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Re-defining the Grotesque: Unprivileged Strength in Emma Tennant's and A. L. Kennedy's Novels

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Key female characters in both Emma Tennant's The Bad Sister (1978), Two Women of London (1989) and A. L. Kennedy's So I am Glad (1996) often commonly posit this bodily victimisation as a destructive power which paradoxically promises creativity and rebirth in both personal and social arenas. The violation enacted on the female body, though it endangers the female subject physically, raises a desire in the female to disassociate herself with 'the feminine' and even to obliterate the feminine altogether. I further discuss how the abject of the female body forms the female characters' internal Other (the image of woman as seen through the desire of man) as a radical estrangement of themselves, and how this self-isolating pain is dissolved through incoherent pathos (fear and strength). These emotions and conditions imply a regression to the maternal and threaten to overwhelm their characters. The dissolution of the repulsion of the female body inevitably relies on a return to the maternal; this return involves incoherent passions: pain and pleasure. This paper contends that this is a form of the psychological grotesque. The inscription of the maternal abyss becomes each character's necessary limitation but also her strength.

Keywords: *body, violence, abjection, feminine, grotesque*

I choose A. L. Kennedy's *So I am Glad* (1995) and Emma Tennant's *Bad Sister* (1978) / *Two Women of London* (1989) to exemplify how twentieth-century female Gothic writers are no longer concerned with the physical anger unleashed by oppressed women against men; they are instead concerned with how the contemporary woman internalises her anger and desires revenge even to the point of self-sacrifice. This is a unique feature in Kennedy's writing and is also a remarkable characteristic in Tennant's observation of the twentieth-century middle-class woman in London. Modern materialistic life can no longer satiate a woman's fundamental desire to have a peaceful existence without fear of bodily violation. The more materials a society possesses, the more desires it will generate.

Pleased to 'produce . . . subversive text[s] out of the scraps',[1] Emma Tennant and A. L. Kennedy have both written novels which draw on a variety of texts and ideas, including such hegemonic discourses as

[1] Indicated by Tennant in an interview. See Kenyon, Olga. *Women Writers Talk: Interviews with 10 Women Writers*. (Oxford: Lennard Publishing, 1989), pp. 173-187 (176).

philosophy, history and myth. Contemporary literary critics have deconstructed these discourses through an examination of the two writers' uses of language. Feminist critics have uncovered the gendered nature of such language, thereby demonstrating Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's assertion that 'individual identity, including sexual identity, is social and relational rather than original or private'.[2] Fictional writers have likewise turned their attention to exploring the 'linguistic markings of the character',[3] especially in the 'quasi-linguistic inscription of surfaces'.[4] The semantic significance of this change is figuratively manifested in the material that contributes to characterisation in their fiction. Some of Tennant's and Kennedy's characters commonly share what I read as sexually exploited and psychologically distorted identities, and are women who denote a feminist perspective on the materiality of language for the effect of unmaking and amplifying our linguistic understanding of the term 'Gothic'.

Although numerous essays have indicated the deconstructive tendency of the fiction of Tennant and Kennedy, none has explored this tendency through the domain of psychoanalysis, especially through the psychological interpretation of maternal abjection. I would like to further explain how the psychological qualities of the grotesque are concerned with Kristeva's view of maternal abjection, and why the female subjectivity is sustained but endangered by this abjection, simultaneously and paradoxically. I attempt to show how female characters' aversion to the masculine mode of the feminine (the corporeal conformity of women to men), in Tennant's *The Bad Sister* (1978), *Two Women of London* (1989) and Kennedy's *So I am Glad* (1995), becomes their abjection of the maternal and therefore forms an internal Other from which they are alienated. The repulsion of this internal Other (as projected by supernatural mediators) sustains each character's borderline of self, but haunts them so that they must unravel what has been constructed. The central argument of this paper foregrounds a belief that a subject's attempt to deny the maternal part of itself results in nothing but an oscillation between contradictory emotions: passion and threat—the psychological qualities of the grotesque.

I. Shift of the Grotesque

According to Kristeva, the abject represents 'our earliest attempts to release the hold of the *maternal* entity even before existing outside of her, thanks to the autonomy of language'.[5] Kristeva indicates that 'a phantasmatic mother' constitutes in the history of each person, 'the abyss that must be established as an autonomous (and not encroaching) *place*, and *distinct* object, meaning a *signifiable* one', so that the person might 'learn to speak'.[6] She writes:

> The abject shatters the wall of repression and its judgments. It takes the ego back to its source on the abominable limits from which, in order to

[2] Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions*. (New York and London: Methuen, 1986 [1976]), p. 142.
[3] *Ibid*., pp. 158-165. Sedgwick suggests that incomplete linguistic markings of 'character' maintain a 'draining but irreducible tension with a fiction of physical, personal presence'.
[4] *Ibid*., pp. 149-158. Sedgwick regards 'the marking of flesh' and 'the marking with blood of veils' as having similarities to written language; he contends that the 'character' in the Gothic narratives is involved in the image of the 'contagious, quasi-linguistic inscription of surfaces'. It is these markings that mould the sexual identity.
[5] Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror*: *an Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 13.
[6] *Ibid*., p. 100.

> be, the ego has broken away . . . . Abjection is a resurrection that has gone through death (of the ego). It is an alchemy that transforms death drive into a start of life, of new significance.[7]

Emma Tennant's and A. L. Kennedy's characters are terrified of, but attracted to, extra-rational experiences. The incoherent pathos embedded in their rendering of gender trauma precisely corresponds to the incoherent nature of the grotesque as inherited from the eighteenth century: in both its older and its newer forms, the power of grotesque liberation stems from vulnerability, just as pleasure comes from forbearance of pain.

In an influential discussion on female Gothic, Ellen Moers defines the Gothic as including any work that 'gives *visual* form of the fear of the self'.[8] The key notion behind this definition holds that that which had been buried in the darkness—a realm, unknown to ourselves, is now unveiled and becomes even more terrifying because fear is visualised. The heroine, in this tradition, is imprisoned in a female body which itself can embody the maternal. This imprisonment evokes the heroine's aversion to her own body and provokes the loss of her sense of self. She thus begins her search for distorted bodies in order to put off her own femaleness. Mary Russo, however, in *The Female Grotesque*, notes that the construction of the feminine is often associated with the 'positioning of the grotesque[9] [body]—as superficial and [placed at] . . . the margins'.[10] Both critics agree that the social construction of the feminine is based on the corporeal and the unnatural in relation to societal norms. According to Russo, the shift of the grotesque from visual abnormal figures to obscure and mysterious mental activities marks a modern interpretation of the grotesque 'as an interior event and as a potentially adventurous one'.[11] Russo's locus for the grotesque favours the demonic grotesque defined by Wolfgang Kayser.[12] Kayser defines the grotesque as the 'estranged world',[13] and considers a work grotesque when it contains motifs that

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[7] *Ibid*. p. 15.

[8] Moers, Ellen. *Literary Women*. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), p. 107. Moers takes *Wuthering Heights* by Charlotte Bronte of the eighteenth century as an example to illustrate a fact that the Gothic female' savagery of girlhood, which causes her growth's despair and even the impetus to self-destruction in her adulthood, has still been the persistant concern in the writing of women in the twentieth century. She considers female experience in 'the compulsion to visualise the self' to be the the most distinquished feature of the female Gothic; visualising the fear of the self can not only characterise female's sentimental perceptions of her external world, but also expose her particular psychological reactions to her subjugated living conditions.

[9] In Mikhail Bakhtin's work, *Rabelais and His World*, the grotesque is referred to as the bodies of the folk. In Bakhtin's argument, therefore, the grotesque becomes associated with all that is exiled to the margins of propriety. In this sense, Russo regards the female body which 'exudes both blood and babies as frequently identified as the ultimate example of the grotesque', as in Bakhtin's image of the 'senile, pregnant hag'. Russo shows that an identification with the grotesque (pregnant) body mirrors the social status of women in male-dominated culture. See Russo, Mary. *The Female Grotesque*. (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 1-2.

[10] *Ibid*., p. 5.

[11] *Ibid*., p.7.

[12] Wolfgang Kayser's definition is one of the grotesque's two forms that prevailed in the eighteenth century. In the eighteenth century, two types of grotesque prevail: the comic grotesque, whose origins and significance are detailed by critic Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), in the tradition of the festival of the carnival; and the demonic grotesque, whose most thorough modern critical treatment is due to Wolfgang Kayser (1906-1960). In an earlier era, the grotesque had been synonymous with the comic grotesque in the service of satire and comedy. The comic type of the grotesque has never been reconciled with the demonic grotesque. See Madden, Heidi. *The Grotesque as Narrative Method: a study of Jean Paul's Dr. Katzenbergers Badereise and Tobias Smollett's Humphry Clinker*. Thesis (Ph.D.), University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1991. p. iii.

[13] *Ibid*., p. 12. Wolfgang Kayser's *das Groteske: Seine Gestaltung in Malerei und Dichtung* (1957) (*The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, trans. 1963) identified the literary grotesque almost with the demonic grotesque, leading the interpretation of literary grotesque into the psychic realm of the demon.

are characteristic of the demonic (such as owls or snakes). Additionally, Kayser's definition of the grotesque implies the intriguing psychic world of the demon, but does not insinuate its visual function in the satiric form. Similarly, Russo suggests that when the grotesque is 'strongly related to the psychic register and to the bodily as a cultural projection of an inner state', the uncanny is immediately invited to exceed the norms.[14] By drawing our attention to the grotesque's function as 'a deviation from the norm',[15] Russo indicates that 'the archaic, maternal version of the female grotesque' is 'the privileged site of transgression for Kristeva'.[16] The female grotesque, from Russo's perspective, is related to Kristeva's psychoanalysis of abjection than to the conventional notion of the physical grotesque.[17]

Russo suggests that Kristeva's psychoanalysis of abjection 'problematises the subject' and 'projects herself towards the grotesque'.[18] This grotesque addresses a psychological state wherein the subject's power of horror arises from his/her being; his/her existence is then sustained by this power, while this power simultaneously jeopardises the subject's autonomy. The paradox embedded in this understanding of the grotesque derives from one's psychological rejection of what seems to be part of oneself. This paradox of the psychological interpretation of the grotesque shares an affinity with Kristeva's explanation of abjection. According to Kristeva, the abject ensures the ability to create the border of one's self but at the same time threatens this border.[19]

II. Maternal Abjection and Female Subjectivity

Kristeva defines the first instance of 'maternal abjection' as the abject mother. Abjection is 'a way of denying the primal narcissistic identification with the mother'.[20] It is difficult, however, for a child to draw a distinction between himself/herself and his/her mother:

> The 'subject' discovers itself as the impossible separation/identity of the

[14] Russo, Mary. *The Female Grotesque*. (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 7 & 9.
[15] *Ibid*., pp. 11-12. Russo posits the female grotesque within psychoanalysis as a challenge to what Teresa de Lauretis calls the 'technologies of gender', a politics of normalisation and homogeneity called gender difference.
[16] *Ibid*., p. 10.
[17] *Ibid*., pp. 62-63. Russo argues that Bakhtin makes an important contribution to putting forward the notion of the grotesque body, which is 'the open, protruding, extended, secreting body, the body of becoming, process, and change', and to constituting a challenge to the official, normalised, Classical body. However, arguing that this image 'is loaded with all of the connotations of fear and loathing around the biological processes of reproduction and of aging', Russo condemns Bakhtin as 'fail[ing] to acknowledge or incorporate the social relations of gender in his semiotic model of the body politics'.
[18] *Ibid*., p. 64. Russo notes that Kristeva's analysis of Paul Céline's literary work, which 'takes on his rhetoric of abjection and interestingly comes to rest in the category of the maternal', reveals the grotesque. This grotesque, embodied in the powers of horror of being, of the subject, is what Kristeva identifies as the 'undoer of narcissism and of all imaginary identity as well'. Russo is quoting from Kristeva's *Powers of Horror: an Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 208. This grotesque is grounded on the ambivalence of the border of the self, as understood by the subject. As Kristeva focuses on Cé line, the fascination with the maternal body in childbirth and the fear of and repulsion from it show the ambivalence of the border of the self: the undifferentiated union with the maternal is to crumble the border of the self but the fear of such a collapse keeps the subject vigilant.
[19] Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: an Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 2.
[20] Oliver, Kelly. *Reading Kristeva*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p.60.

> maternal body. It hates that body but only because it can't be free of it.
> That body, the body without border, the body out of which the abject
> subject came, is impossible.[21]

The child's 'maternal abjection' is a constant companion to its growing consciousness.

In Russo's view, Kristeva's psychoanalysis of abjection denotes 'the accumulated horror and contempt of the descriptions of the maternal body', which generate 'a subliminal defense of the maternal' or 'an idealised category far from the realities of motherhood as a construction or as a lived experience'.[22] Russo implies here that the paradox of abjection, the confusion that lies between the alluring and yet horrible borders of self, comes as the intimation of an idea too large for any grotesque form of physical transgression. In other words, when we call such a mental condition 'grotesque', we betray our own fallen or degraded physical condition, and disregard the limitations of our own vision in lived experience. Russo's psychologically regressive but politically radical method connotes the shortening of the will and of power, but predicts the consequent dissolution of the border of subjectivity of which the grotesque consists.

In summary, therefore, the abjection of the feminine (i.e. the repulsion of the submissive female body) becomes 'the grotesque', or estrangement from oneself. The feminine, when reduced to the norm of corporeal representation as displayed through conformity to masculine desire, is recognised as the rejected Other within oneself. I propose that Tennant's *The Bad Sister* (1978), *Two Women of London* (1989) and Kennedy's *So I am Glad* (1995), all inscribe their female protagonists with a hatred towards the feminine, thereby significantly reforming the tradition of the grotesque. Rather than translating 'the grotesque' into a freakish physical transgression or into a physical subversion within a male-defined ethical system, the three novels express the grotesque as a result of a psychological aversion to gender boundaries as they are regulated by the patriarchal system. They elaborate the psychological transformations of various characters as effected through the pleasure of emancipation.

III. Abjection of the Other

One feminist construction that is employed by both Tennant and Kennedy (and that necessarily concerns the sexual exploitation of women by men) is the figure of the sexually repressed woman evidencing fierce rage. Their literary use of this figure, however, often differs in practice. Tennant approaches gender issues for social revolution with regard to the repression of woman, while Kennedy concerns her characters with 'the personal connections and disconnections that channel their emotional well-being'.[23] In Kennedy's work, the body serves as an extension of the emotional self. Sex and sexuality, as they relate to the body, 'emerge as inconsequential when characters do or do not manage to connect'.[24] Despite the fact that they vary greatly in the ways they address gender issues, Tennant and Kennedy are similar with regard to their analysis of gender inequity. Tenant focuses on the damage suffered by women through gender dominance, while Kennedy examines the confining

[21] *Ibid*., p. 60.
[22] Russo, Mary. *The Female Grotesque*. (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 65.
[23] March, Cristie L. 'A. L. Kennedy's introspection'. *Rewriting Scotland*. (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 139.
[24] *Ibid*., p. 139.

conditions which hinder the 'interconnections among characters as they struggle to succeed or, more often, simply to endure'.[25]

Their characters' emotional conditions illustrate the *quiet* catastrophes that occur all too often in modern, urban gender relationships. Their characters commonly search for spirituality to overcome familial gender trauma. The three chosen texts explore psychological states in terms of the isolation that stems from family scars. This is grounded in the abjection of socially defined gender identity as enacted through the behaviour of a split self, and results in an intensified estrangement from the self. The divided psyche, 'the outward "good" woman, and the inner, amoral self',[26] are fully expressed through mental fragmentation and are evidenced in psychological schizophrenia.

IV. Refusing the Other of Class

Tennant specifically juxtaposes her writing with texts by James Hogg and Robert Louis Stevenson in order to signify fragmentation. By imitating the unreliable narrative voices used in earlier male texts, Tennant shows the unreliability of each character's narrative perspective. She allows her readers to objectively uncover her characters' repressed self-hatred and their fascination with the brooding atmosphere of Gothic horror. *The Bad Sister* engages with James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) while *Two Women of London* connects with Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886).[27] Just as Hogg and Stevenson elaborate on 'the fantastic externalisation of an internal conflict',[28] Tennant situates the internal conflict in the description of the divided female self. Tennant uses the description of the divided self to criticise the socially defined feminine and its negative psychological impact on women. The emotional tension of the divided self originates from the characters' abjection, and from their attempt to jettison the socially defined feminine that requires corporeal conformity and propriety in gender relationships. The unconscious threat is projected through the characters' psychological hallucinations, while the conscious threat is evidenced by the characters' fear of subjugation in the reality of gender relationships.

Tennant's protest against patriarchal prescription of women's maternal and matrimonial duties is characterised by the control of self-hatred and choked-up rage. Her protagonists, Jane in *The Bad Sister* and Eliza in *Two Women of London*, oscillate between the despair and desire generated by social institutions such as motherhood and marriage. Robert Wringhim's narrative in Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions* focuses on psychological realism by apparently describing how a sinner possessed by a real devil undergoes the internal battle for the justification of his soul. Tennant portrays Jane, in *The Bad Sister*, in a similar manner

[25] *Ibid*., p. 138.
[26] Elphinstone, Margaret. 'Contemporary Feminist Fantasy in the Scottish Literary Tradition'. *Tea and Leg Irons: New Feminist Readings from Scotland*. Ed. Caroline Gonda. (London: Open Letters, 1992), pp. 45-59 (51).
[27] Indicated by Tennant in a conversation with Sue Roe. Roe, Sue and Emma Tennant. 'Women Talking About Writing'. *Women's Writing: A Challenge to Theory*. Ed. Moira Monteith. (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1986), pp. 117-153 (124).
[28] Elphinstone, Margaret. 'Contemporary Feminist Fantasy in the Scottish Literary Tradition'. *Tea and Leg Irons: New Feminist Readings from Scotland*. Ed. Caroline Gonda. (London: Open Letters, 1992), pp. 45-59 (50).

through schizophrenia.[29] Jane is the illegitimate daughter of a politician who works in England and lives a libertine life; this politician owns many estates in the Scottish borders and dupes countless women who own no property. Jane's mother, Mary, employed as shop assistant in a big London store (36), was unmarried, as was her Irish grandmother. Having a mother with economic, familial, and marital deficits, Jane keenly feels society's discrimination when it comes to her birth, and she hates her own position as a socially unmarked, illegitimate being. From childhood on, Jane rebels against the social expectations of feminine existence: 'I could see by looking straight ahead [now], instead of shaking my fringe to one side, a gesture which, over the years, had become apologetic and feminine, as if I had to admit it wasn't my right to contemplate the world' (36).

As an illegitimate Scotch-Irish daughter, Jane epitomises crossing points of nation and gender, and feels a 'double otherness'.[30] Beneath the crumbling shell of paternal authority lies maternal darkness: 'I shrugged at the reflection . . . hacking away with the scissors, which seemed to have taken on a determination of their own despite the protests of the owner of the hair' (35). Jane's destiny traps her within an intricate network of wishes and fears that are directed towards her father: 'Sometimes I felt I belonged to both of them [Jane's parents], and then the cottage and the kitchen seemed to grow . . . there would be infinite possibilities' (52); 'The way he looked at me was furtive and eager, like the stare of a man searching for evidence of disease on his own body' (52). Jane is initiated, because of her unmarked birth, into an ambivalent condition of extreme apprehension. On the one hand, her wish for bodily identification with her parents is interconnected with her sense of self; on the other hand, her despair amidst this bodily identification simultaneously generates the image of her female body as a 'disease' on the male body, or as an Other that exists inside her.

This internal Other deepens Jane's abjection because it threatens her autonomy. Jane's abjection derives from a recognition of her mother's bodily and emotional subjugation to her father. Jane is upset with her mother's subservient attitude to her father, especially when she mentions her father giving them a cottage: 'She [her mother] always thanked him, but went on looking guilty. Why was she so uneasy, fingering the old black skirt she wore, gazing past me at the hill as if she was longing to run for it and disappear into the white mist' (52). Jane's displeasure at her mother's inappropriate modesty evokes her hatred towards her own gender identity: 'My [Jane's] legs were thin and perched in high-heeled sandals, the pale tights making them all the more ridiculous and vulnerable' (33). Jane's abjection of her mother's bodily and emotional conformity to her father gives rise to her own self-hatred and forms in her the sense of being imprisoned in the female body; this leads her to a radical desire to renounce any feminine behaviour. The feminine, however, is part of her existential integrity. The abject mother within her mind consequently forges an estranged Other within herself.

The image of self-hatred and of Kristeva's 'the Other within' is seen at the very beginning of *Strangers to Ourselves* through a foreigner who 'lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks

[29] Indicated by Tennant in the part of Jane Wild, in a conversation with Sue Roe. See Roe, Sue and Emma Tennant. 'Women Talking About Writing'. *Women's Writing: A Challenge to Theory*. Ed. Moira Monteith. (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1986), pp. 117-153 (125).

[30] Christianson remarks on the relationship between the national identity and the position of women in society. If Scotland is situated as an Other to England, 'with England used as the dominant reference point', Scotswomen are doubly marginalised. See Christianson, Aileen. 'Gender and Nation: debatable lands and passable boundaries'. *Across the Margins*. Eds. Glenda Norquay and Gerry Smyth. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 67-82 (70).

our abode'.[31] Kristeva asserts that it is precisely the appearance of the foreigner as a hateful symptom that 'turns "we" into a problem'.[32] Kristeva's readers may be shocked into an awareness of the impossibility of the term 'we'—the impossibility of the breakdown of boundaries, by the discovery or recognition of the foreigner. Kristeva indicates that 'the Other within', the foreigner, appears when the consciousness of 'my' difference arises, and that it disappears when we realise ourselves to be foreigners, 'unamenable to bonds and communities'.[33] This implies that in order to assure autonomy, the subject must renounce what oppresses it; it must draw a line between itself and what subjugates it so that its autonomy may be secured. Nevertheless, it is difficult to renounce a part of itself since it is this very opposition upon which the subject establishes its identity. 'My' difference exists only when the abject excludes what is not 'My' but what is in fact a part of 'I'. In this regard, Jane's hatred towards the social devaluation of the feminine, as a 'foreigner within', derives from her individual awareness of socially charted differences in nation and gender. This foreigner within can be obliterated only when she recognises her internal resistance to socially privileged differences. In this sense, Jane's oppression results from internal resistance to the feminine, to the foreigner, to 'the Other within', and to the alter ego of a national, sexual and social man.

Significantly, this 'foreigner' within Jane is more clearly evidenced, and at the same time is more problematised through Jane's jealousy of Ishbel and Miranda, who are two characters who embody Jane's fragmented psychological state. Ishbel (a half-sister of Jane) and Miranda (a favorite of Jane's boyfriend) symbolise the feminine upholding of masculine standards of subjectivity. Jane covets the emotional satisfaction of femaleness embodied by these two women, despite a desire to defy her femininity. Reminded of Ishbel, 'always a slight smile of self-satisfaction at the corners of her mouth' (53), Jane sarcastically burlesques her twin sister as an 'omen' (55): 'I was her shadow, and she mine' (53). Jane both desires and depreciates Ishbel's femaleness which is familially and paternally blessed. Envying Miranda's position in Tony's (Jane's boyfriend's) mind, Jane despises the social expectation that constructs femaleness into a sexual 'refuge' for men; she satirises Tony 'plunging in again between her [Miranda's] legs for safety—noting how it formed a wall against me, a society for my end' (106). Considering herself 'excluded from their sex' (106), Jane would rather be antithetical to this masculine paradigm of the feminine in which the feminine is reduced to a sexual corporeal subjugation, intended to 'purify women's legion souls' (106). Jane's fear of a threat to her autonomy leads her to search for the protection from any defilement through this version of the feminine.

Kristeva argues that protection from defilement ironically entails the importance of 'women and particularly the mother'.[34] Her remark suggests that the identification of oneself with an image in opposition to what he/she defiles is false; instead, the defiled maternal element ironically emphasises the maternal image since the rejected feminine remains a threat to the maternal part that is inherent in the self. In Jane's relentlessness against 'the Other within', the suppressed feminine, she cannot excavate herself from the affliction of the

[31] Kristeva, Julia. *Strangers to Ourselves*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 1.
[32] *Ibid*., p. 1.
[33] *Ibid*., p. 1.
[34] Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 70.

socially devalued female. Instead, she is ironically more occupied by the shadow of the oppressed feminine and by the motherhood inside her. Regarding herself as 'the bad throw of the dice', she confesses that she is 'the double', living with dual desires of being a good woman outwardly and a 'vanished self-evil' (111) inwardly. She treats the letter M as representative both of the image of suppressed femininity and of the image of dissolution of this femininity: 'M for mother, for murder, for Meg. M for her [Miranda]. She made me a shadow, discarded by Tony before he had even met me' (111-112). Identifying Meg as part of her maternal legacy, Jane is blurred at the definition of motherhood and at the boundaries of gender identity; imagining her half-sister in a vision, which in fact reflects Jane's own mental state, Jane 'stood, as Meg had stood under the thin birches behind the cottage on Dalzell land, defiant and still . . . by throwing her darkness over it . . . Margaret . . . my Meg . . . and my mother, is this what you've given birth to?' (66). Naming herself as 'Wild' as the others do in the women's Scottish commune named Margaret (Meg), Jane endorses the 'steps of stronger women', attempting to be 'restored to life and greenness' (111).

However, the passion for a radical evil with the version of Meg's 'femininity' (pretentious but destroying) can never escape falling into the 'essential sacrifice' to 'red altar' (111), just as her mother, Mary, falls as a sacrifice to socially acceptable images of the feminine. It is because of this inevitable destiny of dual motherhood that Jane half-hopes that Miranda can plunge into death in her arms (145), as 'chang[ing] and dissolv[ing] as . . . she [Miranda] melt[ed] into softness, a wedding ring, a veil' (155). It is because of the shared sacrificial inclination of both maternal legacies and because of the death drive embedded in both suppressed femininity and in the subsequent radical abjection to this type of femininity, that Jane decides to break Miranda's moonstones, 'too dim to shine much in the light from the candles' (158). Jane, with the uncanny power rendered and guided by Meg, appears as a fantastic spectre approaching Miranda. Jane *sucks* her dry, in a sense of terminating the suffering both from oppression of the feminine and from the abject.

Imitating Hogg's unreliable narrative voices, Tennant allows her readers to locate themselves at an observant distance from Jane's confessions. The bloody murder of Michael Dalzell and of his legal daughter, Ishbel, appears at the very beginning of the Editor's Narrative with the discovery of Jane's body in a grave with a stick 'pierc[ing] her body just above the ribs on the left-hand side' (165), and appears again at the very end of the Editor's Note. Reading both the editor's and Jane's narratives, readers know that these murders symbolise Jane's mental drives towards her abjection. The abject, as defined by Kristeva in *Powers of Horror* as a *pharmakos*, acts as 'a scapegoat who, having been ejected, allows the city to be freed from defilement'.[35] He ironically intends to renounce a part inherent in himself in order to become a self. Such dynamic reversals, from his patricide to his suicide, make him a being of abjection with the result that his abjection, his border of self, can be obliterated. Prohibition and the ideal coexist in a single character, signifying that the abject subject stands on the imaginary threshold of its self, as if standing on an impossible demarcation of the boundaries. Jane, with the abject of the socially acceptable images of the feminine and with her desire to terminate the threat of this abjection to her autonomy, surrenders herself as a 'scapegoat' to 'the particular',[36] to the witch power in her

[35] *Ibid*., p. 84.

[36] Russo cites Naomi Schor's study *Reading in Detail: aesthetics and the feminine* to stress the link between the feminine and the particular. Schor shows that the 'metaphorics of the particular' will 'give way to the strange,

blood-thirsty murders.

Kristeva stresses blood as symbolic of the abject: on the one hand, it indicates 'the impure' while it 'also refers to women, fertility, and the assurance of fecundation'.[37] It is 'where *death* and *femininity*, *murder* and *procreation*, *cessation of life* and *vitality* all come together'.[38] In other words, the bloodbath promises the triumph implicit in the murder and *purifies* the individual mind that has long been shackled by the ideology of fixed gender identity. Just as Hogg's 'devil' in *Confessions* may be a projection of Robert Wringhim's (the sinner's) own mentality, Tennant's personification of devil figures (Meg, Gil-Martin, and K) in *The Bad Sister*, through Jane's narratives of her own secret thoughts, desires, and fears, constructed as an invention of psychological intensity, may also be a projection of her criminal psychology to exorcise her gender trauma.

V. Defying the Psychological Other

Elphinstone indicates that 'the polar twins of the Scottish Muse'[39] often characterise Scottish literature as a juxtaposition of '" the prose of extravagance" (fantasy)' and '"the prose of experience" (the pragmatic)'.[40] Tennant's use of psychological ambiguity is specifically characterised by those supernatural agencies that are used to project her characters' abjection of the socially-defined feminine. In *Two Women of London*, although the characters of Jean and Ms Jekyll are presented as 'good' and as examples of socially defined femininity, they exhibit a shared affinity with the demonic Mrs. Hyde because they are similarly preoccupied with motherhood. Jean, however, survives in the gender-modifying society while Ms Jekyll preys upon the vitality of Mrs. Hyde. Jean engages passionately with feminist research on 'the Gnostic Gospels and the origins of sin' (*Two Women of London*, 199), convinced that 'painstaking historical research is the only sure path away from prejudice and towards a new state of equality at all levels between the sexes' (199). As a solicitor living in Scotland, Jean disagrees with the presiding feminist norm which is there tinged with 'a combination of emotional insecurity and extreme aggression' (199). She attempts to 'redress the economic-social disadvantages which remain, for women' (199), and is unwilling to 'fall into the trap of the quixotic' (202). Disagreeing with Mrs. Hyde's version of feminist protest which is evidenced in a hatred for women's distress in economic and marital conditions, Jean worries that Eliza Jekyll's 'charming quality—generosity' may cause herself hurt, and 'develop into an unattractive, even embarrassing characteristic' (202). She considers that beneath Eliza's deed of generosity lies 'an apparent need to dominate the existence of another' (203). Jean is antithetical, both to the radical revenge of sexual and existential threats to women adopted by Mrs. Hyde, and to the excessive conformity and generosity to the cruelty of society enacted by Eliza. She detests 'a mother of such suicidal and self-sacrificial dimensions' (203) since it may entail the condition that both sides are defeated and wounded.

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the peculiar, the monstrous'. See Russo, Mary. *The Female Grotesque*. (London: Routledge, 1994), p.6.

[37] Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 96.

[38] *Ibid*., p. 96.

[39] Gregory Smith is the first critic to define the Scottish method of combining the supernatural with psychological and social realism, in his book *Scottish Literature*, published in 1919. Cited by Elphinstone, Margaret. 'Contemporary Feminist Fantasy in the Scottish Literary Tradition'. *Tea and Leg-Irons: New Feminist Readings from Scotland*. Ed. Caroline Gonda. (London: Open Letters, 1992), pp. 45-59 (48).

[40] *Ibid*., p. 48.

The novel draws attention to the social emphasis on self-sacrifice in feminine motherhood, and it explores women's abjection through this identification. Mrs. Hyde is an embittered single mother who murders her rapist, while Eliza suffers from the power of capitalism and the betrayal of love. Gender is foregrounded as the power of capitalism prevails. Not a medical doctor, as in Stevenson's narrative, but an Art-School-trained manager of the Shade Gallery ('Shade,' as if gothically preordained) (185), Eliza cannot reconcile herself to the societal submissive role of the feminine after her career crumbles following marriage, children and abandonment. While serving as 'an advertisement' in the Shade Gallery, Eliza's beauty becomes the 'official version' of the gallery when it is 'declared open by Sir James' (182). Female beauty is visualised, filmed, photographed and, in particular, is gendered for the public through Mara's camera: 'She [Eliza Jekyll] hardly stiffens at all when the dirty old man slides his arm round her waist . . . and keeps it there for the remainder of his speech' (182). Female beauty, as embodied by Ms Jekyll, is ostensibly objectified and becomes exploited in her capitalist society just as the fictional editor comments: 'The media leave us in no doubt that rapaciousness and a "loadsamoney" economy have come to represent the highest values in the land' (176). Eliza lacks the power of Sir James Lister, owner not only of the Shade Gallery but also of 'the massive new supermarket up by Kensal Road' (182). When James unexpectedly 'close[s] down the Shade Gallery and announce[s] plans to develop the site' (236), Eliza loses her job and, at the same time, suffers as her marriage falls apart. As an ever-successful, unencumbered woman, undergoing the breakdown of her economy and her subsequent abandonment by her ex-husband, Eliza turns out to be the heiress to Mrs. Hyde's self-sacrificial revenge as a pungent protest to the repression and hypocrisy deeply rooted in gender identity.

Kristeva in *Powers of Horror* describes the abject as 'a non-assimilable alien, a monster, a tumor, a cancer'.[41] The abject, which is seen as a disease of the subject, cannot be obliterated unless it is removed along with the subject against which it is opposed:

> The abject shatters the wall of repression and its judgments. It takes the ego back to its source on the abominable limits from which, in order to be, the ego has broken away—it assigns it a source in the non-ego, drive, and death. Abjection is a resurrection that has gone through death (of the ego). It is an alchemy that transforms death drive into a start of life, of new significance.[42]

Kristeva reveals the ambiguous quality of the abject: it is both destructive and constructive. According to Kristeva, too much attachment to the part of what the subject repels sustains the 'I'; however, the lapse of the Other breaks down the desire of 'I'. In other words, we can discern that what is expelled as precisely that which is subsequently mourned. Mrs. Hyde and Ms. Jekyll's abjection of the feminine's exploitation inevitably leads to the eradication of their personal egos and of the male subjectivity which first prescribed those egos. In *Two Women of London*, we are told that the supposed rapist is killed by Mrs. Hyde's attacking instrument with a parrot 'deep into his throat, with its beak' (228). The parrot is also shared by Eliza Jekyll as a head on her

[41] Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 11.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

umbrella 'with a long, elegant handle' (229). The umbrella, like a shield, symbolises the function of protection and safety. When the function is shattered, the parrot, with its ability to imitate, counterattacks the repression it suffers. Drawing our attention to the mother being which is coded as 'abject',[43] Kristeva insists that it is 'the logic of *exclusion* that causes the abject to exist'.[44] She implies that the abject, which the social symbolic of the feminine is unable to completely repress, should seek co-existence. Mrs. Hyde and Ms Jekyll's objection to the socially acceptable feminine, the Other within, must co-exist with the demonic potential of the feminine to achieve mental balance.

We may ask whether Tennant permits other female characters to escape from the soul's disease, from the abjection of the feminine in socially defined gender roles. Tennant's mimicry of Stevenson's narrative arrangement denies any omniscient voice and provides 'indeterminacy common to Gothic and postmodern fictions, undermining didacticism'.[45] Uncertainty is highlighted through an ironic tone when the fictional editor comments on the female characters' fervent but ambivalent concern with the rapist's murderer: 'Possibly some of that vulnerability accounts for her [Mira's] pictures' (184). Tennant is commenting on an ambiguous attitude held by a group of middle-class women. Although they condemn Mrs. Hyde for threatening their lives simply by existing, they also need her, and parasitically feed on her vitality for social injustice. The internal conflict is evident as they are 'each one a part of her [Mara's] composite portrait [of Mrs. Hyde] . . . each had been a victim of rape. By the same man?' (185). We see every face implicit in 'the Face of Revenge' (184) at the opening of Mara's exhibition where Mara films Mrs. Hyde and comments: 'the extreme unease experienced by all the women in their different ways when confronted by this spectacle is due to there being something "unnatural" about Mrs. Hyde' (198). The group of women, who occasionally assemble in Robina's boarding-house-cum-club for women and who capitalise on the power of 'liberated middle-class women', manifest the potentially demonic nature of the feminine. Ms Jekyll's up-market house is built upon Mrs. Hyde's rotting basement, a juxtaposition that Jean Hastie describes in her journal as 'almost surreal' (224), as if 'there was a feeling of benign, neighborhood watch: a truly communal spirit in the air' (223). Though disagreement over the radical revenge adopted by Mrs. Hyde is individually articulated, the abject of the repressed and the exploited feminine is communally shared.

VI. Fighting with the Other of Incestuous Trauma

While Tennant illustrates the abject of the feminine through a communal commitment of women, Kennedy grounds it in personal connections and disconnections through the emotional aspects of her characters. In Kennedy's *So I am Glad*, the salient motif of self-contained and self-repressed hatred towards the subjugation of the feminine is revealed, not only through Jennifer's coerced inclusion in her parents' perversion but also in her desire for intimacy when she is an adult, especially as it is accompanied by the recurring fear of damage that is concomitant with such intimacy. Kennedy configures a strongly self-contained protagonist who is silenced by

[43] *Ibid*., p. 64.
[44] *Ibid*., p. 65.
[45] Anderson, Carol. 'Emma Tennant, Elspeth Barker, Alice Thompson: Gothic Revisited'. *Contemporary Scottish Women Writers*. Eds. Aileen Christianson and Alison Lumsden. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 117-130 (121).

sexual abuse but who is angered by the sadistic role her character has to play in order to evade sexual exploitation; through this role, she points out the intellectual solitude and emotional destitution that is found in the Grotesque that is hiding there. Jennifer's lengthy asides and flashbacks epitomise her 'intellectual scepticism'[46] and emotional isolation. Recounting her own repressed hurt as caused by the strangeness of her parents who perform sex in front of her and need her for 'their own, closed reasons' (*So I am Glad*, 71), Jennifer responds by seeking to keep 'her house safe' from 'their gritted teeth, their damp faces, [and] inquisitive eyes' (71). Being forced to see violent sex 'silently' is another method of sexually castrating the feminine. By addressing her strange 'guest' (her father) in the early morning, Jennifer assumes emotional indifference: 'Good morning. Whoever you are' (66). Her 'frightening lack of comprehension' is ironically 'balanced by a wonderful absence of fear' (66); her self-composure undertakes the patriarchal gaze of the calm 'nice' girl. The extent of Jennifer's wounding is foregrounded in the fact that the social part of her mind has been ripped open violently in her parents' sexuality, and that the trauma of the lack of paternal love is simmering inside her when she finds herself in bed facing the insult to her body. The sexuality of the father as enacted upon the daughter invokes an incestuous taboo; to speak of paternal love, as a woman, is an ability denied to Jennifer.

Psychological revelations are carefully enfolded in sentences that deny her parents' roles in her own self-fashioning: 'I will tell you soon about my parents . . . but when I do, you'll already know they played no part in making me how I am' (6). Jennifer's complacent confession to her readers in Kennedy's ironic elaboration disguises truth and incorporates ambiguous gender attitudes; the overt denial of her parents' influence on her signals the hidden refusal of the existence of the vulnerable feminine scarred in her mind. This refusal forms the ground of one's self's borderline and entails his/her strangeness to what is initially familiar. Kristeva emphasises a 'confusion of boundaries' as one of 'the most intense forms of estrangement':

> Visible or invisible? Inside me or outside? They disturb demarcation
> between interior and exterior space and unsettle the speaking subject in
> his customary dwelling-place. To write, to experience the time of
> dazzling obscurity, is to become a stranger to oneself and the familiar.[47]

Kristeva's notion of the abject conjures up a memory of the self, but also emphasises the demarcation between the interior and exterior of the speaking subject when it is produced. To obliterate this barrier is to become estranged from the being of the abject, from the old-established sense of self, and from the repelled but familiar part of oneself.

From this perspective of Kristeva's view of the self's borderline, for Jennifer, to become a stranger to, and therefore to unconsciously obscure the castrated feminine (the conformity of female body), is the safest strategy to evade the resentful fury that surfaces against the emotional injuries caused by her parents. When the headmaster tells Jennifer that her mother was killed in a car accident, Jennifer indicates that her slight irritation soon faded (213). Jennifer's childhood should have been blessed by maternal love and protection, even with the

[46] Dunnigan indicates that Kennedy's writing 'has a measure of intellectual scepticism' but is a 'sensual rather than an intellectual process', a 'spiritual experience of enormous power'. See Dunnigan, Sarah M. 'A. L. Kennedy's Longer Fiction: Articulate Grace'. *Contemporary Scottish Women Writers*. Eds. Aileen Christianson and Alison Lumsden. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 144-155 (144).

[47] Smith, Anna. *Julia Kristeva: Readings of Exile and Estrangement*. (New York: St. Martin's, 1996), p. 39.

presence of parental sexual abuse; however, she is *silenced* by her parents' perverted habit, and is misled by her mother's sadomasochistic version of the feminine. In adulthood, in order to escape from the dangers of being female, Jennifer assumes the role of a sadist in her sexual relationship with Steven, but this role is precisely the opposite of what she expels. Being a sadist, Jennifer is reminded of the trauma of gender abuse, and remains emotionally conflicted. There is no way for Jennifer to repel either side of the abject except to obscure the trauma her parents imposed on her, and to deny her parents' influence over her. Kennedy suggests that Jennifer works upon subtexts when she dreams,[48] and that Jennifer's childhood abuse cannot find exit except when she imposes upon herself a new role as stranger to her injured self—a stranger without emotional 'moles' (7).

Both the loss of love, and the feminine's subsequent estrangement mark the beginning of Jennifer's sexual and moral questioning. While violence is the 'natural expression of the masculine in its purest form', chastity, or 'in an extreme form—repression', paves the way for 'the conditions [of] victimisation'.[49] Jennifer's sexual repression strikes deep at roots that manifest themselves in the emotionally sacrificial nature of a masochist. This is demonstrated by her sadomasochistic relationship with Steven, and this relationship can be seen as an example of a pungent transgression against fixed gender identity. Jennifer treats Steven's body sadistically, while telling readers about her method of transgression: 'Want to see it? Close your eyes now if you don't' (131). Sadism symbolically aims to exert the power of the other version of the feminine (the wily, irrational and demonic potential) over the masculine. Jennifer cannot 'stop' herself from the sexual domination that she asserts as Captain Bligh and which liberates her from any feminine identification: 'Bligh never was—in any historical sense—anything like a lady' (91). As Jennifer sexually abuses Steven—sexually silences him—her childhood gender trauma is redeemed as if she is 'finding an edge and stepping beyond it and gripping that edge and throwing it away' (127). Through her 'silencing castration' of Steven's body who as a ghost can never do any empirical reaction, Jennifer desires to kill her internal Other—the image of ever victimised feminine side of self, with a view to taking a masculine role in gender relationship. This 'silencing', however, due to its non-empirical but supernatural experience, can never serve as a 'substantial' obliteration of Jennifer's gender trauma because she must fight with her rejected feminine side of self imaginatively.

Physical mockery of sadism connotes Jennifer's most poignant fury not only towards social repression of the female body but also towards her own inability to obliterate the memory of sexual abuse. The image of the *feminised* vulnerable child remains a scar that she cannot eradicate. Jennifer ridicules the perversion in her urban construction of love through the means of peculiar sex. She announces her personal definition of love. When growing closer to Savinien Cyrano de Bergerac, she throws her handcuffs into a skip with its empty syringes as evidence of 'our public sickness' (95). When Savinien leaves, Jennifer falls prey to darker desires, assaulting Steven so badly in a one-night sadomasochistic stand that he cannot work for a week. Although she is reluctant to admit her deep-rooted and resentful mental fury, especially when at work as a radio announcer, a 'professional enunciator' (37), her despair is well-broadcasted by a member of the personnel staff: 'I said I would certainly bear her suggestions in mind and she warned of the dangers of unexpected rage. Presumably she

[48] Kennedy, A. L. *Critical Querterly*. 37:4 (1995): 52-55. p. 53.
[49] Day, William Patrick. *In the Circles of Fear and Desire: A Study of Gothic Fantasy*. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 80-81.

was unaware of how personally dangerous she would have found my expressed rage' (226). This black humour, characteristic of Kennedy's writing in moments of particular despair or difficulty,[50] comes as a shock to the reader. It reveals an ironic comparison that conceals the modern relationship of hesitancy between the fear of facing the destruction brought by the rage and bravery of confronting it.

In musings upon her own disintegrated and distorted state within patriarchal culture, Jennifer seems to identify herself with Savinien, a ghost soldier, writer, and *philosophe*, who returns from the dead of the seventeenth century to a Glasgow boarding house. This legendary seventeenth-century libertine's desire to cast off the shackles of tradition and authority parallels Jennifer's longing to expel the values of the feminine; their reactions towards violence and authority, however, are certainly different. While Savinien performs physical violence to fight against authority, Jennifer adopts psychic indifference as a protest against gender violence. Jennifer has long accustomed herself to emotional disconnection. She desires emotional intimacy but fears the harm it may cause since she considers loving as the forerunner to death.

Abjection, in Jennifer's case, is formed in her biological development. Her biological abuse castrates her spontaneous desire for love: the loss of the harmonious unity with her mother through the intrusion of her father (the symbolic order) hinders her ability to give maternal love and makes her believe in the entanglement of damage and love. Savinien's extroverted self-complacent love mirrors Jennifer's introverted imaginary love. Though this pair of lovers share a common desire for intimacy, they dread approaching it: 'I knew the love he meant, the one that included darkness and loving on alone' (236). Savinien's love is shadowed with narcissism due to his own militaristic but deplorable history. Savinien grows in darkness with a history of being 'struck down very slowly in Paris' for being 'a bad atheist' (274). His narcissism derives from the fact that he models himself as a national hero in order to defy military tyranny and to counteract the local authority. His romantic narcissism, however, is never fulfilled. Because although his heroic deeds deepens his internal propensity for violence, it does not bring him freedom from authorial oppression; Savinien's internal violence comes from external physical damage just like Jennifer's. As he slowly regains those memories of violence in his previous life, the spectral Savinien reveals a life of death and damage that strikes a chord with the taciturn Jennifer: 'There was a tenderness in him I'd never managed to find' (129), states Jennifer; however, 'he also had a pain about him I didn't want to feel' (129).

The tenderness of Savinien, who also has a violent past and can therefore understand Jennifer, is used to redress her rage at her parents' perversion. Jennifer's 'produced' calmness finds itself within the redemptive grace of love: '"Don't ever let me hurt you, Savinien. Even if I ask." "Ah." He smiled into me. "No, I won't let you do that. But neither will you"' (208). They communicate, by 'common instinct', the fear of love. Each completes the other, however, in a vision of magnitude; Jennifer's aversion to all personal involvement is metaphorically countered by Savinien's romantic narcissism. Nevertheless, this love, though it would provide redemption to Jennifer's gender trauma, can never fully be achieved. The death is anticipated not only in Savinien's drug addiction but also in the sheer miracle of Savinien's existence (216). Kennedy leaves to her protagonist an unfulfilled act of love, an everlasting quest for spiritual redemption from pain.

[50] Dickson, Beth. 'Intimacy, Violence and Identity: The Fiction of A. L. Kennedy'. *Revista canaria de estudios ingleses*. 41 (2000): 133-144. p. 143.

VII. Existential Dilemma induced by the Other

By showing the cultural encoding of the feminine as obedient, Tennant and Kennedy indicate their characters' anxious and persistent efforts to find in their own voices aboriginal selves that can re-create their worlds. A quest for self-creation, for self-comprehension, and particularly for self-introspection, predicts Gothic selves' survivals of Kennedy and Tennant. Undertaking pain paradoxically serves as the ultimate solvent of the Grotesque; it resides within the confrontation with this grotesque but it is defective in taste. David Bakan notes that pain serves as a role in the decentralisation of ego. This very decentralisation occurs while the self identifies with 'what hurts me', with the 'threat of death' 'which was once integral to the ego'.[51] When the entire soul touches the powers of horror that sustain but potentially murder itself, the uncanny emerges as custodian of a more enhanced power that obliterates the border of self and ushers the limited self into an infinite realm. The infinite appears when the finite limits of human body are surpassed. The very border between life and what lies beyond life has been interrupted, with the external world uncannily 'infecting' the limits of the human body.

A version of femininity may provide an example of what exceeds the symbolic order, but the way of excess adopted by this version is always at the same time marked and defined by the symbolic. The protagonists in Tennant's and Kennedy's gothic narratives rebel against familial and sexual relationships that reduce the feminine to corporeal conformity. Defying the internal reaction towards the jettisoned version of the feminine, however, is the final pursuit of self-satisfaction. Tennant and Kennedy, through the semiotic significance of supernatural mediators, commonly invite romantic encounters with the uncanny in their portrayals of gender trauma. The spectral is an intensified version of the conflicts between the self and its internal Other. This version of conflicts, however, is the site in which the self can live with the internal Other, with the abject, and therefore may see the world whole. For Tennant and Kennedy, the romantic ideal generated by the encounter with supernatural mediators promises a state where the protagonists *undertake* the gender trauma again in order to *erase* the patterns of domination and submission central to masculine and feminine stereotypes. The romantic ideal, an autonomous and forceful agent that makes creation possible, dissolves the internal rebellion of a gothically sentimental self. It assembles all conflicting aspects of the self and puts them to creative liberation. By doing so, characters engender themselves to assert the power of self. Tennant's and Kennedy's elaborate psychological transformations involved in pain and pleasure, in this regard, have both political and aesthetic ramifications. In this section, I will explore how the characters undertake the masculine mode of the feminine, confront their abjection, and resolve their psychological grotesqueness.

In *The Bad Sister,* the feminine is repressively objectified but politically appropriated. By the corner supermarket at the end of the street lies Paradise Island, a house for homosexual women who always 'smile sardonically' (39) at the world. For the women, to unwrap the 'bright tartan package' (39) is to open Pandora's box, to probe into the mental state of urban heroines. Until their unwrapping, Pandora's boxes hold 'fear of closed spaces and fear of open spaces and a drowsiness while operating machinery' (39). After they 'pull and tear at the little white worms of paper that make the wadding', the box 'lies open and shallow' (39). The women's

[51] Bakan, David. *Disease, Pain & Sacrifice*: *Towards a Psychology of Suffering*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 76 & 78.

confrontation with the fear of imprisonment foreshadows Jane's amusement in schizophrenia; here the discovery of mental openness anticipates Jane's psychological transformation. In a Sunday lunch which Jane refers to as 'a cementing thing for couples', the Yorkshire pudding after the 'bleeding meat' serves as a male strategy to entrap women for their own desires: the pudding 'produc[es] a drowsiness', 'a soft acceptance of everything' (47). Jane's affection is filled with scepticism when she interrogates the autonomy of men: 'How would he manage without me?' (47). After sexually exploiting the flesh of women, men flatter women to cater to the image of their own integrated subjectivity. The food arouses Jane's negative but curious appetite when she is passively positioned within a 'male'-oriented economy of property and desire in which the male characters use the female characters as a 'mirror' of alterity, affirming an image of their own integrated subjectivity.

Jane's mother, Mary, is engaged in a commercialised sexual relationship with her fiancé. While buying Mary 'white calfskin gloves', Mr Dalzell moulds Mary's affection to 'just the right size' (7). Mocking her mother's 'fitt[ing] in the world like a glove' (71), Jane regards the 'appearance of enduring stability' (75) as shaping the feminine into animals. Jane renounces the style of clothes that Tony favours; she prefers jeans and jackets and calls them 'magical garments' which 'transcend sex and wealth and individuality' (79). As Sedgwick suggests, the 'character' is anchored in the image of the 'quasi-linguistic inscription of surfaces'.[52] Clothes, a sign of language, subjugate women into a corporeal dimension. Jane chooses to dress herself in invisibility (79) to announce her own autonomy rather than in 'the ballerina dress' (154) to be assorted to 'tarnished sequins' (154). Any symbol of femininity such as ballerina dress here is rejected by Jane to announce her refusal of social subjugation of female body as a flowery doll.

However, when Stephen, the young clergyman who regards the female commune (the women's house) as being like the 'front parlour of a grim Victorian brothel' (21), gives her a necklace with a crucifix symbolising the faith, Jane wears it, intending to be 'translated into another state' from 'the known state to the unknown' (87). Diving down the front of Jane's shirt and resting between her breasts, the crucifix produces a shudder through her body (87). Stephen suggests to Jane: 'If you are frightened, why not use it?' (87). Jane is initiated into confronting her Other within, her abjection. The faith embodied in the sacrifice of Christ triggers Jane's fear of death but also valorises her own faith in transgression. The crucifix, with a semiotic allusion to faith in truth, compels Jane to go through the truth of her abjection and announce the 'truth' about her.

Patricia Huntington notes that Kristeva regards the semiotic *chora* as an attempt to explore 'the excluded feminine dimensions of language, e.g., nonmeaning, nonbeing, absence'.[53] Relatively, symbolic dimensions of language produce meaning, being, and presence. In other words, the excluded feminine dimension of language is emblematic of the negative capability, rather than representative of radical declaration. The absence of meaning, the state of nonbeing, is precisely the negative capability that upholds all of the produced meaning, or the being, and the presence of language. These feminine dimensions of language have never been excluded but metaphorically exist to sustain the presence of produced meaning. It is upon the feminine dimensions of

[52] Sedgwick notes that the marking of flesh and the marking with blood of veils are quasi-linguistic inscriptions. See Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions.* (New York and London: Methuen, 1986 [1976]), pp. 149-158.

[53] Huntington, Patricia. *Ecstatic Subjects, Utopia, and Recognition*. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), p. xx.

language that masculine dimensions of language build their subjectivities. From this perspective, the long-term, repellent, masculine mode of the feminine no longer stands in an unfavourable situation but now calls attention to the fact that the male characters use the female characters as a 'mirror' of alterity, thereby affirming an image of their own integrated subjectivity.

The excluded feminine dimension of language is symbolically retraced in Jane's acceptance of the necklace, an action of assuming the nonbeing. She confronts her abjection towards the corporealised feminine, and at the same time announces the enduring virtue of courage. Without this courageous undertaking, the oppressed character will appeal to the evil power to redress her affliction. This is embodied in Mrs Marten, the affected and overly feminine mother of Jane's boyfriend, who is the most worldly but also the most terrifying figure in the novel. Being the most 'conventional nightmarish, Knightsbridge sort of lady', as Tennant describes this figure, Mrs Marten 'carries a vast load of repressed power and evil'.[54] All her white outfit--her white petal hat, high white shoes and little pearly powder--compact into her silver gaze she tries to fit her deadly-white face (153). Under the costume of all whiteness (a color symbolic of purity and peace) lurks a demonic and subversive heart.

Mrs Marten is a masked version of Meg. While Mrs Marten expresses her rage through her costume, a 'rigidified body' 'preserved in lava' (103), Meg speaks furiously through the 'redness of a bloodshot eye' (100). Both Mrs Marten and Meg suck life out of Jane: the former distresses her to poor health and the latter gives her the power of magic arts to destroy. Jane appeals to the uncanny power to approach her 'dark, unknown enemy' (127). To the reader's amazement, this unknown enemy is none other than Gil-Martin, whose 'shadow fall[s] over' Jane in the same way that Tony's body pulled over hers (127). In order to 'remove any proper claim to identity' (126), Jane must embark on another journey (127) with Meg's magic power, a journey into the abject of the repressed body. Once Meg calls Gil-Martin, giving herself the powers she needs to coerce Jane, Gil-Martin becomes too strong for Jane and thus claims Jane's soul (166). Tennant is here parodying the male demon in Hogg's work. Gil-Martin in *The Bad Sister* is no longer the demonic figure, representative of Calvinist repression, who in Hogg's narrative plagued a young man in the seventeenth century, but is figuratively a source of evil which provides power for Jane but at the same time exerts his power over her. A poignant irony is implicitly drawn to inform the reader of men's exploitation of the enduring feminine. In order to counteract the realistic male hegemony, Jane must paradoxically appropriate the frightening male evil power to solve her gender trauma but simultaneously, she also falls prey to the power.

As Tennant informs her readers, when the male poet calls down the female muse whenever he likes, the female muse will call down another woman, 'who gives her a nasty kick on the shin'.[55] Jane must confront Meg, representative of an extreme feminist, and then trace Meg's whereabouts to Gil-Martin, signaling paternal oppression; then her abjection may dissolve. Jane recalls her vision through the magic crystal ball:

> Tony and my body are still locked . . . a feeling of airlessness and
> suffocation as the room fills up . . . Meg has a red and white spotted scarf

[54] Indicated by Tennant in the part of Mrs Marten, in a conversation with Sue Roe. See Roe, Sue and Emma Tennant. 'Women Talking About Writing'. *Women's Writing: A Challenge to Theory*. Ed. Moira Monteith. (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1986), pp. 117-153 (134).

[55] *Ibid*., p. 125. Tennant indicated here that *The Bad Sister* was taking up the idea that a woman has another woman in her, and the two are warring.

> on her head . . . Gil-Martin--for I know it is him--is staring into the fire.
> In my peace and emptiness, I circle over him. He doesn't look up, but I
> have no need to see his face. We had rough times together when we were
> children, he and I! Then I lost him. (129)

Tennant portrays the dissolution of gender identity as relying on the psychological transformation *after* internalising suffering. This internalisation of suffering for the sake of psychological transformation echoes Kristeva's insistence on interior transcendence. While rejecting a 'transcendent exterior', Kristeva, states Anna Smith, is 'fascinated with moments when the real and the imaginary coincide'.[56] Jane must investigate the interior source of pain, dig out the abject of the female body, and undertake oppression again; then she announces the 'truth' of the feminine. As she indicates at the very end of her journal, she gives Meg what she needed--a symbolic act of removing the abject--and she marches towards Gil-Martin--a symbolic act of dissolving gender trauma. In the process of approaching the abject, Jane justifies the irreducibility of the feminine, the virtual spiritual dimension of the feminine, and courage in feminine endurance. This forbearance of pain paradoxically generates the power of liberation.

The image of objectified women is most explicitly expressed in *Two Women of London.* The Shade Gallery parodies the understanding that the beauty of women is positioned and appraised as a product of art. Mara's camera successfully captures 'the woman in red' (183), dressed in a scarlet skirt, who is 'clearly no expert with this type of machine' (183). The costumed, imprisoned body with grill-like scarlet limitation carries a vigorous heart, waiting to expedite the suppression she suffers. When Eliza meets Sir James Lister for a Valentine's Day lunch before their marriage, Eliza's 'soft and vulnerable' smiles, though amiable and complacent, definitely deny the 'butter [to] melt in her mouth' (226). She knows well that the butter comes 'along with every other damn thing' (226) of oppression made by men. After the close of the gallery, the butter indeed no longer functions as flattering to woman in the dinner as if praising a product of art but, as expected, is followed by the deprivation of marital and economic bliss produced by her ex-husband, Sir James Lister. The 'omens of bloody murder' (228) coming with the 'nocturnal visitants', with 'the cry of an owl' (229) anticipate Eliza's 'sobbing fit' (245) in the darkness at night. Eliza's melancholy imprisonment in her house built on Mrs Hyde's rotting basement make her patterned after the 'bad karma' of the evil woman, Mrs Hyde. Eliza's perfect beauty is in sharp contrast to Mrs Hyde's 'hunched trembling' appearance; in this fragmentation, Eliza's beauty enfolds her misery. Her beauty demands 'medical attention' (245) since it epitomises the scientific ideal of the female.

Eliza's misery finds no exit except by resorting to the medication of science: what constitutes oppression dissolves the oppressed. In *Desire in Language*, Kristeva suggests that poetic language functions 'at the cost of reactivating this repressed instinctual, maternal element'.[57] Kristeva explains:

> Poetic language is within the economy of signification itself that
> the questionable subject-in-process appropriates to itself this archaic,

[56] Smith notes that the semiotic appears luminously outside the body and that the site is 'enigmatic, resistant to interpretation'. See Smith, Anna. *Julia Kristeva: Readings of Exile and Estrangement*. (New York: St. Martin's, 1996), p. 39.
[57] Kristeva, Julia. *Desire in Language*. Ed. Leon Roudiez. Trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon Roudiez. (New York: Columbia UP, 1980), p. 136.

> instinctual, and maternal territory; thus it simultaneously prevents the word from becoming mere sign and the mother from becoming an object like any other--forbidden.[58]

Kristeva suggests that the subject-in-process in its search for the self ultimately finds its inherent instinctual and maternal territory, and intends to activate its long forbidden part (the repressed instinctual, maternal element), preventing it from becoming merely a sign. Only when physical beauty as a visual form, a semiotic sign of language, returns to the physical realm may female beauty be redressed to the spiritual dimension. The destruction of Eliza's physical beauty is satirised in the overdoses prescribed by doctors.

The parody is highlighted by Dr. Frances Crane's memoir. Dr. Crane narrates with a condemning tone while recalling the name on the back of the envelope given to her by Eliza: 'London's most notorious doctor--a man who had deliberately allowed the deaths from overdoses of at least two world-famous rock stars' (252). Readers know from Dr. Crane's tone that this medical professional indirectly killed Eliza and Mrs Hyde. Dr. Crane knows that Eliza indulges herself through an addiction to Ecstasy, 'largely unknown in its long term effects' (252). The tone justifies Eliza's view that Dr. Crane is cool to her, 'disapproving her way of life and general state of mind' (250). As the doctor treats Mrs Hyde for anxiety, prescribing 'Anxian' to her, so does she also regard Eliza's self-destructive withdrawal as 'Heroin' withdrawal symptoms (254-5). Eliza's corporeal beauty is ironically abused by the scientific mechanics that uphold it.

Rather than drawing attention to how the evil can be found within professional's experiments regarding the dual nature of mankind as expressed in Stevenson's narrative, Tennant is concerned with the loss of humanity in professionals. Dr. Crane, a female medical professional, acknowledges the importance of learning the 'subject of personality disorders and their causes' (255) inherent in both the psychological and social dimensions, but she ultimately fails to understand her patients' maladies of the soul. She is blind to the social (outside) treatment of the female and dies of shock of Eliza's psychological (inside) effects. Eliza's courage in applying scientific treatment to her body destroys her physical beauty and paradoxically justifies her feminine compliance through the durability of virtue. As the fictional editor testifies in postscript: 'the sensation of pure violence that poured through me was the most wonderful sensation' (262). The female bodily obedience to medical violence is the only strategy Eliza may adopt to obliterate the physical oppression that the economic and political (outside) world inflicts upon her.

Anna Smith indicates that 'for Kristeva, poetic language was the key to estranging perception and, more ambitiously, all thought, because it introduced a heterogeneous space into signifying structures and subjective identity'.[59] The female body, as the ultimate semiotic signifier, re-engages itself into the estranging social expectation of the female body but anticipates the erasure of this expectation. Mrs Hyde and Eliza's self-sacrificial infliction of *pain* upon the female body predicts the *pleasure* of obliterating the identity imposed upon it; the psychological transformation involves a political displacement of the relationship between body and gender identity.

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[58] *Ibid*.

[59] Smith, Anna. *Julia Kristeva: Readings of Exile and Estrangement*. (New York: St. Martin's, 1996), p. 5.

Undertaking pain as a harbinger of death and thus as a decentralisation of the ego is likewise implied in Kennedy's *So I am Glad*. Jennifer's depiction of the 'moles' as emotions at the very beginning in her narrative foreshadows the protagonist's unexpected inner drive to merge herself into the vexation of pain generated by gender trauma. She indicates that though 'the world is full of sharp little edges and nasty corners', it paradoxically helps to 'protect both the moles and their minders' (6). Her remarks imply that she still may 'dig' out the 'black little mole', to be an 'indivisible' being (108) while also returning to the 'sharp little edges and nasty corners'. Later, Kennedy elaborately reveals the slight degree of spontaneous engagement with the sense of pain through the metaphor of the 'injured pigeon': 'Almost all of its tail is missing--only the feathers are gone, but it cannot fly' (85). Jennifer identifies herself with the injured pigeon: just as the bird is deprived of its feathers so she is offended by her own body while being sexually abused. She cannot liberate her mind, having been 'castrated' in gender terms just as the bird has been deprived of its capability to fly.

Significantly, what Kennedy says about pain may just as truthfully be said about violence. In *So I am Glad*, violence is more typically functional: it aggravates pain while distracting the ego aware of it. This distraction does not exorcise pain; on the contrary, it puts the ego into a more intense engagement with pain. In other words, violence, in Kennedy's vocabulary, marks the *limits* of representation: it uncovers the emotional erosion of self. Jennifer's silence and indifference is the most profound violence towards the external world of brutality as well as towards her inner world of insensitivity. In an instant global communication, Jennifer is witness to a twenty-four hour spectacle of violence both physically real and psychologically stimulating:

> In the first place I tried to keep myself separated from the images of the news I had to broadcast. It was all very well to talk about gassing whole villages, publicly anatomizing children, cosmically and domestically designed disasters - what I didn't want to consider were the faces involved. Now here were all the images I'd avoided and more. A plastic toy suitcase, a coloured fancy hat, the light of intelligence in a pair of eyes make a photograph instantly unmanageable. I could neither look nor look away. (132)

Periodic media debate over child smacking in a way of graphic but fantastic depiction, as if violence were commonly accepted as an ordinary amusement in daily life. Jennifer comments:

> Even the most distressing snaps became, after a while, part of my expected insensitivity. I could pick up any headline SECRET JACUZZI SEX LIFE OF NECROPHILE VOYEUR - PICTURES with not even a shiver. I had been successfully numbed. (132)

Physical contiguity and emotional distance co-exist in a single violent action.

Actually, violence projectively filters the world through an emotionally incompetent but laden story: it denies personal embodiment but shapes the construction of an inner world. Jennifer's obsession with achieving a sense of painlessness is indeed marked by its absence of *pain* but also ironically by the absence of its opposite, *pleasure*. Remaining apathetic towards violence evidently cannot solve the pain of isolation but, on the contrary, reinforces the rigorous isolation of the individual etched against the backdrop of society.

Jennifer's sado-masochism, a form of physical violence, is the only stance different from her habitualised silence; however, it is still symptomatic of apathy. She wonders 'if all of that formerly naval brutality hadn't been a little distraction from a more consistent cruelty - the kind you will always trawl behind you if you're used to being permanently calm' (230). This physical version of violence remains internalised, in contrast with Savinien's straightforward violence to express his political anger. Savinien reminisces to Jennifer that he was once in a bloody uprising against corrupt monarchical and ecclesiastical power in his previous life. He states that pain was an accepted feature of political life: 'Do you know in Henry's time four thousand similar gentlemen died to gain the honour they had always had?' (97). Now in this second existence he duels with a drug dealer called James in open waste ground, in public space, in contrast to Jennifer's privatised violence. This discrepancy between their inclinations in different forms of violence perhaps explains why Kennedy chooses this legendary chivalric character to engage in a battle of love, in 'a combat of hearts' (87) with taciturn Jennifer. For Savinien, love, like dueling, is a delicate warfare, 'demanding expression of virtuosity in the point' (87-88), whereas love, for Jennifer, in Savinien's sword-fencing is a deep wound which leaves her 'opened like a fish to hurt with one simple movement, one deep touch' (174). Jennifer's internalised pain from bodily violence mirrors the bloody brutality of Savinien's life. Jennifer's privatised pain, mirrored in Savinien's physical violence, metaphorically re-registers her into the social sphere.

Exposure to Savinien's eloquent satiric speech on politics becomes a catalyst for Jennifer to divorce from her *silent violence* and to develop her 'tone'. As 'something midway between slight catarrh and a Polish accent', this tone is 'an unnecessary colour in the voice, an air of negative comment' (218). Kennedy notes that 'in Scotland, we embrace the negative' and that 'we are trying to teach ourselves the bitterness of life'.[60] Remaining numb to the pain induced from violence is particulary true of *So I am Glad* which directly addresses a culture of anaesthesia that seeks to deny the existence of pain through drugs and sado-masochistic violence. With a constant sense of guilt, Jennifer depicts that 'Guilt is of course not an emotion in the Celtic countries, it is simply a way of life - a kind of gleefully painful anaesthetic' (36). Embracing negative aspects as an intrinsically subversive way of curing *pain* becomes Jennifer's potential to elicit an empathic response by her internal Other.

This voluntary suffering echoes what Kristeva calls *jouissance*, *pleasure* which contains a radical potential. Kristeva discusses the possibility of salvation by opening to the Otherness as a possible representation of maternity:

> Man overcomes the unthinkable of death by postulating maternal love in its place - in the place and stead of death and thought. This love . . . psychologically is perhaps a recall . . . of the primal shelter that insured the survival of the newborn.[61]

Kristeva, taking Oedipus as an illustration, discusses the male subject's abjection of the maternal for fear of losing his subjectivity. Jennifer's abjection of the maternal body for the fear of being subjugated in the patriarchal society, of losing her subjectivity, is the reverse of this. Kristeva's ethics calls for a subjectivity via

[60] Kennedy, A. L. 'A blend of self-denial and lurid pleasure'. *New York Times*, 20 July 1996. Reprinted by and cited from *The Scotsman*, 13 August 1996.
[61] Kristeva, Julia. *Tales of Love*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 252.

the symbolic without fighting off the semiotic (the maternal). By heeding the experience of maternity, a subject would not be anchored by horror within the dualisms of culture/nature but instead utilises the powers of horror to merge itself into the maternal as a rebirth. Here we think of Jennifer playing the role of mother, nursing Savinien to health but simultaneously healing herself in the process. By taking his pain as hers, she no longer takes delight in 'a small still life that fit[s] very snugly around nobody but me':

> I used to be secretly happy because my relative youth meant that I would most likely outlive all but the most lunatic regime. Now I know I will have to survive in whatever carelessness, plans and theories I never agreed with have done to my air, my water, my soil, my food. Sorry to go on, but I found that I cared about these things. Someone I loved was living here and I care about them. (220).

Undertaking pain of her own and of others tears down Jennifer's small world; pain paradoxically disunites her painful life and restores her humanity by re-embodying it.

Cristie L. March indicates that for Kennedy, gender is not a barrier and often 'occupies a de-prioritised place'.[62] Resolving the gender trauma, in Jennifer's case, rests on a love that is not simply for her internal Other but for what was once in her, for the singular Other and for the universal. Pain serves not merely as a personal painkiller but also as a universal love invoker. Jennifer develops a love for both her wounds and Savinien's, pondering that they may 'get another garden from the bare ground up' as long as they spade 'a pattern into the levelled earth' (205). She hopes that their garden of love will be a 'Paradise Garden', like the Garden of Adam and Eve, blessed with the singing of birds (215) and a harmonious relationship even though their love is sinful. Jennifer, nevertheless, is cynical about the stability of this harmonious relationship. She starts to wonder why women build out 'their states of mind in tiny stones' (225). She wants her mental state 'free from blame' (225) and free from being threatened 'by a stranger' (225), by her internal Other. In order to defy her stranger, her foreigner, her Other within, Jennifer must engage herself into a 'feverish chill of journey' with Savinien to confront her 'fear of falling' (253), her fear of being forsaken, and of being alone.

On the one hand, the reader is invited to go on a trip with Jennifer's 'foreigner' to visit threatening, exotic, as Kristeva suggests, 'other climes, mentalities, and governments'.[63] On the other hand, in Kristeva's view, 'this move is undertaken only to return to oneself and one's home, to judge or laugh at one's limitations, pecularities, mental and political despotisms'.[64] Kristeva implies that it is only through recognising the individual sense of alterity that a broader sense of universality can be conceived.

Tennant's and Kennedy's characters can be considered within the rubric of 'castrated women', socially castrated in their sexuality and psychologically castrated in their gender identity. These authors concentrate on the role of women who are socially marginalised and sexually exploited by patriarchal society and who are made to serve to uphold the masculine mode of the feminine. Gender trauma makes their characters detest the feminine that is

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[62] March indicates that Kennedy deals with gender issues in the troubled family structure as a whole, focusing on the interconnections among characters. March, Cristie L. *Rewriting Scotland*. (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 138.

[63] Kristeva, Julia. *Strangers to Ourselves*. Trans. Leon Roudiez. (New York: Columbia UP, 1993), p. 133.

[64] *Ibid*.

socially defined in corporeal conformation, modesty, and propriety. It therefore causes them to hate being imprisoned in the female body. Tennant and Kennedy on the whole inscribe gender trauma as their characters' disease of the soul. The corporeal conformity of the female body to the male's desire makes the protagonists suffer from the abject--self-hatred for being imprisoned in the female body and the consequent radical estrangement from themselves. This abject posits the socially defined feminine as 'the grotesque', both the stranger and the familiar, the part unpleasant but unshakable to confront.

The appearances of the supernatural mediator, the spectral and uncanny figure, in Tennant's and Kennedy's novels all present cognate solutions of the grotesque in terms of the incoherent pathos. These spectral figures appear as the abject's projection of the gothic heroines' mental state--the gothic heroines' borders of self. Haunting the female characters at the periphery of their consciousness, these supernatural mediators serve as a catalyst for the protagonists to liberate themselves through psychological transformation. Their characters commonly undergo a crucial stage in their moral and psychic development by suspending the social projection of stereotypes onto women and obliterating their self-hatred. The protagonists' encounter with the uncanny, the spectral, and the supernatural mediator renders them the *pleasure* of emancipation from their long-term suppressed *pain*. This *pleasure* of emancipation derives from the *terror* of being hurt and the *pain* of confronting the abject. Only through the heroines' confrontation with these uncanny figures that sustain but threaten their subjectivity can they recognise the falsehood of the border of this gender identity which afflicts them.

VIII. Conclusion

Tennant's and Kennedy's characters, corresponding to the psychological perspectives of the grotesque, implicitly conceal the female aversion to the feminine. The ethical norms implied in the culture of two sexes in modern society uphold the standards of the powerful and the 'strong'—characterised as the 'masculine'—and relatively devalue the feminine in relation to it.[65] This devaluation of the feminine causes a negative psychological effect: abjection. This abjection stems from gender trauma; it resists the corporeal conformation of the female body, repels the masculine mode of the feminine, generates self-hatred for being imprisoned in the body, and therefore causes a radical peculiarity to itself. This abjection establishes a desired subjectivity for the female characters to expel what they are not, and what is deemed Other to themselves. This subjectivity, however, is precarious; what they repel—the maternal—is inherent in themselves and cannot be banished altogether. The repelled Other within themselves thus becomes unfamiliar or, more often, becomes uncannily too familiar: unfamiliar because of the intentional exclusion of the symbolic threats of this Other, and familiar because of the conscious awareness of this Other's uncanny hovering.

Both Tennant and Kennedy set their narratives in late twentieth-century culture. Their choices of time and place are very different but their use of particular historical moments suggests that they are addressing the effects of Scottish tradition within their current era. In order to vent women's restrained fury on the markings of

[65] Butler stresses that 'a certain "girling" is compelled' through the symbolic power which 'governs the formation of a corporeality enacted femininity that never fully approximates the norm'. Femininity is thus 'indissociable from relations of discipline, regulation, punishment'. See Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*. (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 232.

their internalised Other, they satirise the alter ego which appears in the form of a supernatural spectre, and characterise particular historical settings. Their use of the Gothic tradition (the terrifying ambivalence towards sexual morality) in ironic relation to man as a subject differentiates their view from that of their Scottish contemporaries. Elspeth Barker, for instance, uses the split Gothic self to consider ideological oppressions in gendered relationships, while Alice Thompson uses bizarre, half-inhuman Gothic figures to reflect upon the male obsession with female beauty. I will discuss these other authorial techniques in the following chapters.

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