell down. "He must have seen me," said Isabel. "And I saw him-in a state of extreme vulnerability. I'm sorry to sound the philosopher, but in my view that creates a moral bond between us" (McCall Smith 70). Isabel is a private detective. Even though her investigation does not give her money or honour, it satisfies her own need for problem solving and logical thinking and this is accordance with the characteristics of the crime fiction genre.

Furthermore, I will argue that this way of expressing herself is not accidental. Her use

of the expression “I’m sorry” as shown above may expose her own lack of confidence. In fact she excuses herself several times in the same way. Another example is “It’s my fault for being too ... too fixed in my views. I’m sorry” (Mc Call Smith 68), one more example is “I’m sorry to intrude” (McCall Smith 91). When the excuse ‘I’m sorry’ is made thirteen times in this story this repetition can be a symptom of her personal ‘subaltern’ feeling. Her lack of confidence reinforces the Scottishness in this novel.

In *The Sunday Philosophy Club* the reader observes Isabel’s moral struggles. She is constantly faced with moral dilemmas whether she should involve herself or not in her niece Cat’s choice of boyfriend. Another dilemma she faces and wonders about is if lies are acceptable and if the truth can hurt one’s feeling. Furthermore, she wonders whether it is acceptable that convicted murderers write books. Is it accurate to give a murderer a voice to the public? As a moral philosopher, Isabel is engaged with dilemmas and the balance between good and evil. This is also probably why she is an amateur sleuth. “The world, it seemed, was based on lies and half-truths of one sort or another, and one of the tasks of morality was to help us negotiate our way around these” (McCall Smith 164).

This novel has its own Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. I will argue that Stevenson’s dualism, also called the ‘Caledonian Antisyzygy’, is visible in this novel. Isabel is merely good all the time and does not have the divided self which is claimed to be typical Scottish. She is partly American and this can be the reason. However, there might be another explanation. She notifies that she has a predator in her garden: “he sneaked past Isabel’s window. Brother Fox” (McCall Smith 213). Isabel refers to this fox several times, and it is apparently so closely related to her that she has given him the name “Brother Fox”. Brother Fox is a repeated reference in all five novels about Isabel Dalhousie. A relatively common sight in Scotland’s cities, the red fox feeds on Isabel’s and other people’s leftovers.⁵ The fox is mainly known from fables and animal tales and is described as being smart, devious, greedy and schizophrenic, just like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. On the one hand, the fox saves its own skin with slyness; on the other hand, its trickiness helps it to take advantage of others. By reading Robert Crawford’s *Scotland’s Books* I have discovered that the Gaelic word for a fox is gille-martuinn, pronounced ‘Gil-Martin’ (Crawford 432). This is, I think, significant. The name ‘Gil-Martin’ is used in Hogg’s story about Robert Wringhim’s evil side, or a name of the Devil however, Robert claims Gil-Martin is his mysterious friend. One could almost assert

⁵ This familiar predator is a key character in the Scottish wildlife world.

that Brother Fox gives literally a body to Isabel's dark and suppressed personality, and is a projected character. Brother Fox can be a symbol of Isabel's Gil-Martin. "She would like to have warned him of Brother Fox" (McCall Smith 224), perhaps this is her way of informing the reader about her own imperfection, she admits she also can be a predator. The sentence "She had named him Brother Fox, and seen him from time to time-" (McCall Smith 46) may suggest that her evil sides, which she tries to hide, becomes apparent in certain situations. Gil-Martin is a part of Isabel's split-mind. With this interpretation she has a double personality which is a typical feature of Scottishness. She pretends to be good and positive and hides her darker aspects of life in Brother Fox. This can also explain her moral dilemmas whether she should involve herself or not in other's business. She noses around in other private affairs; one example of her sneaking is when she snoops around Toby and explores his secret affair with another woman. Foxes are known for sneaking around. I will proceed and now focus on Isabel's interests. One of Isabel's good things in life is art.

Craig states that Scots are imbued with an intense love of the Scottish landscape (Craig 8). Isabel is an art collector. She shows her love of Scottish landscape paintings, and describes the paintings she studies at art galleries and also paintings she looks at by visiting friends in their homes. "The painting by the door, for example, was a Peplow, and an early one" (McCall Smith 31). Isabel comments also on paintings she observes in Paul Hogg's home: "There was a Gillies landscape, for example, a very small McTaggart, and there, at the end of the room, a characteristic Bellamy. Whoever had collected these either knew a great deal about Scottish art or had stumbled upon a perfectly representative ready-made collection" (McCall Smith 148). William McTaggart, David Bellamy and William George Gillies are all three landscape painters. Isabel therefore fits into this stereotype description of the Scots.

The Scots have a strong belief in the importance of principles, a highly developed work ethic, a sense of duty and social responsibility (Craig 18). Isabel is half-American and has a struggle amidst her Scottish- and American identity. She has a positive and optimistic view of life, however Craig argues that it is impossible to avoid seeing that Scottish books show Scotland through a dark, negative glass (Craig 30). The English poet Ewart Gavin describes the Scots thus:

The Irish are great talkers
Persuasive and disarming
You can say lots and lots
Against the Scots
But at least they're never charming. (quoted in Craig 59)

I do not find Isabel Dalhousie similar to Gavin's description. Similar to the divided self in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Isabel is drawn between her Scottish and American heritage. She has to define her own identity within the mixed heritage. It seems like she has inherited her positive attitude, her charming personality from her American mother and her affection for logical thinking, her work ethic, and her love of the Scottish landscape from her Scottish father. This duality of interests and attitude gives her a Scottish-American identity.

The authority of McCall Smith's woman detective is private rather than state-sanctioned. Plain claims that there is a new mode in Scottish crime writing. He maintains it tends to leave the political and move towards the more personal and the exploration of smaller, more intimate spaces. "This might be seen as the logical outcome of Scotland's new 'Post-British' status" (Schoene 140). McCall Smith's story is an example of this because the narrative is about Isabel's personal life and her relations; thus it is explicitly neither very political nor about global issues. This observation supports my claim that this feature makes the story approximate to a Kailyard novel. A detective novel's two most important characters are the detective and the culprit. I have now discussed Isabel, the detective. I proceed to introduce the criminal, Neil Macfarlane.

Neil is a young man living together with Hen and Mark. He is an active golf player and Scotland is claimed to be the birthplace of golf. He is working as a trainee lawyer. Isabel discovers that Neil and Hen are lovers. Neil, the villain, is not paid much attention to, and this is a typical characteristic in a crime story. The criminal is often the least likeable person in the narrative and this is exposed in the text. "His face was impassive, but there was something disconcerting in his manner, an uneasiness" (McCall Smith 96). The reader is not expected to sympathize with the criminal, since this would break the formula, and Neil is a quite uninteresting character due to the fact that the reader is given only tiny information about him, he is presented without much individualizing detail and is described only in few sentences. The information given about him is not enough to identify him as a round character, according to E. M. Forster's term – that is, a character capable of development and thus of surprising the reader. The criminal causes the victim's death and the next important character to discuss is therefore the victim.

The victim in *The Sunday Philosophy Club* is Mark Fraser. He is young and works in a firm of fund managers. In crime fiction, the reader is not supposed to be too emotionally involved with the victim because the story then changes to a tragedy. This generic expectation is fulfilled in this story where Mark is only presented from his moment of falling, and he has little personal relations to the other characters in the narrative. Neil presents little information

about him, mostly in order to get rid of Isabel's possible suspicion against himself. I have discussed the three most important characters in a detective novel: the detective, the culprit and the victim with regard to crime fiction characteristics. Furthermore, the novel presents other important characters like Isabel's brother and mother who I find interesting from a literary perspective.

While the Scottish people have often felt separated from the government in London, Isabel feels separated from her brother. Her younger brother attended a boarding school in England. As Isabel sees it, he was sent to a "community in which every cruelty and vice could flourish, and did" (McCall Smith 28). The community she describes can be seen as a description of his boarding school; however, it can also be interpreted as her view of England in general. Her brother is in her point of view rigid in his views and an unhappy man. As siblings they represent the relation between the Scots and the English. They have never been close and she feels that he is "almost a stranger to her" (McCall Smith 28). Moreover, her brother, a merchant banker, is an example of the Scottish problem of emigrants. He is an illustration of the about one million well skilled emigrants who have left Scotland in order to live and work in England. He must have a faith that England may give him a better future than Scotland can.

Isabel's mother represents Scotland's relation to the US. In contrast to Isabel's relationship to her brother, she had a close relation to her dead mother and calls her "her sainted American mother" (McCall Smith 16). She remembers that she was tucked into bed at night and also her mother's soft southern voice which reminded her father of "moss on trees and characters from Tennessee Williams plays" (McCall Smith 17). This description illustrates the American mother's warm attitude to her family. I will argue that this close relationship can also be found in another level. The American- Scottish Foundation expresses a warm relation between the US and Scotland. This can be seen in the words of the 28th President of the United States, Thomas Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924), himself the grandson of a Scots Presbyterian Minister: "Every line of strength in American history is a fine line coloured with Scottish blood". That is the reason why there is a warm friendship between the US and Scotland. The American Scottish foundation enthusiastically continues to deepen this warm connection. This close relationship between America and Scotland is shown symbolically in Isabel's warm feelings for her sainted American mother. This supports Plain's argument that "Scottish crime fiction emerges from a hybrid tradition that owes more to American than English popular culture" (Schoene 133). Additionally, the readers are introduced to the characters Eddie and Jamie.

Eddie is a representative Scot. He is a young man working for Isabel's niece. He is a shy, constrained man. "Cat's assistant, a silent young man called Eddie, who always avoided eye contact, now brought them each a cup of hot milky coffee. Isabel thanked him and smiled, but he looked away and retreated to the back of the counter" (McCall Smith 23). Cat informs Isabel that she has found him crying in the back room which can indicate that he really feels miserable. Toby, Cat's boyfriend, argues that Eddie is a "bit of a wimp" (McCall Smith 40). Cat explains "He's a hard worker" and "he's honest" "But he never looks at anyone" (McCall Smith 23). Eddie appears to be an example of what Alan Bold calls an archetypal Scot, who is marvellous at making everything about him miserable. He may also be an example of what Yellowlees means when he claims that the Scots are not brought up to feel confident in themselves.

Jamie is a stereotypical Scot. He is one of Isabel's friends. He is single, in his twenties and plays the bassoon in an orchestra. He has earlier been Cat's boyfriend. Isabel finds him beautiful and gentle and it seems like she is unconsciously in love with him. Because of the age difference, I think she hides her feelings for him and even for herself. Jamie has problems with finding close acquaintances. He has no friends but Isabel. He has not been able to build strong relationships between himself and other people. "I never had a friend like that" (McCall Smith 79). Isabel asks him, "Nobody? Not even as a boy? I thought boys had passionate friendships" (McCall Smith 79). Jamie lets Isabel know: "I'd like to have lots of friends"(McCall Smith 79). Jamie's lack of close associations supports Yellowlees' theory (Craig 6). He claims that Scots are not brought up to feel confident in themselves and if people lack self-confidence and feel useless, this destroys the people's chance to build strong relationships between friends, and to find a life-partner. Jamie is still single and misses close friends and can be one of these Scottish people that lack of self-confidence and this has damaged his social life. As mentioned in chapter one, people with a lack of self-confidence may also have a very pessimistic attitude to life.

Grace, Isabel's housekeeper is a Scottish stereotype. She is a tall woman in her forties, with dark red hair. She is from the working class and has not had all the privileges that Isabel had in her childhood. She has developed a pessimistic attitude. She grew up with hard work and she is one who does not have to question anything, not like Isabel who has all her inner monologues. There are several passages where Grace's pessimistic attitude is disclosed: "Grace said: 'I was standing there at the bus stop, waiting for a bus. They're meant to come every twelve minutes, but that's laughable. Laughable'"(McCall Smith 108). Another comment which reveals her intolerance is "People who had metal piercing in their heads were

asking for troubles” (McCall Smith 66). Furthermore, she is not the only character with a negative attitude. One characteristic example of other Scots’ negative expectation is Isabel’s dialogue with a barman in Vincent Bar.

“‘It’s spring, I suppose.’

‘I suppose,’ said the barman. But you never know” (McCall Smith 142).

The pessimism of this dialogue supports the Scottish psychologists’ claim that sarcasm and negative remarks are as familiar to the Scots as rainy days.

2.4 Scottish icons

Scottish icons are something of which most Scots are fiercely proud to claim as their own. Examples of such icons are the Scottish whisky, the Gaelic language, the bagpipes and the kilt. These are icons the people outside Scotland identify the Scots with.

The first icon to be mentioned in *The Sunday Philosophy Club* is the whisky; acknowledged as Scotland's national drink. Isabel visits a pub with Johnny Sanderson and talks with Johnny. “‘I like some whiskies,’ said Isabel. ‘Some’ ‘Such as?’ ‘Speyside. Soft whiskies. Whiskies that don’t bite” (McCall Smith 198). I will argue that it is not coincidental that she requests Speyside. It is more probable that this is an example of a product placement; a form of advertisement where the brand is placed in a context. It fits seamlessly into the context of the scene, making Speyside seem like a natural part of the story. I find this especially obvious due to the fact that she articulates so affirmatively about the whisky: she calls it soft whisky and stresses that the whisky does not bite. This is most likely a way of marketing this Scottish brand.

The second icon the reader finds in the text is the kilt. There are two references to Scotland’s national item of dress. The first is when Isabel reflects on her childhood. She remembers when she was a little girl and met the Scottish poet Hugh MacDiarmid: “*He was wearing a kilt*” (Mc Call Smith 14). The next reference to this national icon is when Isabel is visiting Paul Hogg. She is curious and finds an invitation to a wedding in Paul’s kitchen where it says that the dress code is Evening/Highland (McCall Smith 145). This means the Highland kilt. A striking feature of any list of Scottish icons is that it is dominated by Highland symbolism. I will argue that mentioning both a Highland whisky and the Highland

kilt contribute to giving this novel a Scottish identity.

The third icon is the Gaelic language. Language is an essential part of people's identity. Today the primary languages spoken in Scotland are Scottish English, (Lowland) Scots and Scottish Gaelic. Most of the text in this novel is written in English; however, some Gaelic language is shown in dialogues and the Gaelic is also explained to the reader in order to let him or her understand the text. The first glance of Gaelic occurs when Isabel offers Toby a drink. "‘Slainte,’ said Toby. Isabel raised her glass weakly. Slainte, she was sure, would be Toby's only word of Gaelic [...]" (McCall Smith 37). Isabel's negative comment about Toby's lack of Gaelic language reveals her sceptical attitude towards him. The old Scottish word "bizz" is also used. This word is explained after being used in a dialogue between Jamie and Isabel. "‘I wonder what it is that made us- both of us- take a bizz against her.’ Then follows an explanation. ‘The old Scots word ‘bizz’, like so many Scots terms, could only be roughly translated. A bizz was a feeling of antipathy, but it had subtle nuances’" (McCall Smith 153). This quotation is also explained by the narrator. I will claim that the author exposes his worship of the Gaelic language. The text insinuates that Gaelic language is a richer language in view of the fact that it informs the reader about all the nuances.

The fourth and last icon presented in the text is the Scottish bagpipe. Isabel reflects on Cat's boyfriend Toby. He is a man she cannot like and she compares him with Cat's ex-boyfriend Jamie: "She had no idea whether Toby could sing, but would be surprised if he could. He would also be unlikely to play a musical instrument (except the bagpipes, perhaps, or, at a stretch percussion), whereas Jamie played the bassoon" (Mc Call Smith 80). This indicates that Isabel values playing the bagpipe less than playing other instruments. It looks like playing the bagpipe is something every Scot should be able to play or is considered as low culture. She is therefore not impressed by Toby while Jamie plays the bassoon which is considered as more cultured.

All these national icons highlight the Scottishness of the text. Thus they support the claims that national icons are much more obvious in Scottish than English literature. Charles Jennings argues: "Englishness unlike Scottishness is baffling diffuse" (Craig 228). I tend to agree.

2.5 The crime fiction formula

As mentioned in chapter one, crime fiction is a formulaic way of writing and consists of several genre characteristics. I will now discuss how this novel uses the typical features of

crime fiction within the rule of Fair Play and the crime fiction formula.

An observant reader has the possibility to solve the mystery before Isabel does. The villain Neil, who is not even a criminal in the legal sense, is mentioned more often than any other character, almost sixty times before he is revealed on the third last page. The most obvious clue is when Isabel discovers that Hen knows the music that was played in Usher Hall the night Mark died. She must have read the programme which the audience received at the concert, which meant that she or Neil, her roommate, most likely must have been there. Ronald Knox requires also that the criminal must be mentioned in an early part of the story and Neil is introduced already in chapter one. Moreover, the rule that the detective must not commit the crime herself is also fulfilled: Isabel is the detective and Neil is the villain. There are no twin brothers or doubles in the plot. On the basis of the met requirements, the notion Fair Play obviously applies to this detective story.

The formula consists of the six mentioned (A,B,C,D,E,F) steps. Step A is the introduction of the detective. The detective Isabel Dalhousie is introduced early: "Isabel Dalhousie saw the young man fall from the edge of the upper circle, from the gods" (McCall Smith 3). The crime and clues are thereafter followed in step B. First Isabel follows the clues from the corpse's roommates Hen and Neil, later the business financier Paul Hogg and also the stockbroker Johnny Sanderson. In step C, Isabel starts the investigation and meets suspects and makes false assumptions. The clues follow lines of witnesses and suspected persons. Some of the story lines typically lead the reader in directions that seem to be false clues. For example, on page 227 we read that "With the sound of fallen glass she screamed, involuntarily, and a hand was laid upon her arm" (McCall Smith 227). This is a false clue and has nothing to do with the mystery she is solving. In the end she discovers a ticket from Usher Hall in the roommates' apartment and finds out that this belongs to Neil. In step D, an announcement of the solution is given. The unexpected explanation is that Neil announces the solution himself when Isabel visits him. "I was there. I was" (McCall Smith 245). Finally, he explains to her what happened the night at Usher Hall. The explanation which is expected in the next step E is from Neil himself. "We had an argument and I gave him a shove, sideways, to make my point" (McCall Smith 245). That she is not the one that announces the true solution breaks with the formula. Isabel is mostly concerned about the moral questions. Thus, when she knows what happened and believes Neil's explanation, she is satisfied and does not announce her resolution. In step F the villain is usually arrested. Surprisingly, however, in this story no one is arrested and the police are not involved. "And that's the end of the matter. It was an accident. You're sorry about it. We can leave it at that" (McCall Smith

247). The mystery is solved; however, an accident instead of a murder breaks the crime formula. Moreover, if the poet W. H. Auden's definition is applied, this novel cannot be considered as detective fiction because the villain Neil is not arrested, nor does he die. Still, I conclude that McCall Smith's novel fulfils several requirements of the detective fiction formula and the novel can be declared to be a formula based detective story.

2.6 Scottish art

The story has a focus on Scottish artists. It cannot be a coincidence that at least ten Scottish artists are mentioned. As Isabel is an art collector, she observes and comments on Scottish paintings and Scottish writers several times. Painters like the Scottish post-impressionist Samuel Peploe is one of them. The Scottish painter Jack Vettriano is also referred to. "She smiled at the Vettriano – he was deeply disapproved of by the artistic establishment in Edinburgh, but he remained resolutely popular. Why was this? Because his figurative paintings said something about people's lives" (McCall Smith 92). This is also an example of Isabel's inner monologues. She considers the paintings as visualization of social realism. The Scottish painter s Cowie is one of Isabel's favorite artists. She has two oils and would be happy to purchase another. Cowie paintings show sad-faced schoolgirls and "Scottish country roads and paths that seemed to lead into nothing" (McCall Smith 52). It may look like he paints unhappy Scottish people. I find that he paints the Scots with their feeling of worthlessness and the Scots lack of self-esteem. When it seems like the paths lead to nothing, I would argue that this tells something about their negative expectations of their own future which can become self-fulfilling prophecies. One female contemporary Scottish painter and printmaker is also introduced when Isabel visits a gallery with Elizabeth Blackadder's paintings. Isabel informs us that she paints cats in gardens. She discusses the painting with Paul Hogg. He says: "Cats in gardens. Very comfortable. Not exactly social realism" (McCall Smith 53). Yet even cats may show realism. In an interview in *The Sunday Times* 28 May 2006, the journalist comments that Blackadder had first a pessimistic attitude toward the interviewer. She wanted to know what kind of article the writer was supposed to write. As mentioned already, people with lack of self-confidence often show this attitude. The journalist on *The Sunday Times* says that Blackadder's cats are not sweet and happy cats. They are devoid of sentimentality, and they often look downright grumpy. This has not stopped them becoming some of her most popular pieces. Their popularity indicates that Paul Hogg may be

wrong. His claim about cats and that the pictures do not show reality, may be wrong because in fact these cross and bad-tempered cats illustrate the Scots' harsh reality of life and the Scots' grumpy attitude. When Isabel mentions and comments on all these Scottish painters she gives the reader an insight into both the Scottish social realism and Scottish art. It is hardly accidental that all these Scottish painters are mentioned; this is also a way of marketing Scotland as a destination and not a country which is culturally deprived.

In addition to these painters, several Scottish writers are also mentioned. These include the Scottish Gaelic poet Hugh MacDiarmid, Scotland's favorite son Robert Burns, the Scottish icon James Hogg, the poet and novelist Ruthven Campbell Todd, the poet Douglas Young and the poet Norman McCaig. "McDiarmid, or Christopher Grieve, to give him his real name, is the wordiest. The best is the tall man, Norman McCaig. But he'll never be fully recognized, because Scots literature these days is all about complaining and moaning and being injured in one's soul'" (McCall Smith 15). The narrator here confirms the negative publicity Scottish literature has. Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* is also referred to. "'Lady Macbeth.'" Isabel said firmly. 'There should be a syndrome named after her'" (McCall Smith 153).⁶ There are also interesting references to earlier Scottish crime fiction like Stevenson's story *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. The narrator says about hypocrisy: "Respectability was such an effort, though, and there were bars and clubs where people might go and behave as they really wanted to behave, but did not dare do so publicly. The story of Jekyll and Hyde was conceived in Edinburgh, of course, and made perfect sense there" (McCall Smith 55). These comments on painters and writers emphasize the Scottishness in this novel and also supports Plain's claim that Scottish crime writing draws extensively upon its forbears. She argues that every self-respecting detective novel carries a compulsory reference to Stevenson (Schoene 133).

Isabel's comments about paintings and literature are not essential for the plot. Thus one reason for their inclusion may be that the novel wants to make the reader aware of the rich history of Scottish culture and to turn the negative aspects of Scottishness into a more positive attitude towards Scottish productions.

⁶ *Macbeth* has many superstitions centered on the belief that the play is somehow "cursed", and many actors will not mention the name of the play aloud, referring to it instead as '*The Scottish Play*'.

2.7 Calvinism

The novel refers to Calvinism as Isabel reflects that “Petty Calvinism had flourished in the nineteenth century and the light had gone elsewhere ;[...]” (McCall Smith 55). Are the moral rules so strict that the Scots cannot relax and fill their needs without feeling shame? Isabel has a feeling of shame and lack of self-confidence and expresses this to Jamie. “But I have bags of failings. Same as anybody else. Bags” (McCall Smith 130). This supports Craig’s claim that the Scots have the feeling of never being good enough.

In my discussion of the setting I have shown the importance of Edinburgh as the main setting. The location of Edinburgh as a Calvinistic city is a significant element of the story, constituting an important part of the characters’ identity. Morality is definitely an issue, however, as claimed by Isabel, “Edinburgh, it was said, was built on hypocrisy” (McCall Smith 55). Isabel indicates that the citizens of Edinburgh still need to visit a bar or club to show one’s true character because of the strict Calvinistic culture, they still have to hide one’s true colours from the public world. However, at the same time she also asserts that “the old moral certainties were disappearing everywhere and were being replaced by self-interest and ruthlessness” (McCall Smith 183). This is another example of Isabel being torn between two standpoints.

The fact that Calvinism regards music, painting, sculpture, and architecture as sin and all prose and poetry which is not sacred also as sin – may be one of the reasons why McCall Smith so obviously refers to several painters, music and literature from Scotland. There has been too much hiding of rich art from Scotland. This is McCall Smith’s valuable contribution to make both the Scottish people conscious and proud of their own culture and also to market Scottish art to readers outside Scotland. Influence of Calvinism on the Scots may be seen in the Scots’ strong belief in the importance of principles, a highly developed work ethic and a sense of duty and social responsibility. Craig asserts that these qualities are part of Scotland’s Calvinist legacy (Craig 18). Furthermore, Calvinism “believes that it is dangerous for people to spend time idly for ‘the Devil makes work for idle hands and idle minds’” (Craig 48). This can be the reason why Isabel is an editor for the *Review of Applied Ethics*. She has more money than she needs and does not have to work in order to get an income. The review has few readers and it can be argued that she does this editorial work in order to use her intellect and have something meaningful to do. However, Isabel misses also some of the old Calvinistic regulations. She finds some of the strict rules good for the moral. She feels that the result today is unprincipled people. “It had to do with the disappearance of guilt from people’s

lives, which was no bad thing, in one sense, as guilt had caused such a mountain of unnecessary unhappiness. But there was still a role for guilt in moral action, as a necessary disincentive. Guilt underlined wrong; it made the moral life possible” (McCall Smith 94-5). The reader can observe an example of contradictions in her view. On the one hand, she reflects on the positive aspects of Calvinism such as a good moral. On the other hand, she points at the negative aspects, such as the feeling of guilt.

2.8 Conclusion

In order to decide whether the story may be characterized as a detective story I have discussed the importance of setting, the typical characters in this detective story, the notion Fair Play and how the detective fiction formula is applied in the story. However, the crime-solving approach is not the heart of the novel. What makes it different from most detective stories is that no one is imprisoned and no crime has been committed in juridical terms. *The Sunday Philosophy Club* does not have a very exciting plot. There are other issues which are more important, especially Isabel’s interest in philosophy and moral issues. The story includes also the necessary references to classical Scottish crime fiction something which Plain argues every self-respecting Scottish crime novel needs.

First, the sustained focus on Scottish whisky, newspapers, literature, painters, writers, national clothing the kilt and even the bagpipe is obvious. The way the Gaelic language is presented is also a technique of presenting Scottish icons. The novel has a wealth of Scottish ‘iconography’. Scotland is in general overflowing in national symbolism and a great many of these symbols are present in this story. It is palpable that almost all artists who are introduced in the novel are Scottish and not English or from other countries. Second, I have discussed how the Scottish problem with emigration is shown through Isabel’s brother, who can be seen as a symbol of Scotland’s feeling of neglect from London. Third, I have argued that Isabel’s philosopher title levels severe criticism of England’s way of changing Scotland’s educational system. Fourth, the story has many of Craig’s typical characteristics of Scottishness and I have discussed Isabel’s affection for Scottish landscape, her passion for logical thinking and her subaltern feeling. Eddie and Jamie lack self-confidence and Grace shows a pessimistic attitude. Fifth, Calvinism is central; Isabel has a high standard of work ethics and tries to avoid idle hands which are considered as sin. She finds the positive influence of Calvinism in the strong belief in the importance of principles, a highly developed work ethic and a sense of duty and social responsibility. However, she treasures art which has been considered as sin

and she indicates that the people still need to hide when they want to show their true character. Isabel cannot show her true character and has a projected character in Brother Fox. Nevertheless, at the same time she also claims that the old moral matter of things is replaced by self-centredness and heartlessness.

To sum up, the novel not only includes but in a way consists of numerous references to Scotland and Scottish culture. These references serve to cumulatively highlight Scottishness. I hope to have uncovered to what great extent Scottishness is presented in this novel. The story represents Scottish culture and identity by using setting, characters, national icons and Calvinism to such an extent that the readership cannot avoid learning something about Scottish culture while reading this novel. And yet “At the same time Scottishness never constitutes more than a mere ‘background’ to anybody’s life, which no one ought to be obliged to foreground unless they choose to do so” (Schoene 15). The novel emphasizes positive Scottish icons and artists. It is as though the author wants to show, almost brag, about the nation’s cultural background. This strategy may be a way of marketing Scotland and also of awakening the Scottish people, thus enabling them to discover their national identity and their cultural background in order to help them overcome their lack of confidence. This is also one of the ways in which literature may deal with subaltern feelings – by presenting a strong Scottish culture. This way of writing can modify the Scots’ negative attitude, while at the same time strengthening a feeling of pride of their national cultural heritage.

CHAPTER 3

The Cutting Room by Louise Welsh

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will first introduce the author and her works. I will then present the setting and characters in *The Cutting Room*, also focusing on important crime fiction genre characteristics in the novel and discussing whether we can call *The Cutting Room* crime fiction or not. Furthermore, I will highlight the Scottish cultural markers, especially the Caledonian Antisyzygy and also references to, as well as echoes of, earlier Scottish literature. In order to look at the split personality I will search for the good and evil according to the Calvinistic definition of these moral qualities.

3.2 The author

Louise Welsh is a Scottish writer born in 1965 and lives in Glasgow. Welsh is teaching creative writing at Glasgow University, the same university where she studied history. Published by Canongate in 2002, *The Cutting Room* was Welsh's debut novel. Translated into eighteen languages, *The Cutting Room* has won several awards.⁷ The *Guardian* chose Welsh as one of Britain's Best First Novelists of 2002 and as "a woman to watch" the year after. Welsh's second book, *Tamburlaine Must Die*, was published to critical acclaim in August 2004 and her third novel, *The Bullet Trick*, appeared two years later. The author is a lesbian and the story is narrated by a gay man.

3.3 Setting

The Cutting Room is about the auctioneer Rilke in Bowery Auctions, who is offered a job clearing out the estate of the dead Mr. McKindless. In addition to be an auctioneer, Rilke, in

⁷This includes the 2002 Crime Writers' Association John Creasey Memorial Dagger, and the 2002 Saltire Society Scottish First Book of the Year Award, the Robert Louis Stevenson Memorial Award in 2003, a Scotland on Sunday/Glenfiddich Spirit of Scotland Award in 2004, and a Hawthornden Fellowship in 2005. This novel was also nominated for the Orange Prize and is included in the Stonewall Honor Book in the US.

common with Isabel Dalhousie, is an amateur sleuth. The setting in this detective novel is in Hyndland: a prime residential area in the fashionable West End of the City of Glasgow. Hypocrisy is claimed to be a result of a Calvinistic Scotland and the first example of this double standard is when Rilke describes Hyndland. It is a middle-class area and Rilke describes it in terms of a negative. "I hate Hyndland. You'll find its like in any large city. Green leafy suburbs, two cars, children at public school and boredom, boredom, boredom. Petty respectability up front, intricate cruelties behind closed doors" (Welsh L 2). This is Rilke's description of a typical Scottish society, a society full of hypocrisy. Rilke feels that Hyndland tries to show something which is not the true face of the society.

Rilke jumps into Glasgow's underworld, including Scottish porn industry, prostitution, trafficking and sexual perversion. This setting in Glasgow has both gothic and modern city elements. Distinctly gothic elements are narrow passages, dampness and cold, and also a locked attic inaccessibility to the rest of the household. Here Mr. McKindless stores his erotic collection of books, pictures and other pieces of art.

Glasgow is presented as a modern city where a gleaming and deceptive façade hides a world of exploitation and crime. The gothic elements and the modern city are both typical features of hard-boiled crime fiction, which is a literary style distinguished by an unsentimental portrayal of crime, violence, and sex. This novel is possessed of all these three elements.

A way to highlight the Glasgow setting is the author's technique of mentioning uncountable Glasgow street names. We follow the narrator rattling off street names along walks in Glasgow and it is almost like we read a map of streets. An illustrative example: "Climbing the rise of University Avenue, towards the illuminated towers of the university, their haze clouding any view of the stars. It was getting quieter now. I descended towards Gilmorehill Cross, then turned right into Kelvin Way, avenue of dreams" (Welsh L 26). This description gives the reader a feeling of touring in Glasgow with Rilke.

3.4 Caledonian Antisyzygy

The term Caledonian Antisyzygy was first introduced by G. Gregory Smith's in his book *Scottish Literature: Character and Influence* (1919). Smith claims that Scottish literature is very diverse and that, under the pressure of foreign influence, it becomes almost a zigzag of contradictions. This combination of opposites is called the 'Caledonian Antisyzygy'. The notion is most frequently cited in reference to the seemingly morally contradictory quality of

the novels by Robert Louis Stevenson and James Hogg. There are for example several passages that refer to Stevenson's novella *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. The detective Rilke is asked about which horror film is the most popular ever, and he answers: "*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde?*" (Welsh L 241). In the analysis of this novel I will mainly focus on this combination of opposites within characters and setting.

The first example of contradictions is the contradictions in the photo with the female victim. Rilke's investigation starts the moment he discovers the photos in Mr. McKindless's hidden envelopes that depict the sexual torture and murder of a young woman. That chapter is introduced by a part of a poem by John Keats:

'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,' -that is all

Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know. (Welsh L 1)

This is an example of Welsh's use of intertextuality. She applies a part of Keats's poem "Ode on a Grecian Urn", which starts thus: "Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness / Thou foster child of silence and slow time." In the silent urn, the poem tells that the urn hides secrets that only poetry itself can release and the poem lets the urn talk at the end. "Beauty is truth, truth beauty," it says. "That is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know." It is as if beauty and silence are enough. Edgar Allan Poe claims that "the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world" (Leitch 746). However, one notable problem of art is that truth is not necessarily beauty, and prettiness is not always truth. A dead woman in the photo has been looked upon as the total beauty; however, the truth is that there is no beauty in death. Even this woman's beauty is destroyed. The woman is young, naked and wears only a beautiful silver bracelet round one wrist. Her white body is in contrast to the dark background. In another picture she has been wrapped in a white blanket and this gives her a virginal look. Her beauty is destroyed by the men's cruel treatment. In contrast to this white innocent woman wrapped in a white blanket are the two men who wear monks' habits with hoods throwing shadows across their faces. These men torture the woman and this is in sharp contrast to the expected action by monks. Monks are associated with kindness however these monks have committed cruelties. The woman looks like a virgin but is probably a victim of trafficking. The truth about the photo which is considered as art is in fact no beauty. Thus it can be claimed that this photo is an example of Caledonian Antisyzygy too. Within characters there are also examples of this duality. I will in the next paragraphs analyze the characters Rilke, Mr. McKindless and the brothers Steenie and John to bring to light their schizophrenic nature which is arguably an example of Scottishness.

3.5 Characters

The crime fiction formula step A is the early introduction of the detective. The auctioneer Rilke is introduced on the second page. "They call me Rilke to my face, behind my back the Cadaver, Corpse, Walking Dead" (Welsh L 2). By these remarks about himself he admits that he is talked about with depressing comments and shows some self-irony. I argue that the detective and main character Rilke is a typical Scot.

As mentioned Scottish culture is designed to cut people down to size and sarcasm, negative remarks and humiliations are as familiar as rainy days. People with a lack of self-confidence may also have a very unenthusiastic approach and / or will often be jealous of other people's success. Rilke is an obvious example of these characteristic features. He wants success and is envious of the citizens living in Hyndland. He has a pessimistic attitude which can be illustrated by one of his inner monologues: "I never expect anything. I didn't expect anything driving along the Crow Road towards Hyndland" (Welsh L 2). Later he says: "Never expect anything. Cat's Piss should have added, 'But be prepared: anything may happen'" (Welsh L 3). Components like these support the claims that the Scots generally share a pessimistic outlook to life, as argued in chapter one.

A divided self is said to be a typical Scottish feature. The phrase "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" is associated with the Scots' split personality. Rilke, the narrator, does not only want to find out the mystery about the woman in the picture but apparently also tries to solve the mystery about himself. He needs to find out about the duality within him, including his female and male aspects, as well as his good and bad sides. Craig asserts that Scots are a people with a passionate need to understand (Craig vii). Seen in this light, Rilke is a typical Scot because he desperately wants to solve the mystery about the picture. He wants to know the history behind it and throw light on the mystery about himself.

Rilke is a person who shows a clear contrast within his character. Rilke is a "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" character. The novel is not only a crime story about the murdered woman in the picture, but nevertheless a mystery story centred on Rilke. Is he a gentleman or is he a villain himself? As the story proceeds he embarks on a self-exploration. In his meeting with the other characters the reader gets to know Rilke; actually the reader learns more about him than about the victim or even the villain. Rilke is divided in two personalities when it comes to relations. He has a close relation to the female characters like Anne Marie, Rita and Rose. He also cares for the unknown woman in the photo; he is friendly with Miss McKindless, the villain's sister, and has also a warm relation to the transvestite Sandy.

Homosexuals have little presence Scottish culture. Homosexual Scots in the public eye also seem reluctant to come out. The social historian Bob Cant claims that gay men are invisible in modern Scotland. He asserts that homosexuals are referred to as the Other, that they do not belong (Craig 142). The transvestites and gender-benders in Welsh's novel are visible in Glasgow's underworld. Rilke has a close relationship to the women in the story, including the transvestites. "I said I'd give it some thought and asked why she was removing her nail polish. She sighed. My wife hates it" (Welsh L 108). This remark shows that he refers to the transvestites as women. The way of using a homosexual man as the detective and include several characters that are transvestites or gender-benders is the author's way of moving this group of persons away from what Bob Cant calls the "Other" to the mainstream.

Rilke's "Dr. Jekyll" part is shown through his positive qualities. He is loyal, compassionate, courageous, and looking for love in his relation to women. The first example of Rilke's positive attitude to women is shown in his relation to Anne Marie, one of Mr. McKindless' victims. Rilke has positive feelings for her, once expressed by the remark, "She had a pleasant laugh" (Welsh L 88). The second example of his close relation to her is when Rilke holds her close after she has killed Mr. McKindless (Welsh L 276). Another positive interest in women is shown when Rilke starts to investigate in order to find out what happened to the victim in the picture he comes across. He investigates and is really disappointed when he fails to uncover her identity. Rilke has a sentimental moment when he realizes that he will not succeed in his survey. "'I cared', I whispered. 'I cared enough to try. I'm sorry I never knew your name' [...] 'I was crying for other victims, present and future'" (Welsh L 293).

Furthermore, Rilke has sympathy for Sandy, the transvestite. When Sandy is attacked Rilke gives the attacker "a swift kick" and wants to tell her "I won't let them hurt you any more" (Welsh L 114). Sandy is a kind of parody because he dresses like a woman but cannot make himself look like a woman given that he has a typical masculine physics. A transvestite fantasizes about being the other sex; he plays with the given gender roles. According to Calvinistic moral laws, he is evil because people are supposed to be grateful to God and not try to change what God has created, specifically their given gender. Therefore this is not accepted, and Sandy's tendency is looked upon as sin. Rilke does not share this point of view. He enjoys staying with transvestites and tries to protect them against the representatives of Calvinistic morality.

Pornography itself is a depersonalizing of people. The same goes for schizophrenia, a split mind. Pornography and sex without love may give people power over others and in this

novel sex is expressed mostly as exploitation. One example of depersonalizing is when the photographer, who takes pictures of Sandy, focuses on the male features that Sandy had hoped to mask. The photographer makes Sandy into an object which is not the object Sandy wants to show and the photographer therefore depersonalizes him. “Too close the lens zoomed in, roving over the pits and craters of a lunar landscape. She smiled and the camera focused on her mouth. Seeing beyond the full painted bow to thin lips, the receding gums and nicotine teeth of the man Sandy wanted to forget” (Welsh L 113). The photographer wants to show what he finds interesting and that is the male characteristics which Sandy tries to hide. However, the photographer focuses on those in particular. Sandy is very masculine and tries to be something he is not. Rilke feels that Sandy shall have the right to dignity and that the photographer ought to photograph what Sandy wants to show, not the part of him he wants to hide. The photographer donates Sandy another identity than the one he has given himself.

Apart from being nice to outsiders Rilke has a well developed conscience. He has a longing for something to believe in: “I sat for a moment longer, wishing there was someone to pray to” (Welsh L 293). Rilke gives his word to Miss McKindless that he will burn the books, yet he crosses his fingers when he makes this promise. Thus he must have planned to keep the collection and not burn it, even though he gives her his word. He breaks this promise and feels bad for having lied to her and suffers a fight between his greed and his conscience. The latter loses and therefore he does not destroy the valuable collection of porn. Nevertheless, he hopes this does not cause Miss McKindless distress in her last hours. He begs for forgiveness: “‘I’m sorry,’ I whispered. ‘I hope you’ll forgive what I have done and what I am about to do’” (Welsh L 245). This fight between greed and moderation and his later feeling of guilt may be due to his Calvinistic upbringing. Even so, he has a warm feeling for the culprit’s sister, he learns to know her and thinks about her as a sweet old lady. The reader is led to see that Miss McKindless is a victim herself. She has protected her brother and lived her life with the information about the brother’s awful choice of lifestyle.

Another woman Rilke cares for is Rose Bowery, his business partner. Her name, Rose, links her to love and motherhood. However, she is not married, has no children, she is pale, drinks a lot and smokes. Rilke feels he owes her much, even children. Rose gets him out of troubles and when he feels down he needs her comfort. “I wanted to ask Rose to hold me. Just take me in her arms and keep me safe” (Welsh L 118). This is not what we expect from a hardboiled detective like Rilke. In the end of the story he also admits “Deep down I love Rose” (Welsh L 293).

Rilke’s caring attitude to women is also striking when he meets other women in

Glasgow. He feels sorry for Moira who thought her father sold her baby brother Charles, and he also feels sorry for her because she thought that her parents' reason for taking so good care of her was because they wanted a good price for her also. Rilke supports her storytelling and shows that he understands her feelings: "Poor you" (Welsh L 142). The reason why he understands how she feels can be based on his own childhood.

Rilke's boyhood may explain why he has been warped during his upbringing. Rilke's relation to his own mother is presented as difficult. There are indications that he has been a victim of child abuse. He admits that he knows about being tied up: "I could see the roughness of the rope, stray fibres escaping the weave. I knew how that rope would feel, but I knew nothing else" (Welsh L 42). Furthermore, when he meets Mrs. Balfour, he describes her as "the kind of mother every boy thought he might like. Neat, well dressed, a short practical woman. Who knows, she might have beaten her boys every night for their lives with a wire coat hanger" (Welsh L 45). Why should he think of a wire coat hanger and beating if he has no experience with it? Another hint of a miserable childhood is when he describes himself: "The only people who might get hurt were us, and weren't we used to that? I wanted something good for a change" (Welsh L 252). It sounds like he has been abused by his mother, or perhaps his father. There is a possibility that his mother also was a victim and that Rilke tried to help her. "I wondered at my obsession, thought about the girl lying dead on her pallet and another woman, dead long ago, who I had tried to help without hope of success. I thought about people I knew" (Welsh L 196). Could this "another woman" be his mother who may have been killed by some man or his father? This may be the reason why he has such a caring attitude to women and a violent, exploiting attitude to men. There are even more women he shows his caring side to, for example Rita.

Rilke feels sorry for the HIV infected Rita who gave her baby away for adoption because she knew she would not live long with her disease. But with new medication she now knows that she can live as long as "other" people and regrets her previous decision. Her only demand was that she should receive a photo of her baby twice a year until her own death, and this is not fulfilled. After she gave her baby away she has not received a single photo. Rilke says he feels sick when he hears about this ill-fated girl.

Rilke's "Mr. Hyde" part is shown through his wicked side. This secret side of him is present in several situations. In contrast to his care for women, Rilke reveals his evil side when he meets men. Regarding his sexual needs, he does not need women and according to Calvinistic moral, homosexuality is a sin against God. One example of how homosexuality is looked upon by other Scots can be exemplified by Steenie's quotation from the Bible: "if a

man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination! A-bomb-in-ashun! ‘They shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them’ (Welsh L 180). However, Rilke does not care about this religious point of view and he lets his desire be met by unknown younger men. He has this physical attraction to several of the men, like the young man Derek and the computer worker Ross. The physical attraction does not include a close relationship, though. He admits to the reader that Ross’s personal life is of no significance: “His name was Ross and worked with computers. Who cared?” (Welsh L 105). After having sex with Ross he admits that “The only cheeky banter I engage in comes before the act” (Welsh L 106).

Rilke uses young men for sexual pleasure. Despite the fact that this activity is not universal sin, it is considered as sin according to Calvinistic ideas of morality. His sexual activities are rough, without any affection. One example is when Rilke meets a young man of about twenty in Usher’s and takes him by the hair and forces his head back, and feels an infusion of power when he discovers the man’s fear. His penis hardens and he tells the young man to undress. Rilke makes the man perform a blow job. Another example of his darker side is his fantasies: “I imagined myself in a movie I’d seen ... raping this boy ... taking him against his will ... forcing him into liking a big cock up his arse” (Welsh L 153). A most striking difference between the classical crime story and the hard-boiled is the role of sex. The classical detective rarely becomes romantically or sexually involved. Within hard-boiled crime fiction, sex is both an object of pleasure and also of fear (Cawelti 153). Rilke’s sexual activity with unknown men and his discovery of Mr. McKindless’ exploitation of women are examples of these two features. Rilke shows his violent sides in the company of male characters. He fights, shows sadistic tendencies and is ironic when he describes his sexual partners. Thus *The Cutting Room* may be characterised as a hard-boiled detective novel.

It is Rilke’s several flaws and contradictions which keep him interesting for the reader. He breaks the Calvinistic moral by being a regular in seedy pubs, by using speed, by drinking, smoking and swearing, and by his use of porn. Rilke also lies, e.g. to Miss McKindless. In elucidation of Calvinism the money earned on pornography is devil’s work and Rilke plans to run away with the money from the auction. In addition to these less dubious qualities, he is greedy and has several friends from the under-world. Even though he cares for the exploited women, he does not reflect much on those he exploits himself.

The examples above illustrate that Rilke has a Mr. Hyde in him as well as a Dr. Jekyll. He is a good example of a Scot with a split personality. He is torn between his good and evil sides. He is not stereotyped and thereby a character to believe in. He is interesting, because he

is a round character with his sins on the one hand and his caring for other people on the other hand. He has many positive qualities and a reader cannot pre-empt his actions. He crosses both the moral laws and the written laws more than the common man in the street. However, he shows at the same time that he cares for other people, women in particular.

One logical weakness in the novel is that Rilke never asks Miss McKindless for papers that show that McKindless really is dead. Another time these papers should be an issue is when the police officer Anderson discusses the case with Rilke. He should know if he was reported dead or not.

Not only Rilke, but also Roddie McKindless is a two-faced character. Rilke discovers this along with his growing self-knowledge. The dead man's name, McKindless, foreshadows that this is a man who is neither valued nor missed much. As typical in detective fiction the culprit McKindless is introduced at the beginning of the first chapter.

When Rilke visits the dead Mr. McKindless' home for the first time he thinks about the nursery rhyme "There was a crooked man and he had a crooked house" (Welsh L 3). This rhyme has its origin in British history. More precisely, it originates from the English Stuart history of King Charles 1. The crooked man is the Scottish General Sir Alexander Leslie who signed a Covenant securing religious and political freedom for Scotland and the rhyme refers to the border between England and Scotland. Rilke has possibly the feeling of entering an English home and that he is on the border outside Mr. McKindless' door. Alternatively, he may be feeling that he will cross the threshold now and he senses that he will enter a new world. He comes into a place of violence, of cruel exploitation of women. Mr. McKindless has taken his freedom by leaving the religious restrictions and has gone too far in fulfilling his own personal needs. He is the villain in the story, and is believed to be dead until the end of the novel when he suddenly turns up. Later the reader discovers that he has set up his own death in order to run away, hoping to cross the border between England and Scotland and thus escaping from the police. This character has several evil sides and Rilke illustratively describes him from a photo: "Dark eyes stared malevolently from the past. I felt that, had I met this man, I would have known myself in the presence of evil" (Welsh L 39). Mr. McKindless tortures young women, kills them and collects pictures of their death moments. He collects and produces violent porn and erotic art. He plays a part in white slavery and is on the edge of being taken by the police. Nevertheless, he has also a "Dr. Jekyll" side. Miss McKindless informs Rilke that her brother was kind when he was a young boy. "But he was a lovely child. A clever, beautiful boy who could have been anything he wanted" (Welsh L 204). Mr. McKindless has a divided self; he is the evil man but also the good brother.

References to earlier Scottish crime fiction such as *Macbeth* and Stevenson's stories are found several places in the text. The first example occurs when Rilke discovers Mr. McKindless' dead body he whispers "'Who'd have thought the old man would have so much blood in him'" (Welsh L 276). This is a quote from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Lady Macbeth refers to Duncan's murder and includes direct references to blood, again linking blood to treachery and murder. Rilke associates his own evil side with Macbeth. This reference links the novel closer to Scottish history and literature with Scottish setting. There are several references to other Scottish stories. Another example of an important reference to *Macbeth* is when Rilke follows Steenie through a locked chamber, along narrow paths, with a torch; typical gothic elements. They climb stairs high up in the darkness, and Rilke is anxious. Steenie's way of comforting Rilke is "trust in the Lord and you'll be fine" (Welsh L 172). Rilke's following remark, "Lead on, Macduff" (Welsh L 173), is a significant intertextual echo of *Macbeth*. This is a common English saying, meaning "Go ahead and I'll follow you". The expression is actually a misquotation of Macbeth's final words before he is killed and has his head cut off. "Lay on Macduff, and damn'd be him that first cries, 'Hold, enough!'" (*Macbeth*, act 5, scene 8, 81). There is a parallel between this scene and what happens to Rilke and Steenie. Steenie tries to kill Rilke and they have a fight just like Macduff and Macbeth in the play.

The next example is a reference to *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Rilke meets the two brothers Steenie and John. In his self exploration he discovers that these men also are possessed of divided selves. Significantly, chapter thirteen is named Steenie. This chapter is introduced by a passage from *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* which gives us a hint of the theme Caledonian Antisyzygy. Another hint is the name of the character Steven Stevenson (called Steenie), for this is the same name as the author of the famous novella. Steenie is an elder of the free Kirk and his brother John is "conducted a thriving under-the-counter trade in red-hot smut religious differences seemed a safe bet" (Welsh L 169). However, Rilke discovers that Steenie not only has a religious good side, but also evil qualities. Rilke discovers some papers Steenie has written about perversions as Steenie finds it. The text is about lesbian and homosexuals. He describes them as vampires and perverts, claiming that "Lesbians seduce wives, daughters, infants & beasts for their unnatural dog-like sex acts" (Welsh L 178). Steenie has written this monologue in blind fury and has these tendencies himself, and this is his way to fight the evil side in him. Steenie's evil qualities are effectively revealed when Rilke is climbing the ladder. Steenie tries to kill Rilke by slipping

the grip, and hits a sharp jolt to Rilke's shoulder.

Steenie seems to be the worse pervert of the brothers. He pretends to be a good Christian but condemns other people. He has a split personality and fights with himself, has prejudices, is insecure of his own identity and has desires he cannot control. He is a typical example of people not being what they appear, a hypocrite just like Jekyll. When the writer brings in a passage from *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, she gives the reader a hint of Steenie's double standards and links his personality to Scottishness. He is a justified sinner like Robert Wringhim in *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and has a hidden side which is demonic. Gilmartin can be seen as the delusional eruption of Robert's conscience, and Gilmartin has become a term for a beast or an evil person. This is Steenie's role in this novel. The Scots' desire to see things in terms of black and white, right or wrong, can easily lead to moral absolutism: the belief that your perspective is not only true but morally superior to others (Craig 194). Steenie is an example of this type of character and also an example of the poet Gavin's description of the never charming Scot. He is critical, sceptical and judgemental.

Steenie's brother John does not pretend to be better than he is. He runs the porn shop and does not follow the Calvinistic laws. His argument is that laws change over time. When Rilke asks if he is lawful, he laughs and informs Rilke that it was not long since "your type were being thrown into jail or shipped off to the gas chambers" (Welsh L 187), thus referring to his homosexual habits and that laws are changing over time. What is sin one day may be accepted another day. For John, what is evil today may not be evil tomorrow. John is not a hypocrite, he shows his true face without shame.

3.6 The crime fiction formula

In step A the detective was introduced. Crimes and clues are thereafter followed in step B. Rilke starts his job to empty Mr. McKindless' house, where he discovers the pictures and thereby the torture and murders that have been committed in the underworld of Glasgow. In step C, Rilke starts the investigation and meets people involved in the pornography business. He also engages on homosexual interactions, which have nothing to do with the investigation. Clearly this is not according to Poe's view of how a composition should be and yet it gives the story a better picture of Rilke and Glasgow's criminal world. In step D, Rilke has discovered that Mr. McKindless is not dead at all, and he also realizes that he cannot identify the girl in the picture. Thus, we can claim that the novel fulfils all the six steps of the formula,

and that this novel is therefore a “typical” formula based crime story. However, it is not obvious that Rilke’s investigation is the reason why Mr. McKindless turns up again alive. Rilke’s role as a detective is not an important part of the mystery solving. The reader can therefore find the mystery story genre used only as a frame for Rilke’s investigation of himself as a character. By meeting other people he learns about himself and lets the reader witness his divided self.

Another characteristic I want to highlight is the novel’s presentation of typical characters of crime fiction. *The Cutting Room* has several typical detective story characters. These are the victim, the girl in the photographs, the criminal Mr. McKindless, and the auctioneer Rilke who investigates. The reader is not supposed to sympathize with the criminal, Mr. McKindless. If the reader does so, the sympathy is likely to reduce the attitudinal distance between the reader and the criminal, thus complicating the formula. The criminal is often the least likeable character in the narrative and this is shown in the description of Mr. McKindless “in sweaty action, his thin, pigeon chest, hairless and neon white – well even a spider has a body” (Welsh L 22). The hard-boiled villain is often characterized as particularly vicious, perverse, or depraved and also involved in the criminal underworld (Cawelti 148). The villain Mr. McKindless has all these characteristics. One example of his perversion is the collection he has in the attic which among other things consists of a photo showing a victim. “Pupils unfocused and far back in her head, a mouth that ended with a scream. Her throat has been cut. Blood flows from her wound, slicks its way across the pallet and drips into the floor” (Welsh L 36). At the same time, the victim – the young girl in the picture – is not a character with whom the reader becomes emotionally involved, and therefore the narrative does not become a tragedy. The detective does not even succeed in finding her identity.

Rilke is a typical hard-boiled detective who is arrested by the police, assaulted by Steenie, and who experiences armed robbery. “‘Keep calm, do what you’re told and your girlfriend’ll be fine. We’re just here for the money.’ His companion pointed his gun at me with a steady hand” (Welsh L 269). He is also threatened by the police, “‘You’ll stay put, Rilke. This is a crime scene and if you leave-’” (Welsh L 272). The hard-boiled detective is habitually an antihero. Rilke is frustrated and cynical but knows how to handle himself in the midst of violence. Miss McKindless needs his help to sell her brother’s property and get rid of evidences of his violent history. Rilke in turn finds that the process of solving the crime implicates him in the violence and exploitation that lies beneath the surface of the respected world. All these characteristics are typical of hard-boiled detectives. The hard-boiled detective

“demonstrates that those who have achieved wealth and status are weak, dishonourable, and corrupt” (Cawelti 157). John Cawelti also claims that the detective in hard-boiled stories is often given a mission – usually a deceptive one – which seemingly has little to do with murder and violence. Rilke is a detective in a hard-boiled story, he is only asked to have an auction for Miss McKindless and this has apparently little to do with the murder of a young woman.

Another typical feature that needs to be mentioned is the detective’s motivation for solving the crime. Rilke is an auctioneer and wants to make sure that the dead woman in the photo is given a name, and he wants the truth about the picture scene to be discovered. If we apply the poet W. H. Auden’s definition (Murfin 100) of detective fiction, *The Cutting Room* would be considered as detective fiction because a murder occurs. However, it is several years since the girl has been killed, and Rilke does not find her body, only a picture. And yet the claim that the murderer should even be arrested or dies is fulfilled when Mr. McKindless is killed.

I tend to consider *The Cutting Room* as a Fair Play puzzle because an observant reader has the possibility to get to the bottom of the mystery before Rilke solves it. The villain pretends to be dead in order to get rid of the criminal material he has collected in his attic. Already on Rilke’s first visit to the house he is observed, but Rilke does not realise that this is the “dead” Mr. McKindless. “A gnomish gardener jabbed at the flames with a long rake. He caught my stare and raised his free hand in a half-defensive wave, like a man staving off a blow. He lowered his cap over his eyes and fed papers from a black refuse sack into the flames” (Welsh L 5). Rilke meets him again in the hospital. “The shambling figure was vaguely familiar” (Welsh L 198). Mr. McKindless has changed his identity to Mr. Grieve in order to hide his criminal past. Both names give the reader an idea of his evil side, Kindless and Grieve are names that hint at his negative features. By the choice of his fictitious name Grieve, he admits that he causes grief. He may have done this in order to boast about his use of violence. Another possibility is to give the reader a clue. However, Rilke does not recognize him as Mr. McKindless, but remembers that Mr. Grieve is the man from the garden. One of the clues is Rilke’s observation that “I thought I saw the ghost of a smile” (Welsh L 199). A ghost is often a dead character. At last Rilke realizes that there is something wrong with the time span. Anne-Marie who had posed for Mr. McKindless, had told him that he had visited her fourteen days earlier, and suddenly Rilke remembers that Miss McKindless informed him that her brother “Roddy died three weeks ago” (Welsh L 5).

There is a chilling irony in that Mr. McKindless asked girls to pose as dead for him

and then killed them. Now he pretends he is dead, and Anne-Marie, one of the girls who posed for him earlier, kills him. “‘Is it a sin to kill a dead man?’ she whispered” (Welsh L 276). This is a perfect change of roles.

3.7 Conclusion

In order to decide whether *The Cutting Room* may be characterized as a detective story I have put emphasis on the significance of setting, the typical characters in this detective story, the notion Fair Play and how the detective fiction formula is applied in the story. Nevertheless, the mystery about the murder of the young woman is not the main focus. What makes it different to most detective stories is that no dead body is found, what start the investigation is an old photo.

On the basis of the met requirements, I characterize *The Cutting Room* as a detective novel, or more precisely a hardboiled detective novel. However, this detective genre and formula is mainly used as a frame, in order to tell the story about the auctioneer Rilke. I make this concluding point because the mystery is not solved by Rilke’s investigation. Additionally, Mr McKindless turns up and is later killed, though without Rilke’s help. Furthermore, he does not identify the mutilated female corpse and the story behind the photo is never revealed. This novel explores the darker aspects of masculinity which Crawford claims Scottish crime fiction tends to do.

Rilke admits that he “felt a need of an exorcism” (Welsh L 26). This need for an exorcism is representative of Scotland’s need. An exorcism can be the act of making Scotland able to forget a bad experience, like being an underdog under England’s control, their subaltern feeling and also getting rid of an evil spirit which may be Calvinism. Rilke’s personal need for an exorcism is his forgetting his miserable upbringing. By Conducting his research about the killed woman Rilke discovers more about himself and this is an element of his own exorcism.

Rilke is a round character, according to E. M. Forster’s description. He is the protagonist who encounters conflicts within himself and he is changed by them. He hints about a miserable childhood and struggles with guilt. Calvinism focuses on guilt, and Rilke is a true Calvinist with the feeling of guilt. Yet he follows his own passions, and does not mechanically adhere to Calvinistic strict moral rules. One of his characteristics is that he is sentimental. Craig argues that sentimental Scots are a well-worn theme. “Scots are particularly, and embarrassingly, sentimental” (Craig 20). This feature contributes to the

formation of his Scottish identity.

Scotland is described as a zigzag of contradictions. Scottish literature has shown a predilection for the theme of Caledonian Antisyzygy and this is obviously a theme in this novel. Craig claims that there is a deep division within the Scottish psyche and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are the most potent symbol of the divided self (Craig 11). Rilke remains mysterious. He has an ongoing struggle inside him between his good and evil sides. He has internal differences of character and opinion. Sometimes he is likeable and sometimes he is not, in contradiction to flat characters who tend to be either good or bad. Rilke is hard-headed on the one hand and romantic on the other. He gets pleasure from using power against the young men he has sex with. He also uses violence against Leslie and Steenie. Yet although he wears a masculine mask, Rilke is not the hardboiled man he tries to be. He has an attraction towards the transvestites and a close and warm relationship to women. These characteristic features are often in accordance with the Calvinistic definition of moral qualities. The evil sides that may not be considered as evil outside the Calvinistic community are, among others, his sexual habits with unknown men, his homosexuality in general and his drinking habits. Scots' combination of opposites is exposed in several of the male characters in this novel and is a central theme of its plot. Not only the characters, but also the setting in Hyndland and the photo show a zigzag of contradictions. Hypocrisy is something Rilke dislikes and he feels that Hyndland is a typical example of hypocrisy and perhaps also Scotland in general. The people he meets pretend to be possessed of moral standards that they do not actually have. Furthermore, Alan Bold claims that "The typical Scot ... is a loser and he knows it" (Craig 8). Rilke is a typical Scot in this way too. He is an anti-hero and the mystery is not solved the way he wanted it to be.

That women are mostly presented as victims in a male society supports the stereotype of the Scottish hard man and the sacrificing mother. Hard-boiled detective fiction was introduced by male authors and, perhaps for that reason, generally portrayed women as either good housewives or femme fatales. *The Cutting Room* is a hard-boiled detective fiction with a female author who portrays several women as victims in a male world, and not as good housewives or femme fatales. Welsh gives the narrator a reliable masculine voice. The poem by E. Gavin which describes the Scots as not charming supports the impression of the characters Mr. McKindless, Steenie, and to some extent Rilke.

The author has used repetitive references to old classical literature by Shakespeare, Hogg and Stevenson as well as an old well known nursery rhyme. These references establish a strong relationship to Scottish culture and identity in the novel. This is significant, and it is

characteristic that Scottish detective stories draw extensively upon its legendary ancestors such as Stevenson and Hogg. By using references to old Scottish plays and novels, it builds up a feeling of Scottish pride. *The Cutting Room* relates to respected national highbrow Scottish literature in order to remind the Scots and foreign readers of their Scottish literary heritage. I conclude that, at least with this novel, Louise Welsh is an author who attracts readers of different kinds of fiction.

CHAPTER 4

Conclusion

The Cutting Room and *The Sunday Philosophy Club* are two detective novels that are completely different in tone and perspective. While the latter is a cosy crime story, the former is a hardboiled detective narrative. In this concluding chapter I will try to sum up my main findings and check if I have managed to adequately discuss the problem statement presented in chapter one.

I have in chapters two and three discussed to what extent these two Scottish detective novels comply with, or differ from, the characteristics of the crime fiction genre. Both novels follow the Fair Play notion and the crime fiction formula. The unexpected outcome in both mystery novels is that no villains are imprisoned. *The Sunday Philosophy Club* is essentially about moral issues, and *The Cutting Room* has a focus on Rilke's investigation of his inner life. However, we have seen that the detective fiction formula is barely the heart of these novels. Nevertheless, both novels subjected to discussion comply with the characteristics of the detective fiction genre: a type of fiction featuring a murder that is solved by the protagonist, and moreover, the focus is on the detective, and furthermore, both novels have the typical features of setting and characters.

Another expressed intention that I had as I set out to write this thesis was to explore Scottishness. Presenting a nuanced view, the critic Craig highlights Scots' good as well as bad reputation. The claims of Scottishness I have focused on are Craig's claims regarding Scots' affection for logical thinking, Scots' affection for their landscape, Scots as patriotic and hardworking people. In contrast to these positive characteristics, there is an uncountable amount of negative features within the notion of Scottishness, such as Alan Bolds's claim that Scots are losers and Yellowlees's argument that Scots have a lack of self-esteem. These aspects can be observed in Scots' self destructive behaviour, pessimistic attitude and many Scots' lack of close relationships.

We have noted that Rilke is a good example of this type of Scot. He is pessimistic and

wants to become successful by stealing the money from the auction of Mr McKindless erotic collection. Rilke is also a good example of Irvine Welsh's description of Scots as miserable pathetic trash. However, Rilke is not an example of the Scottish male's infamous reputation for being insensitive – his sympathetic nature is apparent in his relationship to women and the transvestite, Sandy. Steenie is one example of Hugh McIlvanney's self-destructive characters and also an instance of the sickness of Scotland's intolerance. I have given examples of Scots' pessimistic attitude, their negative expectations and also lack of self-confidence in both detective stories.

Muir and Gifford both claim that Calvinism is a core element in the debate as to what constitutes Scottish identity. Muir argues that Calvinism tries to repress desire and values people's feeling of guilt. Obviously a Scottish issue, Calvinism is a central theme in both novels. Isabel is a true Calvinistic daughter with feelings of failure, bad conscience and concerned with her moral legacy. Yet at the same time she exhibits a passion for Scottish art, even though art has been looked upon as sin in the older Scottish Calvinistic society. She works hard to avoid the idle hands and heart in order to follow the strict Calvinistic rules. As a result of Calvinistic influence, Rilke often experiences guilt but he chooses to live his life according to his own passions. These passions would be impossible to follow if he were a true Calvinistic son. Hypocrisy, which is also an obvious theme in both detective stories, exists extensively due to the strict religious regulations. Both Rilke and Isabel focus on this duality. Two-facedness is also an element in the Scots' split personality and in several characters of *The Cutting Room*.

Is the Scots' split personality a myth or a fact? Several critics discuss whether schizophrenia is a typical Scottish phenomenon, and the poet Hugh MacDiarmid coined the term Caledonian Antisyzygy. The bundles of jostling contrasts, as observable in *The Cutting Room*, are examples of Caledonian Antisyzygy. Rilke is a good illustration, and in one way personification, of a schizophrenic, miserable person with an unhappy childhood and a wretched life; he is even referred to as the Walking Dead. Another illustration is Isabel. The evil part of Isabel's split personality is visible in Brother Fox which again reminds the reader of Gil-Martin, another Scottish phenomenon. We have seen Scotland's emigration problems and the Scots' feeling of being detached from the administrative centre in London are

visualized through Isabel's relation to her older brother in London. We have also seen how subaltern feelings can be traced in Isabel who constantly offers apologies for everything.

Art is an essential theme in both novels. Pictures are important issues in Isabel's world and also in Rilke's life. However, the pictures' implications are completely different. Whereas Rilke prefers erotic art, Isabel preference is paintings of Scottish landscape which also is in accordance with Craig's claim that it is typical Scottish to love Scottish landscape. Isabel focuses on Scottish culture markers such as Scottish painters, cartoons, media, authors, and Scottish icons such as whisky, the kilt, the bagpipe, and the Scottish language. It is a characteristic feature of both texts that the Scottish culture markers and icons are explicitly referred to. I conclude that the authors not only attempt to tell stories about Scottish life but also want to inform the reader about Scottish society, culture and art. This is especially an issue in McCall Smith's novel. The manner of his writing creates a novel that could very nearly double as a marketing exercise for the Scottish Tourist Board. This model of crime writing was previously, and more commonly, seen in typical English detective fiction, as represented by Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers. McCall Smith's text presents a total contrast to Welsh's hard-boiled fiction. McCall Smith transforms the hard-boiled protagonist-like Welsh's Rilke- into the female, and feminine, private detective, Isabel.

One of the possibilities for the federalization of Scotland in post-devolution crime fiction is a geographical shift from rural to urban Scotland and its characteristic problems. Both settings – Hyndland outside Glasgow and Isabel's suburb of Edinburgh – are described as places filled with hypocrisy. Both novels have a setting in urban Scotland – the large cities Glasgow and Edinburgh – and take in the distinctive problems of each city's criminal world. And yet Isabel's part of Edinburgh could not be further from Rilke's darker side of Glasgow.

Craig claims that if you pick up a few Scottish volumes you will see from beginning to end only doom and gloom (Craig 30). Although obviously true in a Welsh novel, this is far from the reality in McCall Smith's story. His novel presents so many positive aspects of Scottish culture and people that it almost becomes a promotion of Edinburgh as a city and presents Scotland as a land with a strongly defined national culture. I conclude that this novel does not show the negative aspects of Scottishness which Craig claims is visible in Scottish books. Even though some of the negative aspects of Scottishness are dealt with, the overall

tone is nevertheless positive and very different from that of Welsh's novel.

In the Problem statement I asked whether a reader can learn something about Scottish culture by reading modern crime fiction from Scotland. I have found that the answer is a definite yes. One aspect of Scottishness is the obligatory reference to literary forebears. And we have seen that both Welsh and McCall Smith have a close relationship with their national literary forebears: James Hogg and Robert Louis Stevenson.

These references tie the two novels to highbrow literature. Crime fiction has been looked upon as formula writing and not valued as highly as other literary genres. However, these references serve to link the two literary modes. I have found that McCall Smith and Welsh use this intertextuality as a device to highlight Scottishness. Intertextuality is used frequently in Welsh's *The Cutting Room*. Most commonly it appears throughout the detective story in the form of an epigraph at the beginning of almost every chapter. In these small passages, Welsh quotes famous literary works and authors, thus setting the tone and presenting the theme of each chapter. Furthermore, these references occur within the text. In chapter two I have pointed out Welsh's intertextual references to James Hogg, Robert L. Stevenson and also to the play *Macbeth*. Welsh's "borrowing" of dialogues from *Macbeth* may be a strategy to give the reader associations which enlarge his or her experience. My main observation is that McCall Smith includes intertextual references to exactly the same classical Scottish novelists and also to the same play – and we should remember that in theatrical circles this play is referred to solely as *The Scottish Play*. This shows that the authors do not write either exclusively or autonomously. Rather, they betray the influence of Scottish society and Scottish literature, thus confirming Rankin's statement in *Washington Post* (see 1.5). Such intertextualities, where the texts are in dialogue with older Scottish classical texts, give the reader an expanded perception of the Scottish setting and of Scottish literary history. They also provide an extra dimension of knowledge and acknowledgment. For example, the dialogue from *Macbeth* that is reincorporated into Welsh's novel provides a sense of recognition, the feeling of being a competent reader, familiar with the more classical texts and the Scottish canon. In my opinion, this reuse of classic Scottish literature emphasizes the Scottish heritage and the Scottish themes in the novels. At the same time, it is important that these intertextual features are not vital to the comprehension of the plot – this

being the essence of a crime story – as some readers might miss them. However, these references may provide all readers, regardless of their literary competence, with indications of the Scottish literary canon and grant them a new awareness of classical Scottish literature. Furthermore, readers outside Scotland and unfamiliar with their cultural heritage are thus given pointers on important literature to discover. In these two novels it is not essential to the plot to recognize Hogg and Stevenson or appreciate the intertextual echo of *Macbeth* to comprehend the story. The reader does not have to understand all the internal wiring of the novels to enjoy the suspense and insight they provide.

I conclude that the use of intertextuality is a factor which Welsh and McCall Smith utilize deliberately in order to attain a broader readership and to offer the skilled readers more, the possibility to enjoy the references they make and the insights these offer. One problem might be that readers outside Scotland feel they miss too much. If the cultural codes are not solved, the gap between text's meaning and reader's ability to understand that meaning can become unbridgeable and the novels be regarded as inaccessible. Due to the fact that I am a Norwegian reader who reads Scottish literature I cannot be sure that I have uncovered all the cultural codes that may be in the texts. Thus it is possible that a non-Scottish reader's experience of reading these texts is somewhat impaired, as certain aspects of Scottish context and intertextuality are unavoidably lost. Nevertheless, commercially this kind of drawback does not seem this has had any negative effect on the export of McCall Smith's books. Globally they have enjoyed striking success, selling several million copies.

Plain writes that Scottish readers today have to choose between McCall Smith on the one hand and Rankin on the other. She claims they are the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde of contemporary Scotland (Schoene 140). After having read both Rankin's novels and Welsh's *The Cutting Room* I conclude that Welsh and Rankin have this Mr. Hyde partly in common. Welsh and McCall Smith can therefore be claimed to be the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in contemporary Scottish detective fiction. As it is written in *The Cutting Room*: "I hate Hyndland" ... "Petty respectability up front, intricate cruelties behind closed doors" (Welsh L 2). McCall Smith celebrates the respectable façade and the readers' predictable world in contrast to Welsh who shows the reader the intricate cruelties lurking underneath Glasgow's glittering façade and thus exposes what lies beneath the conformities of Calvinist repression.

Both writers succeed in presenting the appearance of the Caledonian Antisyzygy that still exists in the Scottish mind. In the two selected novels, the auctioneer Rilke represents the hard-boiled detective. The hard-boiled detective fiction represents a strong claim to both masculinity and Scottish national identity. This novel is also an example of 'Tartan Noir'. Rilke is an illustrative example of an antihero when he is caught by the police for having sex with a male prostitute in a public park and tries to hide illegal drugs from the police without regret or guilt.

I hope to have identified and discussed significant characteristics of Scottishness in the two detective novels under consideration. An interesting topic for further discussion (in another thesis) would be to examine crime fiction from other parts of The United Kingdom, for instance Welsh literature and fiction from Northern Ireland. What is Irishness and what is Welshness? Furthermore, to what extent are these notions reflected in modern Welsh or Irish detective fiction? The focus of this thesis, however, has been on Scottishness, on *The Cutting Room* and on *The Sunday Philosophy Club*.

Bibliography

- Bell, Eleanor. *Questioning Scotland*. New York: Palgrave, 2004.
- Black, Jeremy. *A History of the British Isles*. New York: Palgrave, 2003.
- Cawelti, John G. *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976.
- Christianson, Aileen, Lumsden Alison. *Contemporary Scottish Women Writers*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000.
- Craig, Carol. *The Scots' Crisis of Confidence*. Edinburgh: Big Thinking, 2003.
- Crawford, Robert. *Scotland's Books*. London: Penguin, 2007.
- Devine, Tom, Logue Paddy. *Being Scottish: Personal Reflections on Scottish Identity Today*. Edinburgh: Polygon, 2002.
- Dickson, Beth, et al. *Scottish Literature: In English and Scots*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002.
- Hogg, James. *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1824.
- Jovik, Bozika. *The Place of Calvinism in the Modern Scottish Novel*. Accessed 7 January 2009. <<http://www.filozof.org/pdf%20format/bozica%20jovic.pdf>>.
- Leitch, Vincent B. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. New York: Norton, 2001.
- McCall Smith, Alexander. *The Sunday Philosophy Club: An Isabel Dalhousie Mystery*. New York: Anchor Books, 2004.
- Muir Edwin, *John Knox. Portrait of a Calvinist*. London: Collins, 1930.
- Murfin, Ross C., and Supryia M. Ray. *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003.

- Paulsen, Ingvild. "Krimhelt I Knipe." *Dagens Næringsliv*, 15 March 2004, sec. DN Magasinet: 2.
- Rankin, Ian. *Rebus's Scotland. A Personal Journey*. London: Orion, 2005.
- Scaggs, John. *Crime Fiction. The New Critical Idiom*. London: Routledge, 2005.
- Schoene, Berthold. *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007.
- Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. New York: Dover Publications, 1993.
- Smith, G. Gregory. *Scottish Literature: Character & Influence*. London: Macmillan, 1919.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde with Other Fables*. Pocket ed. London and New York: Longman, 1919.
- The American-Scottish Foundation. Accessed 6 January 2009
<<http://www.americanscottishfoundation.com/home/testimonials.html/>>.
- Times Online. Accessed 6 December 2008.
<<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/scotland/article726704.ece>>.
- Trocchi, Alexander. *Young Adam*. London: Calder, 2003.
- Welsh, Irvine. *Trainspotting*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1993.
- Welsh, Louise. *The Cutting Room*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 2003.