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Crossing the Threshold:  
Reading Authorial and Editorial Paratexts to the Fiction  
of  
Hogg, Hawthorne, and James

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## 1. Introduction

“A text without a paratext does not exist and never has existed” (Genette 3). In *Paratexts. Thresholds to Interpretation*, Gérard Genette determines how exactly paratexts, those elements belonging to “an “undefined zone” between the inside and the outside” (2), may guide and even influence the interpretation of any kind of text. The paratext is “a zone without any hard and fast boundary on either the inward side (turned toward the text) or the outward side (turned toward the world’s discourse about the text), an edge” (2). More specifically, paratexts are those devices surrounding the text that are meant to draw the reader inside; the term ‘paratext’ covers everything from the book’s cover over footnotes to even interviews with the author or his publisher. The paratext, then, is “what enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and, more generally, to the public” (1).

The general denomination of ‘paratext’ can be divided into two subcategories: first, there is the peritext, which “necessarily has a *location* that can be situated in relation to the location of the text itself” (4); the peritext is located “within the same volume” (4), and it contains “such elements as the title or the preface and sometimes elements inserted into the interstices of the text, such as chapter titles or certain notes” (5). Genette delineates these as the more “typical” (5) paratexts. Elements which do not appear inside the book or anywhere near its direct surroundings, Genette defines as epitexts. These are “all those messages that, at least originally, are located outside the book, generally with the help of the media (interviews, conversations) or under the cover of private communications (letters, diaries, and others)” (5).

Generally, both the peritext and the epitext can be produced either by the author of a work or by his publisher; “[t]he author and the publisher are (legally and in other ways) the two people responsible for the text and the paratext, but they may delegate a portion of their responsibility to a third party” (9), on the condition that this is “accepted by the author” (9).

Although Genette, when he discusses the publisher's peritext, does not include editorial contributions in his list of examples, I feel that these, too, are paratexts; indeed, as I will discuss in great detail in the chapter on *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, editor's notes speak with an authority that should not be underestimated, and their presence in a book has the undeniable potential of modifying the reader's interpretation in more ways than he himself may realize. As such, the paratext's "existence alone, if known to the public, provides some commentary on the text and influences how the text is received" (Genette 7).

## **2. Background to research**

Over the past decades, literary theory has gradually been moving from a writer-oriented perspective to the current poststructuralist reader-focused view; *Paratexts*, too, claims to be concerned with how books are presented to the reader. What may strike one as odd about *Paratexts*, however, and what certainly sparked my interest, is its emphasis on authorial responsibility. As proposed in Genette's book, the author is the figure in charge of the paratexts that surround a text, and as such, he also indirectly controls their influence on the reader. It seemed to me, then, that even though Genette is considered one of the most important authors of the poststructuralist movement, his focus is more on authorial responsibility and intention than one might originally assume. Since I had discovered from previous research that the author's role in the publication process of a book is often limited, and that his assumption of responsibility over certain paratexts can stem from external factors, such as financial issues, Genette's presupposition of authorial control to me did not seem to concur with this. I wanted to learn more about the paratext, but also about the role of the author in our conception of meaning and intention in any given work of fiction.

This dissertation, then, stems from a deep interest in the “accompanying productions” (Genette 1) surrounding a text, as well as from a personal curiosity and a desire to find out more about my own reading practices. I hope that the results of my research will be as refreshing to my reader as they have been to me.

### 3. Literature review

The text that features most prominently in my research is, of course, Genette’s *Paratexts*. I use its terminology consistently throughout this dissertation, and generally assume the same definitions its author provides. Also, it should not surprise that other notable sources that I have relied on are paratexts to the literary texts I will analyze themselves; they have proffered valuable information about the discussed works’ publication history, their historical background and, most importantly, their reception.

The discussion on Hawthorne’s *The Minister’s Black Veil* relies first and foremost on the historical information on Joseph Moody presented in Phyllis Cole’s *Mary Moody Emerson and the Origins of Transcendentalism. A Family History*. Additionally, my own views on the relevance of Moody’s story stand in opposition to those of Edgar E. Dryden, who believes that the footnote is meant to make the reader aware of the similarities between Moody and Hooper. Instead, I have followed the ideas of Robert E. Morsberger, John Hillis Miller and Earl E. Stibitz, who all assert that *The Minister’s Black Veil* cannot be explained through the history of Joseph Moody, even though the footnote that accompanies the story may lead the reader to believe otherwise.

In analyzing ‘The Custom-House’, the introduction to *The Scarlet Letter* written by Hawthorne himself, the information on the critical reception of the novel is based on the researches of Marshall Van Deusen and Frank MacShane, who have both suggested that ‘The Custom-House’ has been a thorn in the sides of many a critic ever since the publication of *The*

*Scarlet Letter*. Furthermore, Michael Davitt Bell's insights on the gradually changing tone of Hawthorne's introduction, from historically accurate to entirely fictional, have served as a starting point for the discussion of this particular paratext.

While for the examination of *The Turn of the Screw* I have used some of the concepts proposed by Glenn A. Reed and Stanley Renner, especially their ideas on the Governess' sexual frustration and psychiatric instability, I believe that their take on the events in the story need not be the only way to interpret it. Hence, Willie Van Peer and Ewout van der Kamp's "(In)compatible Interpretations? Contesting Readings of 'The Turn of the Screw'" has proved very valuable as a reminder of the exact purpose of this dissertation, which attests that the authorial paratext is not by definition partial to any one interpretation, but that it enables and often even encourages the possibility of multiple readings of a text.

The second large part of this dissertation, which is centred around the analysis and scrutiny of James Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, is for the most part based on the several different editorial introductions and notes that have appeared alongside it and the information imparted in them. The most notable of these paratexts are those of John Carey and Ian Duncan.

I have taken over John Miles Foley's ideas on tradition as they appear in Suzanne Gilbert's "James Hogg and the Authority of Tradition"; Foley suggests that tradition and folklore are a dynamic media that are continually changing; from this I have derived that while tradition will always carry a core of truth, much of it will often be exaggerated, and as such traditional facts are in a way not the most reliable sources. They are, however, still valuable for the study of history, because even though they may not relate historical facts accurately, they can still testify to socio-cultural changes throughout history. The study of tradition is in that sense comparable to the study of interpretation; the latter, too, changes depending on the social, cultural and economical circumstances of its time. One might say

that tradition is a consequence of interpretation, which is something Hogg clearly understood well.

Furthermore, I have relied heavily on Douglas S. Mack's overview of Hogg's career as a writer in order to reconstruct the events preceding the publication of *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*.

Finally, the last chapter of this thesis was inspired mostly by Roland Barthes's "The Death of the Author", which establishes the idea that the interpretation of a work does not depend on the one who has created it, but on the one who reads it. In that sense, one could say that each reader mentally re-writes any given story, making it entirely his own, and that the author is simply one of these many readers whose interpretation is equally valuable to that of his 'peers'. This idea has been the starting point of this dissertation, which will take on a mainly reader-oriented approach, as opposed to Genette's author-focused one in *Paratexts*.

#### **4. Methodology**

In this dissertation, I will examine both peritexts and epitexts in four literary works. In the first section of this investigation, which starts under 5, I will closely inspect and analyze three peritexts inserted by authors: one footnote, added by Nathaniel Hawthorne to his story *The Minister's Black Veil*, and two prefaces or introductory texts, to *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Turn of the Screw*. In doing so, I aim to discover how and why authors include certain paratexts into their work and how they wish them to have an effect upon the reader, or, quite contradictorily, *not* to have any effect at all. I will research how these paratexts influence the interpretation of the works in question and in how far the author is trying to steer this interpretation in a certain direction.

Secondly, I will discuss James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, and how the author's own negative experiences with publishing houses are

represented in the novel. As the novel is divided in two parts, one of which is written by the Justified Sinner himself and the other by an anonymous editor who tries to reconstruct the events recounted in the Sinner's memoir based on both a found manuscript and on traditional tales, I aim to explore how this pseudo-peritext (since both the Sinner's memoir and the editor's narrative were written by the James Hogg) adds to and sometimes even directly contravenes the Sinner's recollection of the circumstances leading up to his suicide. Furthermore, I will inspect James Hogg's letter, which appeared both inside the novel as part of the editor's narrative and outside of it as an authorial epitext, and relate it to the novel's subject matter.

Finally, from the insights gained from the analyses of these four works, I will reconsider Genette's *Paratexts* in terms of authorial control. I will also try to determine how prominently the reader features in *Paratexts* and how this fits in with the general poststructuralist conception that the interpretation of a work lies not with the author, but with the reader. Hence, though I will often mention the author and his 'intention' throughout this thesis, the author I refer to must not be seen as the person in possession of all the answers regarding his own work; with 'intention' I mean those ideas that the reader expects the author to have put into his work, and how the interpretation of these influences the former's own reading of it. This study, then, is written from a perspective that places the reader at the centre of literary comprehension, as it tries to discern how exactly the paratext may aid or impede his understanding of a text.

## 5. Authorial paratexts in *The Minister's Black Veil*, *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Turn of the Screw*

As I have established above, the most obvious writer of paratexts is probably the author himself. The author can be responsible for numerous paratexts surrounding his own work, from introductions or prefaces over footnotes and explanatory notes and even, as for example J.R.R. Tolkien did with the maps of Middle-earth he included in his famous *The Lord of the Rings*, to illustrations. In this section, I will consider two types of authorial paratexts; in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Minister's Black Veil*, I will discuss how the insertion of a single footnote might influence the entire interpretation of a text. Secondly, I will discuss two introductory texts; one is the introduction to Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, the other is the preface to the 1908 New York edition of Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*.

On the footnote (or at least on its definition) it is unnecessary to elaborate; it is a short text that is appended to a word or sentence within the text and that offers, or pretends to offer, an explanation, further information, or citation details. The preface, however, is a different story altogether. Where Genette distinguishes between the introduction and the preface – the former having “a more systematic, less historical, less circumstantial link with the logic of the book” (161), while the latter is “multiplied from edition to edition and [takes] into account a more empirical historicity [...] [obeying] an occasional necessity” (162) – I use both terms for the peritexts I will address below. The reason for this is, as will become clear from the analyses of both works, that neither peritext allows itself to be categorized as either; both bear historical information about the conceptualization of the book, and both pretend to be autobiographical to at least some extent. At the same time, both texts bear “circumstantial links” (161) to the stories they precede, or, in the case of the Penguin edition of *The Turn of the Screw*, follow. Neither text is highly systematical. It would seem, then, that both paratexts are prefaces, and still Hawthorne has chosen ‘introductory’ over ‘prefatorial’ to entitle ‘The

Custom-House'. I have thus resorted to the use of both terms, as I felt it would not in the least affect the logic or the structure of my argument.

### *5.1. The Minister's Black Veil*

"I look around me, and lo! on every visage a black veil!" (1289). With these dying words, the honourable Reverend Mr. Hooper draws his last breath in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Minister's Black Veil* (1836). Hooper is considered a perfectly good minister by the people of his congregation, "a good preacher, but not an energetic one" (1281-1282), until one day he appears for sermon adorned with a black veil "[s]wathed about his forehead, and hanging down over his face, so low as to be shaken by his breath" (1281). The effects of the veil on his convents are enormous; the veil instills great fear in them, and for the remainder of Hooper's life, the question that occupies each and every soul in the congregation is *why* the reverend has taken to wearing the "horrible black veil" (1283).

Scholars and critics, too, have wondered about the meaning of the veil. While this is certainly an important aspect of the story on which I will elaborate to some extent, in the light of this research I deem it necessary to pay special attention to the appearance and placement by Hawthorne of the footnote containing the peculiar history of Joseph Moody, which can hardly be said to be accidental or arbitrary and which will prove highly interesting with regard to the notion of the paratext. Hence, in this section, I aim to research how Hawthorne's peritext might influence the reader's way of assigning meaning to the veil, exploring the notions of sin and confession in the story and how Hooper's reasons for shrouding his face in black are of a far more complex and deceived nature than simply mourning the death of a friend.

Hawthorne's footnote, which falls under the category of the peritext, describes Moody in the following fashion:

another clergyman in New-England, Mr. Joseph Moody, of York, Maine, who died about eighty years since, made himself remarkable by the same eccentricity that is here related of the Reverend Mr. Hooper. In this case, however, the symbol had a different import. In early life he had accidentally killed a beloved friend; and from that day till the hour of his own death, he hid his face from men. (1280, footnote)

Appended to the subtitle 'A Parable', the link with the historical character Joseph Moody is made from the opening lines of the story, connecting him to Hooper not only through their similar habits of wearing a veil, but arguably also through the reasons for which they wear such a black shroud. According to Phyllis Cole, Hawthorne "probably followed the Maine historian Timothy Alden in ascribing [Moody's] behaviour to guilt over the accidental shooting of a friend in childhood" (22). By donning a black veil, then, Moody would confess that he was the cause of his friend's death and use it to express his shame and grief over the incident, although Cole provides several other possible explanations for the veil, such as "grief over his wife's death, the pressure of work, and his possibly unwilling assumption of the ministerial vocation" (22).

Whichever the case may be, Hawthorne himself ascribes Moody's veil to guilt over his friend's death, thus exerting considerable influence on the reading of the black veil and on the text as a whole. The story of the Reverend Mr. Hooper "functions as a re-reading, or even as a misreading and distortion, of previous events, even if the characters performing the repetition are not aware that they are doing so" (Miller 22). As such, even if this story finds its origins in a historical truth, to interpret it from this perspective ignores the imaginative power behind it and constrains its meaning to a single interpretation. Even though Hawthorne states

that the meaning of Hooper's veil is of "a different import" (1280, footnote), his footnote still might lead to the belief that Hooper's veil, too, must be interpreted as a sign of mourning and of guilt. While the latter is certainly justifiable, since guilt and confession of secret sin are two themes which feature prominently in this story, it is, according to Robert E. Morsberger, "a mistake to concentrate too much on the veil itself. Aside from Mr. Moody, no one wore such a veil, and the possessor of it is merely an eccentric" (1973:455). *The Minister's Black Veil* then, is to be read as more than just a re-writing of the life of Joseph Moody. As with most of Hawthorne's works, there is no ready-made or univocal interpretation of the black veil, and the reader must actively engage with the story to peel away the many layers of meaning that are to be detected in it.

The simplest explanation for the veil, according to Earle E. Stibitz, is that the story serves as a representation of Hawthorne's "fundamental belief in man's proneness to hide or rationalize his most private thoughts or guilt. This", Stibitz continues, "is the parable (of the subtitle) that the Reverend Mr. Hooper seeks to preach with his wearing of the veil" (1962:182). Thus, *The Minister's Black Veil* can be interpreted as a way of the Reverend Mr. Hooper to confront the people of his congregation with their sins by wearing his own secret sin as a shroud over his face, though never revealing its nature. However, although the veil could be read as a symbol of guilt, it does not necessarily confess to a secret crime committed by Hooper. As I have established, the meaning of Reverend Hooper's black veil can be read in many ways; indeed, it might be interpreted as an outward incentive to provoke inward reflection upon one's own sins, and it seems from the story that the veil does have this effect on the members of Hooper's congregation: "[h]is converts always regarded him with a dread peculiar to themselves, affirming, though but figuratively, that, before he brought them to celestial light, they had been with him behind the black veil" (1287). It might also be a means of power, adeptly used by Hooper to instill fear in and assert control over his congregation:

A subtle power was breathed into his words. Each member of the congregation, the most innocent girl, and the man of hardened breast, felt as if the preacher had crept upon them, behind his awful veil, and discovered their hoarded iniquity of deed or thought [...] with every tremor of his melancholy voice, the hearers quaked. (1282)

Or, it might be a tool to isolate himself from all of society, a sacrifice which he gladly makes; the suffering of one for the benefit of many: “[t]his dismal shade must separate me from the world: even you, Elizabeth, can never come behind it!” (1285).

Though this altruistic vision is easily confirmed through a first reading, the complexity of the story requires a more indepth understanding of Hooper’s intentions behind the black veil. In fact, the veil bears all of the above meanings, as well as many more; Hooper’s motives, though, are of a more singular kind. Though claiming to find great distress in his loneliness to his fiancée Elizabeth, Hooper also finds a grotesque pleasure in his complete isolation. Stibitz, then, proposes a second reading of the story as a reaffirmation of Hawthorne’s “equally constant belief that man is often guilty of pridefully and harmfully exalting one idea, frequently a valid truth in itself, to the status of the absolute” (182). When Elizabeth threatens to leave him if he does not take off his veil, Hooper cries out to her:

‘Do not desert me, though this veil must be between us here on earth. Be mine, and hereafter there shall be no veil over my face, no darkness between our souls! It is but a mortal veil – it is not for eternity! Oh, you know not how lonely I am and how frightened to be alone behind my black veil. Do not leave me in this miserable obscurity for ever!’ (1286)

However, after Elizabeth’s departure, “Mr. Hooper smiled to think that only a material emblem had separated him from happiness, though the horrors which it shadowed forth, must be drawn darkly between the fondest of lovers” (1286).

Strangely, it is in Hooper's moments of greatest distress that this peculiar smile appears. It is described seven times in total, (the symbolism in using the number seven would not have gone unnoticed by the more attentive reader) and always at those moments where he feels completely deserted by mankind. It seems, then, as though the Reverend Mr. Hooper takes satisfaction from his outcast status, posing himself as a martyr. In turn, he finds a perverse indulgence in his own sorrows, because they elevate him to a status of uniqueness far above ordinary mortals. This morbid narcissism might be the reason why he is so intent on remaining veiled at all times; he is the sole person in the community who is able to bear such great distress with the dignity and serenity that he supposedly does. However, at the same time, Hooper never misses the opportunity to admit that the veil is a burden to him as much as it is to others, thereby exploiting his status of the voluntary victim even further.

Through this reading, if anything, the veil is a symbol of Hooper's egotism, representing Hooper's greatest sin: vanity. And even though the veil clouds his face for all to see, the sin it represents can only be understood by those who are perceptive enough to notice the "sad smile [that] gleamed faintly from beneath the black veil, and flickered about his mouth" (1282). Of all the people in the congregation, Hooper's fiancée Elizabeth appears to be the only one who is able to correctly interpret the smile on Hooper's face. She is also the only one who has not shied away from Hooper since he has started wearing his veil; unlike the other converts, Elizabeth does not fear the veil, or the man behind it. Upon hearing Hooper's cryptic explanation as to why the veil cannot be removed, as always accompanied by his elusive smile, then, Elizabeth takes a moment to ponder upon his words. Here she seems to have an epiphany: "[b]ut, in an instant, as it were, a new feeling took the place of sorrow: her eyes were fixed insensibly on the black veil, when, like a sudden twilight in the air, its terrors fell around her" (1286). Finally, it appears, Elizabeth has seen the horror of the veil. Yet it seems highly unlikely that Elizabeth, who until this moment has appeared to be

unfazed by it, suddenly becomes afraid; rather, in this revelatory moment, Elizabeth identifies the sin that is the veil. Her sudden fear is not a product of the truth behind the veil, but of the truth about Reverend Hooper, and of the person he has become. By revealing his sinfulness, she realizes that he is destined for damnation. Once more she attempts to persuade him, when she says “[l]ift the veil but once, and look me in the face” (1286). Hooper, however, is too caught up in his egotistic fantasy, and by refusing to lift the veil, he rejects both Elizabeth and his final chance to repent. Whatever other sins Hooper might seek to hide by donning the black veil, his greatest sin is his inability to detect that the veil itself is a sin; while Elizabeth is able to recognize his black shroud for what it is, Hooper continues to exalt in it even to his dying breath. Therefore, he can never be redeemed. As Morsberger comments, “God may know all, but that is no reason why the villagers must understand and judge. Secret sin is hidden not from God, but from man” (459); even though Hooper addresses the issue of secret sin in the first sermon he gives while being veiled – “[t]he subject had reference to secret sin, and those sad mysteries which we hide from our nearest and dearest, and would fain conceal from our own consciousness, even forgetting that the Omniscient can detect them” (1282) –, his sin is also hidden from himself. Blinded by his perverse narcissism, and under the pretense of setting himself as a moral example for the community, Hooper cannot break free from the circle of self-righteousness in which he is caught; this is what eventually leads to his damnation. “Still veiled, they laid him in his coffin, and a veiled corpse they bore him to the grave” (1289).

Aside from the actual footnote, there is another interesting aspect to the paratext containing the description of Joseph Moody; the subtitle to *The Minister's Black Veil*, ‘a Parable’, to which the footnote is directly appended, is, according to Edgar A. Dryden, “on the one hand, “putatively historical... based on a reconstructed literal past” and yet on the other, it represents its actualities as signs or emblems that signify something other than

themselves and hence require interpretive action from the reader” (146). This, he continues, is what Melville also understood when he commented that Hawthorne had “chosen to entitle his pieces in the manner he has”, and that “it is certain, that some of them are directly calculated to deceive [...] the superficial skimmer of pages” (Melville in Dryden 146).

Naturally, Hawthorne did not choose the subtitle to *The Minister's Black Veil* arbitrarily and without consideration; by referring to the genre of the parable, the author inevitably sends the reader in search of analogies between Hooper's and Moody's stories, even if these are not necessarily the main focus of the tale. Still, as opposed to what Dryden suggests, Hawthorne does not “[ask] us to see Mr. Hooper as an [sic] historical figure or at least to view him as the literary copy of a historical original” (134); instead, he challenges the reader to look beyond the realm of simple comparison into a reading which is far more complex than what he initially assumed. Both the subtitle to *The Minister's Black Veil* and its affixed footnote hang like a veil over the multitude of possible readings that they disguise.

Like the black shroud over Reverend Hooper's face hides his sin from almost everyone in the congregation, but most importantly from himself, the footnote about Joseph Moody by Hawthorne does not provide an easy explanation for the meaning of the veil and of the story in its entirety; rather, misguides the reader into the belief that Hooper's situation must be similar to that of Moody. Why else, the reader might argue, would Hawthorne mention the case of Moody, if it is not relevant to the interpretation of the story? Additionally, his drawing on the parable would make it even easier for the reader to believe that Reverend Hooper's black veil refers back to that of Joseph Moody, and that their respective reasons for wearing their veils are comparable. Indeed, Hawthorne's use of the paratext has quite the opposite effect of what it would normally be expected to do; instead of clarifying, it mystifies, concealing the possible other readings of the story. As Thomas R. Moore explains, “[t]he rhetoric of [Hawthorne's] sketches may be seen as transparent or semivisible, unadorned or

complex, straightforward or ambiguous, depending upon the expectation of the readership and the consequent willingness of that readership to participate in the negotiation for meaning” (324-325).

If the reader should choose to accept that which Hawthorne suggests in his footnote, and interprets the veil as a symbol for mourning, though the reason for this mourning would have “ a different import” (1280) than that of Moody, he is free to do so; however, this reading of *The Minister’s Black Veil* would then conceal the story’s many other layers of meaning. Hawthorne uses the footnote to challenge his reader to look deeper into the text and to look beyond the veil that is the paratext. Much more than merely a marginal influence on interpretation, the paratext can be used as a device to exclude the reader from or include him into a network of possible meanings, but only if he is able to see the paratext not as a boundary inside which the limits of interpretation are constrained, but rather as a window from which a whole new range of perspectives can be observed. In the words of Genette, it is “a “vestibule” that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back” (2), as long as the reader allows the veil in front of his eyes to be lifted.

### 5.2. ‘The Custom-House’ in *The Scarlet Letter*

In his later work, Nathaniel Hawthorne continued to play with the idea of authority and interpretation, and although the paratext had not been given its name in his day, he often applied it to influence and confuse his readers. ‘The Custom-House’, the introductory preface to *The Scarlet Letter* written by the author himself, is perhaps the most notorious and widely discussed paratext in Hawthorne’s entire oeuvre. “[T]rivial in matter and unworthy in manner” (Van Deusen 61), critics have often dismissed ‘The Custom-House’ “as irrelevant to the “masterpiece” that follows it” (Van Deusen 61). Consequently, “a number of critics [believe]

that it so detracts from the artistic unity of the volume that it should be omitted” (MacShane 93).

However, from Genette’s definition and understanding of the paratext as an intrinsic part to any work of literature, regardless of its genre, ‘The Custom-House’ is, in fact, extremely relevant to the story, not only because it was originally written as a preface to a collection of short stories in which *The Scarlet Letter* would have been the centre piece, but also because has a direct effect on the meaning and interpretation on Hester Prynne’s story in particular.

In ‘The Custom-House’, Hawthorne describes his “weighty responsibility as chief executive officer of the Custom-House” (12), a job which seemed to have extinguished his interest in literature and writing entirely for the next few years: “[l]iterature, its exertions and objects, were now of little moment in my regard. I cared not, at this period, for books; they were apart from me” (22). And yet, it was in the Custom-House, which had robbed him from his desire for literary fame and recognition, where he allegedly made a discovery that directly resulted in the creation of *The Scarlet Letter*, which would make him famous almost from the instant it was published.

From Hawthorne’s narrative tone and the very detailed information he provides about his time as Custom-House officer, it would seem as though ‘The Custom-House’ is an autobiographical sketch in its entirety. Indeed, ‘The Custom-House’ is one of only two moments in Hawthorne’s life where he felt the need to be autobiographical in his writing. The reason Hawthorne proposes for its inclusion in *The Scarlet Letter*, he explains, is to assure the “authenticity of [the] narrative therein contained” (6) to his audience. Hence, the reader is led to believe that ‘The Custom-House’ functions as proof for the historical accuracy of the story of Hester Prynne. Still, records of any such events involving a scarlet letter to ever have occurred in Puritan New England history have yet to be discovered. As such, according to

Michael Davitt Bell, “everybody recognizes that this self-effacing claim of authenticity is a joke, since Hawthorne himself invented the manuscript he identifies as his source” (39). It appears safe to assume, then, for the time being, that the events in *The Scarlet Letter* are not based on historical facts, and that ‘The Custom-House’ was probably only inserted in the volume to add complexity to the story, an endeavour in which, according to the aforementioned critics, Hawthorne has failed tragically.

And yet, even though the humouristic undertone of ‘The Custom-House’ is hard to overlook, dismissing the entire preface as a farce simply to puzzle the reader would be all too shallow an approach to this story. The difficulty for the reader in trying to form an interpretation of ‘The Custom-House’ is in part due to Hawthorne’s own ideas on the function of fiction, and his suggestion that his novel is based on true events must be taken more seriously than it has been by many critics and scholars until now.

Hawthorne claims that he has indeed discovered a number of pages in which Surveyor Pue, who was the Custom-House surveyor during the time in which the novel is set, describes the life story of Hester Prynne. “The original papers, together with the scarlet letter itself, – a most curious relic,” Hawthorne comments, “are still in my possession, and shall be freely exhibited to whomever [...] may desire a sight of them” (28). Only a few lines down, however, the author disclaims to merely have copied the story as it was written down by Pue:

I must not be understood as affirming, that, in the dressing up of the tale, I have invariably confined myself within the limits of the Old Surveyor’s half a dozen sheets of foolscap. On the contrary, I have allowed myself, as to such points, nearly or altogether as much license as if the facts had been entirely of my own invention. What I contend for is the authenticity of the outline. (28)

Hawthorne thus confuses the reader by incorporating fictional events into what he describes as an autobiographical account; moreover, while he admits that the story of *The Scarlet Letter*

“nearly or altogether” (28) completely stems from his imagination, he still continues to confirm the existence of the manuscript and the letter he has found. As in *The Minister’s Black Veil*, Hawthorne’s paratext does not provide the reader with an easy explanation of the story that follows; rather, he uses the paratext to draw the reader’s attention to the issue of authenticity of fiction. As Bell suggests, the “curiously casual progression – from “nearly” to “altogether” [...] to “*entirely* of my own invention” – nicely deflates the pretense of factual authenticity” (42-43). Hawthorne is not tricking the reader into believing he actually found a number of papers on which the late Surveyor Pue had recorded a story of a woman who bore a scarlet letter on her bosom; more likely, ‘The Custom-House’ is a means of showing that such things would have been *possible* in the Puritan New England of Hester and Dimmesdale. The introduction to *The Scarlet Letter* does not actually confirm the veracity of Hester Prynne’s story, even though Hawthorne jokingly refers to it as being “autobiographical” (5), but neither does it negate it; by exploring the boundaries of fact and fiction, of authenticity, Hawthorne illustrates how these terms often intermingle. *The Scarlet Letter* does not tell a tale of true events; it is witness to the customs of the Puritan doctrine that governed seventeenth century America. “*The Scarlet Letter* is thoroughly and realistically concerned with both the details and the meaning of the New England past” (Bell 46), and thus, even though the novel is as historically retraceable as the latter part of the preface is autobiographical, the story of the scarlet letter is something that *could* have happened.

In what is probably one of the most famous passages in ‘The Custom-House’, Hawthorne argues that the imagination is like “[m]oonlight, in a familiar room, falling so white upon the carpet, and showing all its figures so distinctly, – making every object so minutely visible, yet so unlike a morning or noontide visibility” (30); while fictional events, which come forth from the “the imaginative faculty” (30) which he so aptly describes, do not necessarily address historical facts, they can still offer a truthful image of how adultery and

sin were treated in the day. Hence, ‘The Custom-House’ raises the question of authority; Bell suggests that in the ironic use of the autobiographical genre, Hawthorne is “claiming for his story the very sort of authority his culture approved, [...] the conventional authority of what Jefferson called ‘reason and fact, plain and unadorned’” (39). Subsequently, Hawthorne uses his paratext to paradoxically defy what was considered appropriate fiction in his day; under the guise of the autobiography, and with the argument that what he has written is based on true events, he strives for a more tolerant approach towards fiction and the imagination, arguing that the events he describes in *The Scarlet Letter* were not unlikely to have happened in case of adultery in Puritan New England.

The paratext to *The Scarlet Letter*, then, is not simply a joke, and the arguments to have it omitted from the novel entirely falter when the real implications of ‘The Custom-House’ are laid bare. ‘The Custom-House’ is used to show to the reader how fiction, even if it is not based on true facts, might portray the circumstances of a certain period in time and in a certain place. Hawthorne’s introduction to the novel does not apply simply to Hester’s story alone, but to fiction in its more broad sense. However much or little the paratext might affect the interpretation and reading of *The Scarlet Letter*, for its motives can be hard to decipher for the unpracticed reader, to dismiss it as entirely irrelevant is to deny the novel’s publication history and as such a large part of its journey from manuscript to finished book.

### 5.3. *The Turn of the Screw*

More direct and far more baffling than Hawthorne’s playful use of paratexts to beguile his reader, Henry James’s preface to the 1908 New York Edition on the way his famous story *The Turn of the Screw* should be interpreted – or, in any case, how he had intended it to be read – is a particularly interesting peritext in relation to the work of fiction with which it is concerned. While it appears that James claims that the novel is a classic ghost story, and that

Peter Quint and Miss Jessel are not the result of the Governess' hysterical projection, there are many scenes in the novel which assume the direct opposite.

*The Turn of the Screw* relates the story of a countryside governess who is left with the charge of two young orphans, a boy and a girl, on the magnificent estate of Bly, which is owned by the children's disinterested uncle. After a short while, the Governess begins to see the apparitions of two deceased former servants of Bly; driven to the verge of madness by these repeated appearances, the Governess takes a perverse delight in postulating herself as the protector of the children's souls, which she believes are what the ghosts of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel are after.

One of the questions that has dominated critical readings of *The Turn of the Screw* is whether or not the phantasms of Mister Quint and Miss Jessel are 'real'; that is to say, whether they really do exist, or whether they must be interpreted as delusional hallucinations of a mentally ill woman. This is how, according to Glenn A. Reed, the opinions of critics have been divided between

two schools of thought: the more traditional interpretation holds that the dead servants, in a preternatural flair of evil, actually returned to haunt the children; the more recent psychological theory is based on the belief that the governess alone was possessed of these demons, that her sexually frustrated mind generated the ghosts and the atmosphere of corruption surrounding the innocent children. (414)

One way of looking at the story is through the knowledge James provides in the preface to the twelfth volume of the New York edition, which also contained *The Aspern Papers*, *The Liar*, and *The Two Faces*. There are at least two quite remarkable things about this preface; firstly, James presents the manuscript written by the Governess herself and recovered by a man named Douglas, whom he describes as his "distinguished host" (126), in whose countryhouse

“the circle, one winter afternoon, round the hall-fire” was gathered (126). Here, James continues, “the talk turned [...] to apparitions and night-fears, to the marked and sad drop in the general supply, and still more in the general quality, of such commodities” (126). While in this section of the preface it is never mentioned whether the narrator is actually Henry James, it is easy to assume that, considering the nature of authorial paratexts, James is referring, or at least pretends to refer, to autobiographical events.

From this preface, the reader already learns James’s apparent distaste of “the mere modern ‘psychical’ case [of ghost stories]” which “clearly promised little, for the more it was respectably certified the less it seemed of a nature to rouse the dear old sacred terror” (126). Hence, it seems that James’s desire was to create a ghost story according to the rules and practice of its genre, and that the result is “a fairy-tale pure and simple – save indeed as to its springing not from an artless and measureless, but from a conscious and cultivated credulity” (127). Based on a tale told to James’s host by the woman whom we suppose is the same governess from the story, James’s interpretation of the events is thus highly mediated, yet, much like Hawthorne in his preface to *The Scarlet Letter*, he insists that the core of the story is rooted in reality.

If, then, *The Turn of the Screw* is a classic ghost story where the presence of the supernatural is experienced by all the characters, and not just by the Governess, James’s preface is certainly very confusing to the reader; the story is laced with indications that only the Governess can see Peter Quint and Miss Jessel; and though she herself claims that the children are clearly aware of their presences, even she has to admit that neither Miles nor Flora ever directly admit their recognition of a ghostly apparition. For instance, when the Governess first sees Miss Jessel by the lake, little Flora gives no sign whatsoever that she, too, has taken notice of a third presence in her direct surroundings; she simply continues with her play, intent on making a boat out of two pieces of wood (43). Yet the Governess reads into

Flora's perfectly normal, child-like behaviour that she *is* aware of Miss Jessel, and that her act of "[turning] her back to the water" (43) is a way of acknowledging that yes, she knows the apparition is there, but that she does not want her governess to know that she does.

'Flora saw!'

Mrs. Grose took this as she might have taken a blow in the stomach. 'She has told you?' she panted.

'Not a word – that's the horror. She kept it to herself!' [...]

Mrs. Grose of course could only gape the wider. 'Then how do you know?'

'I was there – I saw with my eyes: saw she was perfectly aware.' [...]

'How can you be sure?'

This drew from me, in the state of my nerves, a flash of impatience. 'Then ask Flora – *she's* sure!' But I had no sooner spoken than I caught myself up. 'No, for God's sake *don't!* She'll say she isn't – she'll lie!'

Mrs. Grose was not too bewildered instinctively to protest.

'Ah how can you?'

'Because I'm clear. Flora doesn't want me to know.' (44)

This is but one example of many where the Governess reads into the children's behaviour things that are not necessarily there. Throughout the story she is seeking proof for the existence of the ghosts, constantly 'reading' them 'into' the most banal acts the children are involved in. The Governess needs this proof to assure her own sanity – if she were to admit to herself that Flora and Miles do not see Quint and Miss Jessel, she equally has to admit her own delirium. Her conviction that the children are corrupted thus stems from her desire for self-preservation; if Miss Jessel and Quint are trying to have the children's souls, then she can indulge in the perverse satisfaction of operating as their saviour: "but I was in these days literally able to find a joy in the extraordinary flight of heroism the occasion demanded of me.

I now saw that I had been asked for a service admirable and difficult; and there would be a greatness in letting it be seen – oh in the right quarter! – that I could succeed where many another girl might have failed” (41). Much like Reverend Hooper in Hawthorne’s *The Minister’s Black Veil*, the Governess operates not out of concern for those who are in her charge; rather, the apparitions allow her to cultivate her deep narcissism and to distinguish herself from other girls who could not have handled such a heavy burden as well as she does. The Governess transforms her own life into a gothic novel – in fact, she even literally mentions *The Mystery of Udolpho* and *Jane Eyre* – in which she is the damsel in distress, but in her own story, she is the one who will eventually stand her ground.

In this reading, the perverse satisfaction she gets from protecting Flora and especially Miles, whom she repeatedly refers to as ‘the little Master’, is her outlet for what Glenn A. Reed refers to as “her sexually frustrated mind” (414); indeed, many critics have read into the Governess a school example of female hysteria as described by Freud. Her sexual desire for the real Master, who left a deep impression on her, even though the two have only met once, cannot be satisfied because the latter refuses to have anything to do with the children or the Governess. According to Stanley Renner, she then projects the Master onto the figure she first sees on the tower at Bly; yet when she looks him in the face, a sudden fear takes hold of her, a fear which she herself justifies by stating that “[a]n unknown man in a lonely place is a permitted object of fear to a young woman privately bred” (24), but which Renner accounts to “fear of male sexuality” (178). The figure on the tower thus transforms into Quint. But she also projects the Master onto little Miles, who is the epitome of innocence and gentle manners. Her hysterical projection, as such, is twofold; she is sexually frustrated because she desires the Master and yet cannot get close to him, which she projects onto Miles whom she *can* possess, but she is also afraid of the violent masculinity she has perceived in the Master, and this, in her imagination, becomes the figure of Peter Quint.

This is one interpretation which many critics have followed. There are, however, also many examples that contradict the reading of *The Turn of the Screw* as a story concerned with psychotic delusion sexual hysteria. The objection which many critics have made, for example, is that the Governess had not yet heard anything about Quint or Miss Jessel, and still, from her description of the apparitions to Mrs. Grose, the latter is able to discern the two former servants. Equally ambiguous is the question of how Flora, a little eight-year-old girl, could possibly have rowed a large boat across the lake all by herself moments before Miss Jessel appears to the Governess a final time. And finally, just before the boy dies his mysterious death, Miles appears to actually see Quint: “‘It’s he?’ I was so determined to have all my proof that I flashed into ice to challenge him. ‘Whom do you mean by ‘he’?’ ‘Peter Quint – you devil!’” (124).

Whichever way the reader should choose to interpret the respective signs of either reading, Willie van Peer and Ewout van der Knaap have wondered why scholars and critics have insisted on either interpretation, and not on both. “What is striking,” they comment, “is that these differences are perceived as opposites, representing two claims that mutually exclude each other” (695). Indeed, why should one theory be ‘correct’, while the other is dismissed? Perhaps James’s preface does not need to be cause for debate; instead, like Hawthorne in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Minister’s Black Veil*, he uses the paratext to urge his reader to look beneath the surface of his text. From a first reading, it is easy to assume that the Governess is the only one who can see Peter Quint and Miss Jessel; still, the aforementioned counter-arguments are enough to leave him in a state of bewilderment. James’s preface, he assumes, will illuminate the inconsistencies he finds in the story. And then, James goes on to suggest that *The Turn of the Screw* is nothing more than a classic ghost story, meant to invoke terror and fear in his reader. Yet he also remarks that “Peter Quint and Miss Jessel are not ‘ghosts’ at all, as we know the ghost, but goblins, elves, imps, demons as

loosely constructed as those of the old trials for witchcraft” (130). “The old trials for witchcraft”, as is a well-known fact, were based on traits, both physical and psychological in nature, which those who were accused of witchcraft possessed. The grounds for branding a person as a witch were precarious at the very best, and to say that these demonic signs in Quint and Miss Jessel are “as loosely constructed” (130) as those within the alleged witches in their day, is a very ambiguous remark on James’s behalf.

Ultimately, it is up to the reader to decide which interpretation he favours most; “[o]nly make the reader’s general vision of evil intense enough – and that is already a charming job,” James comments, “and his own experience, his own imagination, his own sympathy (with the children) and horror (of their false friends) will supply him quite sufficiently with all the particulars” (131). Whoever these “false friends” may be – for the Governess’ hysteria is equally harmful to the children as the evil intentions of Quint and Miss Jessel – James does not specify. Instead of presenting one particular reading as ‘right’ and the other as ‘wrong’, which has often been assumed, James allows room for the reader to speculate, to feel his own way through the story and to give his own meanings to it. Like Hawthorne, he uses the paratext not to pinpoint, and hence to limit, the interpretation of his text; rather, the preface to *The Turn of the Screw* provides the reader with a multitude of possible readings, all of which are equally applicable to the story and none of which, as such, are either entirely ‘wrong’ or undisputably ‘correct’.

In all three of the stories that I have discussed, the author uses the paratext not to assert authority, and, most importantly, his *own* authority, but to question it. Hawthorne focuses on the authority of facts, and how writers of literature, while they may bend historically accurate data and mold them to fit their esthetic purposes, can still relate things about human history that are inherently true. James, on the other hand, paradoxically challenges the reader to interpret *The Turn of the Screw* in his own way by proposing a literal

reading of the text, in which he contradicts his own established beliefs about first-person narration and how it is always unreliable – “in the long piece, [it] is a form foredoomed for looseness” (*The Ambassadors* 14).

All three texts, however, deal with an author who uses the paratext to draw his reader into the story. Their presence in their stories is of a definite influence on the reader, though they never dictate him how he should interpret the text. Hence, the authorial peritext is “a place and medium [...] for “author’s intrusions”” (Genette 340), although it does not force the reader into the direction of one single interpretation. Instead, it coerces him to look beyond the authorial note and into the infinitude of meanings a literary text may contain.

## 6. Editorial pseudo-peritexts and authorial epitexts in James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*

In the nineteenth century, authors of Romantic fiction became increasingly aware of the possibilities to incorporate paratexts into their fiction as a means to influence the readers' interpretations, and in doing so often deliberately setting them on the wrong track. My analyses of *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Minister's Black Veil* and *The Turn of the Screw* suggest that the person responsible for the most important and influential paratexts surrounding a text is the author. Indeed, Genette comments that "[the paratext] is characterized by an authorial intention and assumption of responsibility" (3). "Something is not a paratext," he continues, "unless the author or one of his associates accepts responsibility for it, although the degree of responsibility may vary" (Genette 11). To this definition of what the paratext does not entail, I will come back in the final part of this dissertation, as it will prove to be quite fundamental in the discussion of authorial control that will follow.

In this section, I will raise the subject of yet another interesting work in terms of paratextual research: James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, which appears in the form of, as the title already suggests, a memoir written by the Justified Sinner himself. Alongside this memoir, the same story is recounted again, this time by a fictional editor who, after reading a letter published by an author named James Hogg in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, discovers the grave of the Sinner and extricates from it the manuscript of his memoirs. The editor's narrative is particularly interesting in terms of paratextual research, for not only is it a pseudo-paratext in itself, pretending to present to the reader an authentic document and commenting on it as a real editor's note would, but it contains another paratext which bears significant importance in itself: the letter which prompted the editor to track down the grave of the Sinner, as it happens, was actually

published in the August issue of *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1923, one year prior to the publication of Hogg's novel.

I intend to trace back the publication history of *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (from here on abbreviated to the *Confessions*) as well as the letter that appeared separately from it the year before; based on Alker and Nelson's *James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace* and Mack's *The Collected Works of James Hogg. The Shepherd's Calendar*, I will reconstruct Hogg's prevailing issues with editors and publishers and how these affected his writing in general, and the *Confessions* in particular. Subsequently, I will pay special attention to how the *Confessions* address these issues, focusing in particular on how the editor's narrative does not clarify or explain Robert Wringhim's memoir, but rather leaves the reader in a greater state of bemusement as to the lifestory of the Sinner. Finally, I will discuss how Hogg uses the plot device of the found manuscript quite differently from his contemporaries by placing the letter that appears inside the editor's peritext outside of the novel as an epitext in *Blackwood's*, thus leaving the reader to wonder how fictional this suicide account really is. All excerpts from the novel are taken from the 2010 Oxford World's Classics edition, edited by Ian Duncan.

### *6.1. Publication, editing, and their effects on interpretation*

It is well documented that James Hogg had a long-standing business relationship with William Blackwood, publisher of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, a conservative publication that competed with the *Edinburgh Review*. Many of his early works and poems appeared in *Blackwood's*, and, though Blackwood refused to publish Hogg's novel-length works, the connection between the magazine and the novel will prove valuable in terms of paratextual research in general, and epitexts in particular.

According to Thomas C. Richardson, Hogg's relationship with Blackwood had started out well enough, but was blemished in part by the latter's refusal to take Hogg seriously as an author: "Hogg was often irritated by the lack of respect from the Blackwoodians for him personally and as an author" (Richardson 188), and he apparently felt that "[h]is name should command 'reverence'" (Richardson 188). Instead, William Blackwood, along with his editorial advisor John Wilson, became exceedingly critical of Hogg's literary accomplishments, and began to have more and more objections to publishing his works. Blackwood had already refused to publish his novel-length works *The Three Perils of Man* (1822), *The Three Perils of Woman* (1823), and *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), causing him to turn to his London publisher Longman.

*The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner: Written by Himself: With a Detail of Curious Traditional Facts, and Other Evidence, by the Author* was first published anonymously in 1824 by publishing house Longman & Co. According to Mack, it "was given a hostile reception when first published" (Mack 2006:n.pag.), supposedly because (as commented on the blurb of the 2010 Oxford edition) "Hogg's sardonic and terrifying novel [was] too perverse for nineteenth-century taste" (blurb). Furthermore, it appears to have been blatantly overlooked by the Victorians due to extensive editing by Blackie publishing house:

[T]he Rev. Thomas Thomson prepared a revised edition of Hogg's *[Collected] Works* for publication by Blackie. These Blackie editions present a bland and lifeless version of Hogg's writings. It was in this version that Hogg was read by the Victorians. Unsurprisingly, he came to be regarded as a minor figure, of no great importance or interest. (Mack introduction vi)

The *Confessions* appeared in this edition as *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Fanatic; With a Detail of Curious Traditional Facts, and Other Evidence, by the Editor*. It

was only in the second half of the twentieth century that, according to Mack, Hogg was rediscovered and revalued; his current status as one of Scotland's major romantic authors is in large part due to the republication of some of his works "in editions based on his original texts" (introduction vi), one of which was the *Confessions*. However, as mentioned above, this is not to say that the first edition of the *Confessions* was a major success compared to its all but lukewarm reception by the Victorians; indeed, as commented in the introduction to the 2010 Oxford edition, most of Hogg's novel-length works of fiction remained unsuccessful throughout his lifetime, and continued to be neglected many decades after his death in 1835:

*The Three Perils of Man* (1822), *The Three Perils of Woman* (1823) and *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), all published by the London bookseller Longman & Co., make up a series of increasingly audacious reckonings with novel-length forms of Scottish Romantic fiction: historical romance, national domestic tale, and fictional autobiography. They were received with growing coolness, in some cases outright hostility, by critics and the public, and *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* would be the last of Hogg's experiments in the novel. (Duncan introduction xiii)

As a result, the Longman & Co. edition of the novel, existing of one thousand copies, was to be the only one to be published during Hogg's lifetime, though at some point plans were made for a reissue of the existing copies "with a new title page" (Duncan introduction xxxv); these, however, never seem to have been carried out in practice.

As Mack comments,

[Longman] regarded this particular author as something of a loose cannon. The nervous publishers gave instructions for Hogg's novel to be printed in Edinburgh by James Ballantyne, secure in the knowledge that Ballantyne's staff always took pains to remove 'indeliciencies' from the texts they printed. [...]

Faced with the real danger that his novel would be seriously damaged while passing through Ballantyne's hands, Hogg contrived to get the *Justified Sinner* printed by James Clarke rather than James Ballantyne, in spite of his publisher's express instructions to the contrary. As a result, Hogg was able in this instance to retain control of his text, and to ensure that his subversive and challenging novel made its first appearance in a form he found satisfactory.

(Mack n.pag.)

It appears that Hogg was well aware of the permanent interpretational changes that could be contrived by extensive editing; indeed, from his point of view, the editor was not "simply the person responsible for preparing a text for publication" (Greetham 348), as he had experienced the effects of excessive editing in one of his earlier works, *The Three Perils of Man*: "[i]ndeed, interference of this kind had already happened in 1822 when Scott, having read proofs of *The Three Perils of Man*, proceeded to pressurise [sic] Hogg into making changes in that novel" (Mack n.pag.). Scott was a business associate of Ballantyne's, and as such Hogg's fears of zealous editing – according to John Carey, "he disagreed with revision on principle" (Carey introduction xiii) – appear to be justified.

A similar incident to the one with the *Confessions* occurred with the publication of the collected edition of Hogg's *Shepherd's Calendar*, eventually published in 1829. Up until then Hogg's novel-length works had all been published by Longman, but when the latter refused to publish his articles from *The Shepherd's Calendar*, a selection of which had already appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*, in book-form (possibly because his previous novels had been "unsuccessful as far as sales were concerned" (Mack introduction xiv)), "William Blackwood was the obvious choice as an alternative" (Mack introduction xiv). Here Hogg was to experience first-hand just how much control he as an author had over his own work. Blackwood appeared to be only mildly interested in publishing *The Shepherd's Calendar* as a

whole, and Hogg had to take great pains to convince him into succumbing to his wishes. Eventually Blackwood agreed to publish the book, but on the condition that Hogg's nephew, Robert Hogg, would be allowed to revise the articles of *The Shepherd's Calendar* (Mack introduction xiv). Hogg refused at first, but by then he was experiencing financial problems, which eventually forced him to allow Robert Hogg to "prune [...] and arrange as he [liked]" (Hogg in Mack introduction xv). From then onwards, Hogg was largely excluded from the revision and publication of *The Shepherd's Calendar*, and Mack comments that the alterations Robert made were many (introduction xvi). Hogg's growing dissatisfaction with William Blackwood almost caused him to stop writing for the magazine altogether, and by the early 1830s Hogg's publications in *Blackwood's* had become scarce.

Throughout his life, Hogg continued to battle against publishers to secure his works in their original form, and although he managed to preserve the *Confessions* in their unaltered state during his lifetime, the novel was still subject to immoderate changes after his death in 1835. The 1837 revision by David Octavius Hill (and which was adopted by Thomson for the 1865 Blackie edition) was governed by "three principles" (Carey introduction xxiv), namely

bowdlerization, tinkering with the structure, and theological timidity. The first accounts for the disappearance of anything approaching profanity, and of the 'bagnio' visited by George and his friends, which becomes 'another tavern' [...] The second disposes of the John Barnet episode, the Auchtermuchty story, and the intervention of Hogg himself at the novel's end [...] The third discards reference to the infallibility of the elect, empties the [sic] Wringhim's and Gil-Martin's speeches of serious theological content, and deprives Robert of his prayers, unshaken faith, and assurance of justification. The doctrinal and psychological hinges of the work are thus patiently unscrewed. (Carey introduction xxiv-xxv)

Thus, Hogg's initial wariness regarding editors, which stemmed from his earlier experiences with Longman, appears to have been justified, and while the *Confessions*, too, were eventually submitted to excessive revision, the book itself deals with this very matter in a quite extraordinary way, as it questions the authority of the alleged critical editor, as well as emphasizes the effect the editor's narrative has on the interpretation of the Sinner's own memoirs.

### 6.2. *The editor's narrative*

Traces of Hogg's prevailing issues with editorial practices and their influence on the interpretation of a work are found in the novel itself, where Hogg makes use of a fictional editor. Rather than clarifying Robert Wringhim's often confused and inconsistent tale by providing an objective account of the events, though, the editor's narrative complicates the reader's quest for the truth behind the murder of George Colwan and the suicide of Robert; the blurb on the 2010 Oxford edition adequately describes how the events in the novel become even more clouded in speculation as the editor's narrative unfolds: "Robert Wringhim's *Memoirs* are presented by an editor whose attempts to explain the story only succeed in intensifying its more baffling and bizarre aspects" (blurb).

The incorporation of the editor provides insight into Hogg's own stance on textual editing. As the editor himself reveals, his reconstruction of Robert Wringhim's tale is supported largely by traditionary facts:

It appears from tradition, as well as some parish registers still extant, that the lands of Dalcastle [...] were possessed by a family of the name of Colwan, about one hundred and fifty years ago [...] I find, that in the years 1687, George Colwan succeeded his uncle of the same name, in the lands of Dalchastel and Balgrennan; and this being all I can gather of the family from

history, to tradition I must appeal for the remainder of the motley adventures of that house. (5)

Early on in his career, Hogg had shown his dissatisfaction with how his contemporaries, such as Walter Scott, treated oral testimony as unreliable and unscientific sources for the re-writing of Scotland's traditional ballads. According to Suzanne Gilbert, Hogg's view on tradition leans more closely to the contemporary conception of it by modern folklorists such as John Miles Foley, who coined the term 'traditional referentiality', by which is meant "a context that is enormously larger and more echoic than the text or work itself, that brings the lifeblood of generations of poems and performances to the individual performance or text" (Foley in Gilbert 2009:101). Furthermore, Foley "[assumes] tradition to be a dynamic, multivalent body of meaning that preserves much that a group has invented and transmitted but that also includes as necessary defining features both an inherent indeterminacy and a predisposition to various kinds of changes or modifications" (101). He defines tradition as "a living and vital entity with synchronic and diachronic aspects that, over time and space, will experience (and partially constitute) a unified variety of receptions" (101). It is this interpretation of tradition which characterizes Hogg.

Gilbert juxtaposes this view to that of Hogg's contemporary Walter Scott, who believed tradition to be "firmly located in the past" (101). Strangely, the editor's narrative, which appears to confirm Hogg's view on tradition by drawing on oral testimonies, raises more questions than it answers, and seems to assert the direct opposite of that which Hogg so fervently defended: the oral tradition. In the editor's narrative, these oral testimonies – which may well be based on eyewitness accounts, but might have been exaggerated and altered through the years, or which may have been made up altogether – are not presented as being reliable at all. Indeed, "the editor does not supply 'the facts'. He repeats traditions which, he admits, may go no further back than the printers of Wringhim's memoir" (Carey introduction

xii). The editor's narrative thus appears to contradict all of Hogg's own beliefs about tradition. Yet, perhaps it is not tradition on which Hogg casts the shadow of doubt, but the editor's use of it. As mentioned above, Hogg had had many first-hand experiences with editors who wanted to remove the "indelicacies" (Mack introduction xvi) found in his works. What Hogg appears to be doing, then, is draw attention to the fact that literary texts, like traditionary sources, are dynamic, and that their interpretation changes with time. He seems to point out that each text can have many different interpretations, just as one event can be recounted differently by different witnesses. The editor's narrative, which is explained to provide an objective, yet critical approach to the document found on Robert Wringhim's corpse, does not seem to be critical at all, as it relies on traditionary tales which may bear a core of truth, but which, given the timespan over which they have existed, are bound to have been altered and exaggerated to at least some extent since the actual events. It is, then, simply another take on the events leading up to Robert's Wringhim's suicide; the only difference between the editor's narrative and the tales it is based on, is the fact that it appears in print. Hogg seems to suggest that the authority of the written word, especially when it is backed up by a paratextually important figure such as an editor, is generally assumed to carry more truths than oral testimonies do, even if this is not necessarily the case. A careful reading of both versions of the Sinner's ordeal reveals that the editor's note can hardly pass as a critical investigation, and as such it is in itself unreliable; indeed, there are many inconsistencies (which Carey sums up nicely) in the editor's own account which prove his ignorance of the facts:

[t]he external evidence for the whole affair is unsettlingly flawed: the old laird marries after succeeding to Dalcastle in 1687, but his second son is 17 on 25 March 1704; Colwans and Wringhims go to Edinburgh in 1704 to attend a session of parliament that took place in 1703; Mrs Calvert sees Drummend's claymore glittering in the moon, and the surgeons testify that this sword fits

George's wounds, whereas Wringhim, by his own and Mrs Calvert's account, carried a rapier [...] (Carey introduction xii)

Additionally, while the editor dutifully transcribes the testimonies of Bell Calvert and Miss Logan, both of whom confirm the existence of an unknown man who worked as Robert's accomplice, in the ending lines of his narrative the editor finally reveals his own ideas on the memoir that was found in the suicide's grave:

With regard to the work itself, I dare not venture a judgment, for I do not understand it. I believe no person, man or woman, will ever peruse it with the same attention that I have done, and yet I confess that I do not comprehend the writer's drift. It is certainly impossible that these scenes could ever have occurred, that he describes as having himself transacted. I think it *may* be possible that he had some hand in the death of his brother, and yet I am greatly disposed to doubt it; and the numerous distorted traditions, &c., which remain of that event, may be attributable to the work having been printed and burnt, and of course the story known to all the printers, with their families and gossips. That the young Laird of Dalcastle came by a violent death, there remains no doubt; but that this wretch slew him, there is to me a good deal.

(188)

The editor, while providing a detailed account of the events based on local tradition, does not believe the testimonies on which his narrative is based. More striking, however, is the fact that he does not even believe the anonymous writer of the memoir, whom he identifies as Robert Wringhim, to have stricken his brother. While the narrative in itself already confounds the reader by first apparently affirming the presence of Gil-Martin, the editor eventually admits that all which he has recorded seems very unlikely to him, because the Sinner is not culpable for George Colwan's death to begin with. And even if he is, the editor continues, he

accounts “all the rest either dreaming or madness” (188). He believes that rather than a personal confession, the manuscript is a parable meant to instruct, and that while it was probably accepted as a real confession at the time it was printed, this kind of set-up is outdated. Furthermore, he continues by labelling the document inauthentic, asserting that even though “it corresponds so minutely with traditionary facts” (189), it is “not at all consistent with reason” (189), and thus it is impossible that it could have really happened. Completely ignoring the matching points between the “traditionary facts” (189) and the Sinner’s memoir, the editor, who has appeared to confirm those facts, now dismisses all he has so minutely recorded because it does not conform to his own logic, thus firmly planting his own interpretation of the memoir as the more reasonable and, as such, more trustworthy one.

In contrasting the editor’s narrative to Wringhim’s memoir, Hogg sheds light on the influence editorial choices have on the reception and comprehension of stories, seemingly asserting that self-proclaimed critical editions, which propose one interpretation of a text as a basis for further reading, are not the only possible way of reading a text. Rather than affirming the common image of the editor as “simply the person responsible for preparing a text for publication” (Greetham 348), then, Hogg’s own experiences with overzealous editing (Mack n.pag.) by editors, especially in his earlier works such as *The Three Perils of Man* are the cause of his critical position towards them. The editor in the *Confessions* is not an objective voice trying to enable the reader to make sense of history by means of indepth traditionary research; he is what Greetham denominates an “intentionalist editor [who] is deciding which reading is the more authorial (and is therefore interpreting intention), and in the process presumably rejecting all other readings as unauthorative [...]” (Greetham 352). While Greetham provides an introduction to scholarly editing, this comment about the intentionalist editor is probably applicable to the editor in the broad sense of the word, and perhaps even more so to editors like the one in the *Confessions*, whose treatment of the memoir and of his

sources does not lead the reader to believe that he is a professional editor; still, the inclusion of his own thoughts on the manuscript do suggest that a skeptical reading of Robert Wringhim's memoir is advised, which undeniably undeniably the superiority of one reading over another.

As a result, by allowing his own interpretation of the events at Dalcastle to seep into his text, the editor might be altering Robert Wringhim's memoir without changing even a single word, and quite fundamentally so. Bakhtin, who proves to have been an avant-gardist in paratextual study, remarked that “[g]iven the appropriate methods for framing, one may bring about fundamental changes even in another's utterance accurately quoted... By manipulating the effects of context, it is very easy to emphasize the ‘brute materiality’ of another's words, and to stimulate dialogic reactions associated with such ‘brute materiality’ [...]” (Bakhtin in Frankel 223). Indeed, the paratext's “existence alone [...] provides some commentary on the text and influences how the text is received” (Genette 7). Hogg realized this, and his deep understanding of editorial practices is demonstrated in the *Confessions*, where he explores to which extent processes of publication might alter an original draft; evidently, as the reader has experienced first-hand from reading the *Confessions*, the influence of the editor's and publisher's paratexts on interpretation are hardly to be overestimated.

### *6.3. Author versus editor: contradictory accounts in the memoirs and the editor's narrative*

Apart from religious fanaticism and editorial influences, the leading theme in Hogg's *Confessions* is undoubtedly that of the double or doppelgänger, which was, as can be seen in numerous examples such as *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll Mr. Hyde* and Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*, a popular motif in nineteenth century gothic fiction. While this is certainly a rewarding field of study in itself, the notion of the double in the case of the *Confessions*

proves particularly interesting in the research on paratexts; throughout the Sinner's memoir, the reader might believe that he is in on what is going through Robert's mind, being acutely aware of the fact that Gil-Martin is only a mental delusion. The reader is led to believe that Robert is an unreliable narrator with psychiatric problems. But the editor, who is responsible for the fictional peritext that appears alongside the Sinner's confessions, also affirms the presence of Gil-Martin in his narrative; this leaves the reader confused and possibly assuming that Gil-Martin is, after all, a real person.

Hogg certainly takes the idea of the double to a next level when he creates no less than four doubles (or five, depending on how one wishes to classify the Sinner himself) for Robert Wringhim, of which the bodily ones, according to Rosenfield, are presented by the brothers George Colwan and Robert Wringhim himself (334), whereas two of the other doubles of Robert and George are embodied by Gil-Martin, first as he takes on the shape of Robert as the two first meet, and subsequently when he is confused for George Colwan's ghost (134). Finally, there is Robert's "second self" (136), who by the end of his memoir has become so consuming that the Sinner is unable to tell which one of his two personalities has the upper hand:

When I lay in bed, I deemed there were two of us in it; when I sat up, I always beheld another person, and always in the same position from the place where I sat or stood, which was about three paces off me towards my left side. It mattered not how many or how few were present: this my second self was sure to be present in his place; and this occasioned a confusion in all my words and ideas that utterly astounded my friends, who all declared, that instead of being deranged in my intellect, they had never heard my conversation manifest so much energy or sublimity of conception; but for all that, over the singular delusion that I was two persons, my reasoning faculties had no power. (116)

Interestingly, George Colwan experiences a similar uneasiness at the continuous presence of Robert by *his* side: “[t]o whatever place of amusement he betook himself, and however well he concealed his intentions of going there from all flesh of living, there was his brother Wringhim also, and always within a few yards of him, generally about the same distance, and ever and anon darting looks at him that chilled his very soul” (30). Contrary to Robert’s second self with regard to himself, however, the editor describes Robert’s position to be “at his brother’s right hand” (28) rather than at his left, so as to create a mirroring effect of *doppelgängers*.

This web of doubles that Hogg creates becomes then even more intricate when Robert states the following: “[t]he worst part of it was that I rarely conceived *myself* to be any of the two persons. I thought for the most part that my companion was one of them, and my brother the other; and I found, that to be obliged to speak and answer in the character of another man, was a most awkward business at the long run” (116). Robert starts to feel that his own personality is entirely suppressed by his two doubles, the one being his brother George’s ‘ghost’, the other presumably Gil-Martin as Robert’s own image.

Equally baffling is the fact that he never clearly distinguishes which of the two is the one he feels to be inside his own body and which one always stands in a fixed spot behind him; it is as though the Sinner is trapped inside the personality of either his brother or of Gil-Martin, and that he can never speak as himself. Indeed, that is what Robert accuses Gil-Martin of: “[b]ut as well may you try to reason *me* out of my existence” (132) (emphasis mine); Robert is encased, both in body and in soul, in a being that is no longer his own, consumed by his so-called friend and his many optical illusions.

The most intriguing question that arises from reading the actual memoirs written and partly printed and published by Robert Wringhim, then, is whether or not this elusive Gil-Martin, whom Robert first values as a great friend and even mentor, but whose presence

grows to become “irksome” (137) to the Sinner, is a real person, or rather a psychotic delusion created wholly in Robert’s sick mind. Though the editor’s sources confirm the appearance of a young man alongside Robert Wringhim on many occasions, the Sinner himself drops many hints that pave the way for an alternative interpretation, namely that he and Gil-Martin are, in fact, but two sides of one man. Could it be, then, that the editor of Wringhim’s memoir does not provide truthful information based on testimonies by witnesses, but rather relies only on select sources which confirm his own take on the events at Cowanscroft?

Apart from the extreme likeness between Robert and his new friend, there are at least three other instances which cast doubt on the mental stability of Robert and subsequently on the existence of his elusive friend Gil-Martin. Firstly, there is the much earlier appearance of a boy named M’Gill, whose behaviour affects the young Sinner in a way which is uncannily similar to the influence Gil-Martin exerts in the older Robert. Then, there is the strange moment where Robert discovers he has been experiencing lapses in his memory during a conversation with his attorney, Lawyer Linkum, and the latter’s utter disregard of Gil-Martin’s presence in the room. Finally, Robert himself repeatedly lingers upon the notion of a “second self” (136), which, in combination with the other clues, leads to the assumption that Gil-Martin and Robert are indeed “incorporated together – identified with one another, as it were” (137) – or, as Robert himself phrases it: “the power was not inside me to separate myself from him” (137).

The first time Gil-Martin makes his entrance into Robert’s life is at the exact moment his adoptive father, the honourable Reverend Wringhim, reveals to him that he is one of the elect. At this instance, it seems, Robert’s personality undergoes a crucial change:

my whole frame seemed to be renewed; every nerve was buoyant with new life;  
I felt as if I could have flown in the air, or leaped over the tops of the trees. An

exaltation of spirit lifted me, as it were, far above the earth, and the sinful creatures crawling on its surface; and I deemed myself as an eagle among the children of men, soaring on high, and looking down with pity and contempt on the grovelling creatures below. (88)

Immediately following this experience, Robert makes his acquaintance with Gil-Martin. Though he is reluctant to greet the youth that is striding up towards him, Robert confesses that he “felt a sort of invisible power that drew [him] towards [the stranger], something like the force of enchantment, which [he] could not resist” (89). Robert himself believes it is in this very moment that the very course of his life is altered:

As we approached each other, our eyes met, and I can never describe the strange sensations that thrilled through my whole frame at this impressive moment; a moment to me fraught with the most tremendous consequences; the beginning of a series of adventures which has puzzled myself, and will puzzle the world when I am no more in it. (89)

As Robert elaborates on his first meeting with Gil-Martin, another crucial revelation is made: Gil-Martin bears a striking resemblance to the Sinner. “What was my astonishment”, comments Robert, “on perceiving that he was the same being as myself! The clothes were the same to the smallest item. The form was the same; apparent age; the colour of the hair; the eyes; and, as far as recollection could serve me from viewing my own features in a glass, the features too were the very same” (89). This is an important moment in the doppelgänger reading, since it represents the very moment in which Robert subconsciously creates a “second self” (136) in the shape of another person, thus splitting his own personality into two.

Additionally, though it may seem as if Robert’s delusion only fully takes place after his first meeting with Gil-Martin out in the field, it is clear from the text that he already struggled to construct his own identity as a young boy. In his memoir, Robert describes

himself as being “particularly prone to lying” (83); the young Robert is obsessed with distorting and deforming reality, up to a point where he becomes unsure of what is true and what is made up: “the truth is, that one lie always paved the way for another, from hour to hour, from day to day, and from year to year; so that I found myself constantly involved in a labyrinth of deceit, so that it was impossible to extricate myself” (83). As such, Robert’s tendency to deceive others and eventually even himself would lie at the base of his creation of the character of Gil-Martin. Moreover, there is Robert’s childhood rival M’Gill, whose name bears such a resemblance to that of Gil-Martin that its likeness can hardly pass as arbitrary, and whose presence and behaviour affect Robert in the exact same way as Gil-Martin’s does: they arouse inside him the need to sin. When he is unable to surpass M’Gill on an educational level, Roberts invents lie after lie to bring him to discredit (85-86); and although M’Gill never directly encourages Robert to commit these sins, the effect he has on the latter are the same, only to a lesser extent.

Robert is fully aware that this behaviour is sinful, yet even in his youth he interprets his own sins as only a punishment to those whose sins are still far greater than his own:

In the meantime, I went on sinning without measure; but I was still more troubled about the multitude than the magnitude of my transgressions, and the small minute ones puzzled me more than those that were more heinous, as the latter had generally some good effects in the way of punishing wicked men, froward boys, and deceitful women; and I rejoiced, even then in my early youth, at being used as a scourge in the hand of the Lord [...]. (82-83)

Robert’s obsession with sin and guilt stems from his early childhood; as such, Gil-Martin is not the cause of Robert’s irresistible urge to sin against the word of God, but its result. The Sinner, who has been inventing excuses for his many sins all his life, as such cultivating two sides of his own personality (the Guilty Sinner and the Justified one) that are continuously at

war with each other. The appearance of Gil-Martin then symbolizes the first step towards the guilty Robert's downfall, for admitting this side of himself to become visual allows for his evil nature to exert more influence over him than it ever has. Rather than an internal battle against himself, Robert is now faced with his evil nature with his every move. Robert is not, as Rosenfield claims, in the first place George's evil twin (334-335); he is a person with a split personality, one part of which is demonically possessed by Gil-Martin. While George might be the Sinner's physical counterpart, Gil-Martin is his psychological evil twin, and it is he who exerts the greater amount of power over him.

The closer the Sinner's memoir draws to its conclusion, the more obvious the references to Gil-Martin as simply a psychotic delusion become. After the murder on George, Robert begins to experience periods of memory loss which range from a couple of hours to several months in time and for which he cannot account. The first instance in which this occurs is Robert's complete ignorance of the alleged seduction of a countrywoman's daughter, as well as the signing of a number of legal documents. It is here that Robert is confronted with deeds which he is unable to recall; it is also in this very scene that Gil-Martin takes on the appearance of George Colwan for the first time. Curiously, it is not until Gil-Martin's likeness to the late George is remarked by Robert's attorney Linkum, that Robert sees in Gil-Martin's features the face of his late brother; even more peculiar is the description of Linkum's entrance, and especially how he hardly favours Gil-Martin with a single glance:

'I'm at a little loss for your name, sir, (addressing my friend,) – seen you very often though – exceedingly often – quite well acquainted with you.'

'No, sir, you are not,' said my friend, sternly. – The intruder never regarded him; never so much as lifted his eyes from his bundle of law papers [...]

*'Impossible! Have seen a face very like it then – what did you say your name was, sir? – very like it indeed. Is it not the young laird who was murdered whom you resemble so much?'* (134)

Linkum has perhaps only laid eyes on Gil-Martin very briefly upon his entrance, yet he recognizes the deceased George's features in an instant; it is only then that Robert and Mrs. Keeler also lay full eyes on him to confirm the lawyer's observation. Yet when Mrs. Keeler cries out that Gil-Martin is George's spirit, the attorney dismisses her, as though the appearance of one's dead brother were only the most common of circumstances. Whichever the case, this encounter seems to affirm the physical presence of Gil-Martin; at the moment of the attorney's entrance, he is visible to everyone in the room. Yet before Linkum enters, Mrs. Keeler never so much as addresses Gil-Martin. In fact, she appears to not even notice him, only focusing her attention on Robert. The latter does exchange a few words with his friend, to which Mrs. Keeler fails to respond, even when Gil-Martin reveals that her accusations are justified. It is as though she is not aware that there is another person in the room until Linkum arrives.

Here Robert's memoir becomes confused again; is Gil-Martin really there, and do Linkum and Mrs. Keeler fully experience and acknowledge his presence? Or is the scene that occurs at Dalcastle a mix of actual and imaginary events, recorded by Robert in his memoir even though only part of it actually happened? Perhaps, if one insists on the reading that I have been proposing, Robert, who is unable to remember the first six months he resided at Dalcastle, is incapable of separating his memories from his delusions, precisely because of his multiple personalities which all blend into each other. If Robert himself cannot distinguish facts from imagination, the reader certainly will have a hard time doing so as well. Combined with the at times contradictory reports by the editor, it is hard for the reader to make out which interpretation Hogg is trying to direct him to, or even whether he should take Hogg's

intention into account at all. Since this idea of authorial intention is a different matter altogether, which asks for more attention than merely a fleeting mention, I will elaborate further on it in the final chapter of this dissertation. For now, there remains but one paratext which has not yet been attended: James Hogg's letter in the editor's narrative.

#### *6.4. From pseudo-peritext to epitext: James Hogg's letter and the authority of documentation*

As I have pointed out, James Hogg, like many of his contemporaries, knew well how to utilize the paratext in order to deepen the mystery surrounding his characters and thus deceive his readers. His connection with *Blackwood's Magazine* allowed him to get a little more creative than most writers with regard to paratextual influence. While I have already discussed the ways in which both Hogg's fictional editor and Hogg himself as an author impose contradicting views of Robert Wringhim's life on the reader, a final and particularly interesting document that appeared alongside this novel has remained scarcely discussed until now: the letter that spurred the editor to go in search of Wringhim's grave in the first place, and which was signed by an author who went by the name of James Hogg. Remarkably, this letter was first published by the real James Hogg in the August number of *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1823 under the title 'A Scots Mummy', a year before the *Confessions*. By appearing outside of the novel before its inclusion inside it, the letter is thus not merely a pseudo-paratext, presenting itself as an authentic document discovered by a fictional editor, but becomes a tangible and, in fact, quite real epitext.

While I do not intend to make claims on the veracity of Hogg's story in its entirety (though the story has been proven to be rooted in reality), it is again Hogg's clever use of the paratext that urges the reader to partake actively in the reconstruction of the events at

Cowan's Croft and which leaves him to wonder not only how much of the editor's narrative is made up, but also just how much of Hogg's own story was invented.

A first peculiarity about this letter is that it is signed it with Hogg's actual name instead of his usual pseudonym 'The Ettrick Shepherd'. One might argue that this is possibly the result of the ridicule Hogg's fictional characters, such as The Ettrick Shepherd (which was both Hogg's penname as well as a character in his contributions to *Blackwood's Magazine*) had to undergo by the other lead writers for *Blackwood's*. Hogg experienced these mockeries as personal attacks, and took great offence at them. In the novel, the editor claims that even though the letter "bears the stamp of authenticity in every line" (182), he has so often "been hoaxed by the ingenious fancies displayed in that Magazine, that when this relation met [his] eye, [he] did not believe it" (182). This critique of *Blackwood's Magazine* is of course not surprising considering Hogg's issues with its founder, and by having the editor comment on the letter's genuinity amidst a collection of "ingenious fancies" (182), Hogg seems to be distancing his own writing, and in particular this novel, from *Blackwood's*.

Publishing under his real name then appears to be an attempt to be taken seriously, but it is also a way for Hogg to show that the matter with which he is dealing is of a more serious calibre than his other publications. As Ian Duncan comments in the introduction to the 2010 Oxford World's Classics edition, Hogg's editor's narrative results more complex than many of his contemporaries' attempts:

Hogg's device of an editor presenting the story in the form of a historical document, originating in the 'found-manuscript' set-up of eighteenth-century Gothic, derives more proximately from Irish and Scottish national and historical novels, which restored seriousness and complexity to what had become and empty convention. (*Confessions* xxi)

David Groves provides one possible answer as to why Hogg's use of the "found-manuscript' set-up" (*Confessions* xxi) has a deeper intrinsic meaning than others of its kind; in his article Groves writes about a letter sent to Hogg's daughter Mary Gardner by a certain William Amos, stating that the suicide grave was not fictional, but did in fact lie on the site Hogg describes in his novel (Groves 2-3).

Indeed, the explanatory notes to the 1969 Oxford edition, edited by John Carey, confirm the existence of a grave on Fall Law: "A 2 ft. X 1 ft. slab, rather like a gravestone, still stands on top of a cairn on Fall Law. For this information I am indebted to Mr. H. Kidd, Bursar of St. John's College, Oxford, who climbed Fall Law for me" (Carey 261). The 2010 Oxford edition also provides a note on this peculiarity. Ian Duncan describes the grave as follows: " 'A 2 ft. X 1 ft. slab, rather like a gravestone, still stands on top of a cairn on Fall Law', according to Carey in 1969. Garside reports a 1999 excursion that confirmed the presence of the cairn, consisting of 'a pile of small stones', but no gravestone-like slab" (213). Garside himself only mentions the climb to Fall Law very briefly in his explanatory notes to the 2002 Edinburgh University Press edition of the novel: "A more recent climb in 1999 confirmed the presence of a cairn on the hilltop, consisting of a pile of mixed stones, but with none noticeably similar to that reported earlier" (231).

It appears that the authenticity of the existence and location of the alleged grave on Fall Law nowadays is a much doubted issue, and since conclusive evidence of either case has yet to be revealed, the claim that the suicide's grave which inspired the *Confessions* still exists on Fall Law until this day is perhaps all too audacious; as such, it is quite probable that the story of a serial killer in the Scottish Borders in the early eighteenth century is the result of Hogg's imaginative power in its entirety. And yet, this rather disappointing discovery about the authenticity of the grave need not be anti-climatic in epitextual terms, because, even though the grave may not exist as it is described by James Hogg and by the editor in the

*Confessions*, evidence exists of the exhumation of a corpse on a farm near to Hogg's home in the summer of 1823.

In a letter to William Blackwood dated 7 August 1823, Hogg mentions "a curious incident that has excited great interest [in Yarrow]" (Mack 193). Indeed, a suicide's corpse was discovered in the Yarrow valley that summer, and this event lies most likely at the base of Hogg's creation of the *Confessions*. It is highly likely that 'A Scots Mummy' was inspired by the exhumation of a body so close to Hogg's own home (for he was living in the Yarrow Valley at the time), and that the author was so fascinated with the event that he wrote a book about it. Of course, matters are never this simple with Hogg's writing, and basing a novel on an actual event without complicating the reader's attempts to discover the book's meanings is not something he was likely to do, especially not in the *Confessions*, which is already laced with contradictions and inconsistencies on both Robert Wringhim's and the editor's part.

Rather than allowing this third voice in the novel, namely that of the author of 'A Scots Mummy', to affirm either version of the events, the letter written by Hogg and published in *Blackwood's* raises the question of the localization of the suicide's grave. According to the letter, the remains of Robert Wringhim rest on top of Cowan's Croft, a hill near Hogg's birthplace Ettrickhall: "[o]n top of a wild height called Cowanscroft, where the lands of three proprietors meet at one small point, there has been for long and many years the grave of a suicide marked out by a stone standing at the head, and another at the feet" (179). The editor makes arrangements to visit the grave, and asks the assistance of none other than the author of the letter in *Blackwood's*, James Hogg, to assist him in his search. This Hogg, however, refuses, and the editor is forced to find another guide. Eventually a local shepherd agrees to take him to the grave, but when the editor asks him whether the information provided by Hogg is correct, he answers that "there [is] hardly a bit o't correct, for the grave was not on the hill of Cowan's-Croft, nor yet on the point where three lairds' lands met, but

on the top of a hill called the Faw-Law, where there was no land that was not the Duke of Buccleuch's within a quarter of a mile" (184). The notes on the text explain that Faw-Law, or Fall Law, is in fact located "0.5 mile (0.8 km) north-north-west of Cowan's Croft" (Duncan 213). This, the shepherd continues, is something Hogg should have known, since he had "once herded the ground where the grave is, and saw both hills from his own window" (184).

Indeed, the Hogg who wrote for *Blackwood's* used to work as a shepherd in Ettrickhall (from which his pseudonym is derived); it seems, then, that Hogg creates additional tension between fact and fiction by deliberately confusing both hills with one another. As I have been unable to trace the details of the discovery in Yarrow, there appears to be no account of the body having been found either on Cowan's Croft *or* on Fall Law, the only particulars I was able to find out being that it was found "on a neighbouring farm" to Hogg's own home at the time. Where this farm was situated in relation to either cairn is unsure, and yet the editor claims Hogg was wrong about the grave's location based on the local shepherd's testimony and his own eye-witness account. "One of the more subtle themes of Hogg's novels" Deirdre Shepherd explains, "is the role of documentation in supporting the interpretation of events even while questioning the motives of those who are ultimately charged with that interpretation" (163). The placement of the letter in the editor's narrative as a veritable source questions the authority of the editor and of the letter writer himself; more importantly, it also questions Hogg's own status as the author of the novel. Since the novel was published anonymously, its possible explanation for the mix-up on the part of Hogg, perhaps in order not to negate his own sources, in the form of an anecdote:

Our guide said he always heard it reported, that the Eltrive men, with Mr. David Anderson at their head, had risen before day on the Monday morning, it having been on the Sabbath day that the man *put down* himself; and that they set out with the intention of burying him on Cowan's-Croft, where three

marches met at one point. But it having been an invariable rule to bury such *lost sinners* before the rising of the sun, these five men were over-taken by daylight [...] and by the time they reached the top of Faw-Law, the sun was beginning to skair the east. On this they laid down the body, and digged a deep grave with all expedition [...] (184)

Far from clarifying the issue, however, the reader is now left in a state of even greater bewilderment, because the guide's explanation still does not provide a satisfying answer as to how Hogg could have known about the Eltrive men's original intention and how the body ended up on Fall Law instead of Cowan's Croft. One might argue that the Hogg who wrote the letter had no knowledge of this at all, and that his mixing up of both sites was a pure coincidence. Alternately, one might believe that he did know, and merely got his facts confused. Either way, by this point it has become clear to the reader that the unnamed editor of Robert Wringhim's memoir is not fully informed about the exact events and that he fills in the gaps in his self-proclaimed successful attempt to reconstruct them with rumours and mouth-to-mouth testimonies that have circulated for over a hundred years; as such, the editor's narrative does nothing to aid the reader on his quest for the true life story of Robert Wringhim. Robert's own memoir, if indeed it has been reproduced exactly as it was discovered in the grave on top of Fall Law, proves a more credible and truthful source than the editor's narrative. Hogg's novel thus appears to bear testimony to how literature does not always benefit from editorial notes. As Deirdre Shepherd comments in *Walter Scott, James Hogg and Uncanny Testimony: Questions of Evidence and Authority*, Hogg

questions the reliance placed on printed texts, whether ballads, personal memoirs, confessions or antiquarian history, as exemplars of testimony. In Hogg's experience of the publishing milieu of Edinburgh between 1802 [...]

and 1832 [...] certain voices were more likely to be heard, or accurately transcribed, than others. (2009:234)

As such, it seems that Hogg was well aware that he, as a Romantic author, did not benefit from what McGann calls “an intentionalist privilege given to a Romantic concept of the solitary author creating a work in an ‘originary moment’ of composition” (McGann in Greetham 337); Hogg knew from experience that the author’s wishes for the publication of his works were far from being the primary concern of editors and publishers. Although Hogg strived for the *Confessions* to be published in an unbowdlerized version, it appears that the precise point the novel makes is that the influence of editors and publishers on the interpretation of a work is far greater than it was assumed in the Romantic tradition. As I have discussed earlier, the editor of Robert Wringhim’s memoir bases his account of the events on traditional sources which may or may not be reliable; he does not read the document critically, nor does he correctly read the signs of Robert’s mental instability. The interpretation he provides of the memoir to the reader is thus based solely on his own reading of the text; as such, he is what Greetham labels an “intentionalist editor” (352).

Although the Sinner’s memoirs provide ample evidence of both readings (one in which Gil-Martin is an actual person, the other in which he is merely a psychotic delusion created in Robert’s mind to justify his irresistible urge to sin), the editor’s narrative at first seems to confirm the former reading, thus complicating the interpretational process of the observant reader, who is able to comprehend some of the signs of Robert’s psychological issues and is left to wonder whether Gil-Martin is real or not. And yet, even though he first describes the traditional facts related to him by “the greater part of the inhabitants of at least four counties of Scotland” (5) dealt with “matters of which they were before perfectly well informed” (5), in the final passage of his narrative the editor negates the existence of Gil-

Martin entirely, even though his presence had been confirmed in both the accounts of Bell Calvert, Lawyer Linkum, Mrs. Keeler and Miss Logan.

As such, the novel can be read as a warning for and a critique of editorial practices and how they affect an original work during an author's life, but especially after his death. Ironically, as proved with the Blackie editions of the *Confessions*, this is exactly what happened to the original edition of this very novel as well. Juxtaposing the editor's narrative and Robert Wringhim's actual memoir sheds light on the fact that authorial intention is overestimated in the publication process, and that the author, while able to exert some control over the publication of his work during his lifetime, still is only a mortal being in the end, and that his intentions and his wishes die with him. That is not to say that there exists only one possible interpretation of a novel and that this is the one the author has intended it to be; on the contrary, it draws attention to the fact that like tradition, texts are dynamic, have evolved over time and will continue to evolve as long as the practice of editing continues to exist. Rather than "taking on the traditional preoccupation with authorial intention" (McGann in Greetham 337), McGann proposes "an alternative view of composition, in which the entire history of the work is a fit subject for textual scholarship, and even posthumous changes by editors, publishers, friends and relations, are to be considered a perfectly valid part of the text read as a social construct" (337). Texts can have as many readings as they have readers, and the process of interpreting varies both socio-culturally and temporally. Genette correctly states, then, that "[t]he ways and means of the paratext [and of the text] change continually, depending on period, culture, genre, author, work, and edition, with varying degrees of pressure, sometimes widely varying [...]" (3), although he still assumes a large authorial control over the paratext, which I shall further discuss in the final section of this dissertation.

### 7. Revisiting *Paratexts*: the paratext and authorial responsibility

In the previous sections I have discussed some of the ways in which the paratext may influence the interpretation of a text. The issue that remains for works such as Hawthorne's *The Minister's Black Veil* and *The Scarlet Letter*, James's *The Turn of the Screw* and Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, which all deal with unreliable narration and ambiguous paratexts, is which meaning is the right one. Should the reader, when reading James's preface to *The Turn of the Screw*, forfeit his carefully constructed understanding of the Governess' delusional ideas and accept the author's claim that Quint and Miss Jessel really do appear to her and the children? Or should he ignore James's statement, even though he speaks with the authoritative voice of the creator of the story? I have suggested in my discussion of Hogg's *Confessions* that the process of interpretation ought not to be governed by the reader's initial impulse to search for *what the author intended*. Ironically, this appears to be the point that Hogg is making in his novel also. By utilizing the paratext not as a marginal device but as an active tool to draw the reader into the text, he makes a strong claim for the diversity and versatility of the written word, and against the tendency of readers and critics alike to pin down one meaning as the correct one. Robert Wringhim's memoir is one recollection of the events that occurred at Cowan's Croft; the editor's narrative is another. To say that Robert's account is the one to be believed can be countered by the fact that he is himself often confused and unsure of the precise facts. The editor's narrative is equally unreliable because it is based on testimonies and oral tradition, and because it is arguably laced with his own assumptions.

In other works, the author uses the paratext to misguide the reader in a more obvious way; Hawthorne's use of peritexts to melt history with fiction are a more obvious, though not less effective way to prompt the reader into searching for new interpretations, and James's

preface seems to confirm the existence of the ghosts at first sight, but after a close reading of his exact words, it becomes clear that it is as ambiguous as the story itself.

In discussing these four texts, I have pointed out that the paratext is more than simply a framework to a novel, and that it can steer the reader into certain directions in the practice of giving meaning to the events in that novel. In Hawthorne and James, it is the author who deliberately places these paratexts there; in the *Confessions*, however, Hogg cleverly juxtaposes two sides of one story to demonstrate that the author in fact has very little control over his work, and that interpretation is something strictly personal and unique to every reader. Thus, authority and intention will be the focal points in the final section of this dissertation; by revisiting Genette and scrutinizing his *Paratexts* more closely and with the insights gained from reading the four aforementioned texts, I will argue that Genette, while correctly assuming that the paratext is an important parameter in the signifying process of the reader (even though he does not elaborate on this), he allots too much importance on the input and consent of the author in the publishing business, and that, while he makes many references to the reader in general, he does not engage with him on a more private level, thus not considering how his actual reading process might be influenced by the paratext. Because of this, Genette quite remarkably seems to distinguish himself from other poststructuralists, the most famous of them being, of course, Roland Barthes, who announced “the death of the author” in order to ensure “the birth of the reader” (148). However, Genette’s focus on the author’s role, as I will point out, must be nuanced, for there is a distinct difference between responsibility and intention. I will endeavour to set these boundaries between the two terms, and to investigate how, if at all, Genette intermingles them in *Paratexts*.

On what is a paratext and what is not, Genette comments that “[b]y definition, something is not a paratext unless the author or one of his associates accepts responsibility for it, although the degree of responsibility may vary” (9). The use of those two particular words

in this definition, ‘associates’ and ‘responsibility’, is very important in the light of this research: from the first, we can derive that it is not the author alone who is responsible for the paratext. Secondly, the accountability of the author or his associates is not always clearly defined, and by placing the two on the same level, it seems as though the author and his associates always share the same opinion. Genette goes on to explain how exactly this issue of responsibility is dealt with in his distinction between “the official and the unofficial” (9), on which I will return shortly, but I believe it is necessary to allow a little more room for consideration of Genette’s definition of what the paratext is *not*.

It is quite unclear whom exactly Genette means with “one of his associates” (9); if he means business associates, then whom he refers to are the author’s publisher in the first place, and, by extension, his editor. If he means private associates, any person who is close to the author and who has in some way taken interest in the author’s work could be seen as an associate, going from peers to close friends and even to family members. While it is important to note that Genette recognizes others’ possible influences on the publication of a book, it is also quite striking how “the author and his associates” (9) are so easily, and seemingly without consideration, put on the same level, whereas they are in fact two very different authorities who may have separate visions on how a text should be presented to the public. For example, editors may alter the original manuscript of a novel in ways the author does not necessarily approve of, but which he still tolerates due to, for instance, financial problems. Or, works may originally be published the way the author had intended them to be, but after his death they may be edited and revised against his original wishes still. Perhaps more often than not, authors and their associates do not share the same interests and views, and while one may want to take full responsibility for anything related to a certain book, the other might want to distance himself from the paratexts surrounding it. Such was the case, for example, with Anthony Burgess’s dystopia *A Clockwork Orange*; where the original novel included twenty-

one chapters, Burgess's American publisher decided to omit the final chapter in order to make the novel more appealing to the American audience. Only years later, in 1986, the twenty-first chapter was restored in the American edition of the novel, and Burgess himself wrote an extended justification for the absence of the chapter and how it was not he, but his publisher who insisted it be omitted, even though in his opinion, this damaged the plot severely. More than a century earlier, James Hogg was equally opposed to William Blackwood's idea to have *The Shepherd's Calendar* revised by Hogg's nephew Robert, but he, too, was eventually forced to consent. As such, it should not surprise that authors and their publishers are not always on the same line when it comes to the publication of a work; this, however, is something Genette does not seem to take into account, even though editorial traces in literature are just as paratextual as the author's own paratexts.

A second issue with Genette's definition of the paratext is his use of the term 'responsibility'. Genette suggests that only texts that have been approved by the author or his entourage qualify as paratexts; "[t]he sender is defined by a putative attribution and an acceptance of responsibility. Most often the sender is the author [...] but the sender may equally well be the publisher [...] The author and the publisher are (legally and in other ways) the two people responsible for the text and the paratext" (8-9). With 'responsibility', Genette does not mean that the author and the publisher are necessarily the creators of the paratext, though in most cases they are; rather, they have the authority to incorporate it in the book, or to allow it to be presented to the public, or not to have it published at all. However, what Genette fails to explain is how this definition is affected first and foremost by the passing of time, and secondly by modern technology.

Before the legislation of copyright, which started in the second half of the seventeenth century in Great Britain and expanded from there, and which allowed the author exclusive rights to all of his work, the author had no way of controlling publications about his original

text, or even to alterations made to it by third parties. Additionally, while the author may have some authority over the paratexts as long as he lives, what happens to his work after his death is beyond his control. While James Hogg was relatively successful at maintaining his *Confessions* unaltered at their first publication in 1824, the novel was revised and edited thoroughly after his death. One might argue that there are still the publisher and the author's affiliates who can protect the original work from being altered in ways the author would not have approved of, but as I have mentioned above, the author and his associates do not always share the same interest. Vladimir Nabokov, on his death bed, asked of his family not to publish the novel he was working on at the time and which he would be unable to finish, yet still *The Original of Laura* was published in 2009 by Nabokov's son Dmitri. Vladimir, then, never wished to, nor was he ever able to, accept responsibility for his final work and everything surrounding the original text, because he was against its publication to begin with.

Secondly, while he was writing *Paratexts*, Genette lived in a society that was changing rapidly; even though he admittedly could not have foreseen what direction the explosion of new media would take or how it would influence the ways of the paratext, by 1987, which was when *Paratexts* was first published under its original French title *Seuils*, traces of new media were already visible in every aspect of everyday life, including literature. Genette was clearly aware of this:

The ways and means of the paratext change continually, depending on period, culture, genre, author, workd, and edition, with varying degrees of pressure, sometimes widely varying: it is an acknowledged fact that our "media" age has,seen the proliferation of a type of discourse around texts that was unknown in the classical world an *a fortiori* in antiquity and the Middle Ages [...] (3)

Yet even though he acknowledges the possible influence of modern media on the paratext, he does not elaborate on this topic further, and as such seems to underestimate just how much

they may affect the authorial responsibility he continually assumes. Hence, the fundamental problem that arises when he refers to those paratexts that the author or the publisher does not wish to accept accountability for, is that the “unofficial (or semiofficial)” paratext, “for which the author can always more or less disclaim with denials” (10), cannot be controlled by the author or by his associates. Genette refers specifically to the “authorial epitext” (10), by which he means interviews, correspondences, and the like; yet the author cannot, for instance, track down where and how the words he uses in an interview, which he consented to give and for which he thus claims responsibility, are used by third parties or in which context his statements are used (or misused) and how they are interpreted by a large audience. Surely, he may claim that what he said was not intended in a certain way, but the author cannot disclaim what he does not know about. And matters become even more complicated, as I have pointed out, after the author’s death, when he is no longer in the position to explain what exactly he meant. Combined with what I have established before about the author and his associates being two separate instances, delineating what can be classified as a paratext and what cannot is more complicated than it would appear from Genette’s definition.

The importance Genette allots to the author’s responsibility is a point of criticism which frequently reoccurs in the discussion of *Paratexts*; “[c]e qui définit le paratexte”, Andrea Del Lungo concludes, “est donc une intention et une responsabilité de l’auteur” (400), which she sees as a fundamental problem in Genette’s discussion of the paratext. Clem Robyns, too, has noted the implications of Genette’s insistence on authorial responsibility:

Another and more debatable set of exclusions arises from his resolute restriction of the category “paratext” to those aspects which remain under the supervision of the author. As a consequence of this restriction, he limits his remarks on literary criticism [...] only insofar as it is directly influenced (read: dictated) by the author. (466)

Indeed, the author features prominently in each definition Genette provides of the paratext: “this fringe, always the conveyor of a commentary that is authorial or more or less legitimated by the author” (2); “[the epitext] is characterized by an authorial intention and assumption of responsibility” (3). His focus on the author appears to deviate from his contemporaries and, more importantly, from his peers of the French poststructuralist movement. The poststructuralists strived for a shift in literary studies from the author to the reader;

the act of reading has become a necessary condition for the actualization of a text as such. Thus the critical emphasis on the role of the reader, on literary interpretation, and its responses between the interactive process between the text and the reader, is one of the major themes of contemporary literary theory from the mid-sixties onwards. (Ricci 120)

Most notably, Genette’s views on authorial responsibility and intention seem to contradict the ideas of none other than Roland Barthes himself, the pioneer of the *nouvelle critique* who famously sentenced the author to death in his essay “The Death of the Author”, in which he proposes a way of reading in which not the author’s intention, but the reader’s interpretation is at the centre of literary criticism:

a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author. The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text’s unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. (147)

Thus, the author becomes nothing more than the body that produces these “multiple writings” (147), while it is the reader who makes sense of them and gives them their meaning. Genette’s focus on the author and not, as Barthes promotes, on the reader, seems to be then an obsolete

form of literary criticism. The “birth of the reader” (148) had been declared by Barthes two decades before the publication of *Paratexts*, and yet Genette, who is considered one of the most important representatives of the *nouvelle critique*, appears to be still stuck in the old-fashioned regime where the author was the source of all knowledge concerning his own work.

Still, Genette’s focus on authorial responsibility need not necessarily be against the principles of the *nouvelle critique*; while his ignoring of the publisher’s influence over the author remains an issue, Genette never mentions authorial *intention* as defined by Barthes, where “[t]he explanation of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it, as if it were always in the end, through the more or less transparent allegory of the fiction, the voice of a single person, the author ‘confiding’ in us” (142). Genette does not propose a reintroduction (or, perhaps more accurately, a reiteration) of the the idea of the “Author-God” (146) into literary criticism; he makes no claims about which interpretation should be followed. He only assumes that the author has full control over his own work, and as such that the influence of the paratext lies with him. As a result, Genette underestimates both the pressure of publishers on authors and the interpretational capacities of the reader. In a way, then, Genette’s approach is quite atypical of the French structuralist movement, but not enough so that he contradicts the general ideas its represents in its entirety. Genette’s author is not an intentionalist one. The role of the author as discussed by Genette is of a pragmatic nature; the author is simply a possible sender of the paratext. How his commentaries on the text should be interpreted, Genette does not discuss, and thus he leaves this up to his reader. Still, *Paratexts* seems to be written from a perspective that has not yet embraced an approach that abandons the mystical figure of the Author entirely; after all, the author still remains the most important sender of the paratext. Other possible senders are often either quickly dismissed (“I will not dwell on the publisher’s epitext” (347)), or the commentaries they

produce do not fall under the denominator of 'paratext' because they are not written out of an authorial assumption of responsibility.

A logical consequence of Genette's author-focused approach would be that the author's paratext has the most influence on the reader; but if, like James Hogg, authors have to sacrifice parts of their original work in order to have it published at all, the real power regarding paratexts lies with the publisher. Hogg's *Confessions* then, especially in its final pages, becomes a satire of how exactly editors, who act upon the instructions of the publisher, may alter a text so significantly that their revisions may affect the interpretation of a work. The authority over the paratext lies not with the author, but with his publisher; all the paratexts that the former may wish to include and which eventually end up in the finished version of the book, are only there because the publisher has allowed them to be, and a published book may be entirely different from the original manuscript the author intended to present to the public. As such, in proposing the author as the principal creator of paratext, or at least as the person who is accountable for all the paratexts that a work may contain, Genette grossly depreciates the influence of the publisher.

But there is another issue with Genette's discussion of the paratext and how it is a 'threshold to interpretation'; while he devotes ample attention in his work to the 'threshold', the actual effect paratexts have on interpretation is a subject that Genette seems to avoid. *Paratexts* only ever deals with how a text is presented *to* the reader, but it ignores the response *from* the reader and its implications for the text in turn. This disregard of the reader can be justified by the fact that *Paratexts* actually only functions as an introduction to a new field of study that invites further research; hence, as Robyn correctly comments, "[t]he major function of this work is indeed the presentation of a very heterogeneous and hitherto almost virgin field of study" (466). Still, since the paratext is born from the desire to cause an effect on the reader – be it to tempt him into buying a book, to provide him with extra information

or, as nineteenth century authors knew well how to do, to inspire him to look beyond a seemingly ready-made interpretation of a story – Genette’s inattention to the reader is still an issue in correctly estimating the paratext’s potential. The reader is not simply a passive observer of the paratext; he converses with it, allows it to influence his interpretation, and forms his own ideas based on or contradictory to what is suggested in the paratext. Genette avoids precisely that which makes the paratext so interesting: not *that* it influences interpretation, for that it indubitably does, but *how* it influences it. Central to this, then, are neither the author nor the publisher, but the reader.

## 8. Results

The four literary works that I have discussed, *The Minister's Black Veil*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Turn of the Screw* and *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, all provide valuable information about the way in which paratexts might influence the reader. In both of Hawthorne's works, the author questions the authority of historical facts and how the knowledge of them is relevant to the reading of fictional works; Hawthorne seems to prove that even though works of fiction are not always based on true events – although they often pretend to be – this does not have to mean that they are irrelevant to the study of the past. Most importantly, however, is how both Hawthorne's footnote in *The Minister's Black Veil* and his introduction to *The Scarlet Letter* show the effects of the paratext on interpretation; in *The Minister's Black Veil*, the footnote to the subtitle can equally hide the story's many layers of interpretation as well as reveal them.

In 'The Custom-House', Hawthorne continues to explore the relevance of fiction in the light of history. Many critics have argued that the introduction to *The Scarlet Letter* does nothing for the story that follows and that it should be omitted in its entirety. Indeed, as Genette remarks, "the public and the reader are not unvaryingly obligated: no one is required to read a preface" (4); the reader is never obliged to read or take note of the paratexts surrounding a text; however, to delete them entirely is to deny the publication history of a work. Moreover, regardless of whether the reader is willing to take into account the author's intention or whether he wishes to look at fiction from a poststructuralist point of view, paratexts inserted by authors serve a purpose that extends beyond simply providing extra information; they may reveal how the author conceived his story, how he wished to bring it across to his audience and, most importantly, how he himself has interpreted it. Since interpretation and reception is what this paper has been primarily concerned with, as it is also

Genette's main focus in *Paratexts. Thresholds to Interpretation*, the paratext, while it may be ignored by the reader, should never be deleted from a work.

Henry James's preface to *The Turn of the Screw* addresses the issue of authority and interpretation in a similar, yet different way; through a first reading of the preface, it would appear that James is urging his reader to interpret the appearances of Quint and Miss Jessel as actual occurrences, and not as psychotic delusions. However, James is in fact urging the reader to draw his own conclusions from the story; rather than arguing for one interpretation, James is aware of the multitude of meanings in fiction. He seems, then, to be very aware of the idea that "the author creates only a text: he/she will have a particular text world in mind, but there is no guarantee at all that the reader will manage to produce the same text world on reading that text. We cannot say that the author's text world is the definitive one, since, in fact, there is no such thing" (Werth in Jeffries and McIntyre 153). James does not, as has often been assumed, strive for the reader to follow his own reading of the story; he spurs the reader on to find his own way through it and to take note of the variety of possible interpretations that *The Turn of the Screw* allows. Hence, the paratext is not used as a way to limit the reader's views on the text, but to expand them; it does not prevent the multiplicity of interpretation, but rather enables it.

James Hogg, however, takes the study of the paratext to another level in his *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, where he juxtaposes two entirely different versions of a single story. Where the Justified Sinner himself is convinced of the existence of his strange friend Gil-Martin, and his rhetoric hardly leaves room for doubt that he really experienced the events he described in such a way, the editor who has discovered his memoir dismisses the story as a failed parable. Yet at the same time, the editor admits that the story of the Sinner can be traced back through history in the Yarrow region's folklore and traditionary tales. In doing so, Hogg questions the authority of supposedly critical editors, and he urges

the reader to realize again that there is not one correct version or one correct interpretation of facts. As such, Hogg's *Confessions* are, in fact, a warning for the way editorial practices may affect a work of fiction and how these effects are received by the public. On the one hand, then, Hogg was aware that the idea of "an intentionalist privilege given to a Romantic concept of the solitary author creating a work in an 'originary moment' of composition" (McGann in Greetham 337) was not a realistic view on the business of writing at all; yet on the other hand, he seems to argue against the denying of the author's wishes by editors and publishers, and subsequently for a Romantic kind of respect for the author. Nevertheless, Hogg, like the other authors I have discussed, raises awareness of the possible implications of the paratext, and how these may alter the meaning of the stories they are appended to.

The discussion of authors' paratexts, then, inevitably leads to the question of authorial intention; should paratexts be considered by the reader in his construction of a text's meaning, or should he not take them into account at all? Should the author's reason for including paratexts to his work matter to the reader? As I have discussed in the third chapter of this dissertation, it seems that Genette argues that it should. His focus on the author and his responsibility regarding the paratext appears to be strangely at odds with the opinions of his poststructuralist peers. However, Genette is obviously aware that "the public and the reader are not unvaryingly and uniformly obligated" (4) when it comes to reading the paratext; indeed, readers, even though "such freedom is not always opportune for the author" (4), are free to ignore the paratext if they wish to do so. Yet the problem with Genette's *Paratexts* lies not in his opinion on authorial intention, since he never makes any explicit claims about this matter. What is really at issue here is his focus on authorial responsibility: Genette allots too much importance to the will of the author, and too little to the pressure of publishers.

Another issue that prevails is Genette's lack of consideration for the reader's part in the study of paratexts. Genette only seems to address the questions of what paratexts are and

how and by whom they are used. To the question to whom they are addressed, however, and more importantly how they are received, Genette fails to provide an answer, while the discussion of Hawthorne's, James's and Hogg's works earlier in this dissertation has shown that the interpretation of the paratext lies not with the author, but with the reader. While it is often the author who places the paratext into the text, it is the reader who is invited to use it, or sometimes to not use it, to form his own ideas on the meaning of a story. Still, while Genette's focus is often too much on the author, with *Paratexts* he provides but a framework, a starting point for further research. As such, Genette's terminology and definitions about the various aspects of the paratext are indeed very useful in the actual study of the paratext as it is used in practice.

## **9. Implications**

Since Genette's *Paratexts* is only meant to open up a relatively new area of study – indeed, in the words of Genette, *Paratexts* is “only a wholly inceptive exploration, at the very provisional service of what – thanks to others – will perhaps come after” (14-15) – it becomes quite evident why his focus on the reader is so limited, and why it is so important that his ideas continue to be investigated in future research. As I have argued, the tendency of looking for the author's stamp inside a text is still omnipresent with critics and scholars alike, even if recent literary criticism has strived for a more reader-oriented approach in literature. While Barthes has declared the death of the Author as far back as 1967, it seems from the above analyses that in the publishing business, the Author has slowly been vanishing into the background since long before then. Still, to the public, the persona of the author has never been more popular, which leads to wonder how the study of literature will develop over the next decades. Perhaps it will fall back to its search for authorial intention; I feel, however, that it would be more interesting and rewarding if scholars in the next few years were to

investigate not how works of fiction were intended to be interpreted, but how they actually *are* interpreted, and in which ways the paratext influences this interpretation.

## 10. Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have given a short introduction to Gérard Genette's *Paratexts. Thresholds to Interpretation*, in order to create a canvas on which I could then build up my argument. Through the analyses of Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Minister's Black Veil* and James's *The Turn of the Screw*, I have attempted to expound that even though authors often seem to use paratexts to slip their own intentions and interpretations of the story into the text, the paratext needn't work in such a way at all; in fact, the reader is free to take heed of the author's comments on the text, or to ignore them entirely.

Furthermore, I have endeavoured to prove that authorial paratexts, and more specifically peritexts, are often used not to limit the reader in his interpreting process, but to challenge him to look deeper into the text in search of meanings that he had not previously discovered. The author, then, may sometimes have a large influence on the interpretation of his work, and his adding of paratexts to his story may sometimes confuse the reader, but this is not always an inherently bad feature. Additionally, the author often attempts to put a distance between his own interpretation and the reader's, allowing the latter to read the story in his own way, and leaving him free to ignore the paratext if he so wishes. Either way, however, the authorial peritext will always leave a certain impression on the reader (if he reads it), and it will always affect his interpretation to a certain extent.

I have then moved on to the largest bulk of this dissertation, which was the discussion of James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, in which I have investigated how not only authors, but also, and possibly most importantly, editors and publishers influence the reading of a text. In this section, I have explored how

publisher's wishes and differences in edition influence a story. James Hogg's novel can then be read as a satire on these editorial practices and on the Romantic idea of the Author. In the end, it is not the author who has the last say about his work, but his publisher.

This, as I have addressed in the final section of my thesis, is something Genette grossly underestimates in *Paratexts*, where he continually refers to the author as carrying the largest responsibility for most of the paratexts surrounding a book, whereas he minimalizes the roles of both the publisher and the reader.

It can be concluded then, that even though there have been many attempts to turn the tables, the Author is still the person that is at the centre of literary study. While recent developments in literary criticism have attempted to put the reader more at the forefront, looking at the author in order to come to the 'correct' interpretation of a literary work is still a common practice among scholars and recreational readers alike. This has often only been empowered by the appearance of peritexts and especially epitexts alongside the text; while the author never had full control over his own work once it was being published, the new media have caused us to launch back into an adoration for novelists which equals the idea of the Romantic Author. This dynamic surrounding the author, who on the one hand cannot and does not even always want to control his readers' interpretation by means of the paratext, but who on the other hand is closer to the public than ever, hence spreading his ideas more widely than ever before, appears to be at odds with current critical ideas about authorial intention and responsibility. It should not surprise, then, that the reader seems to be moving more and more to the background in literary theory again, even though the study of individual interpretations might tell us more about the layers of meaning of a work than any authorial or editorial paratext ever could.

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A young shy woman was in her room reading but afraid to try or make friend's unaware something magical might happen as unknown to her, Ogre Child an Alpha Ogreix Warrior and hero of Aria knew this girl could use a little magic. Many people from Earth found their way either into Aria or the Mista Universe somehow but was using a spell on the woman's mirror to create a Threshold, a magical doorway to Aria, but was leaving before anybody noticed, but became unseen after the girl wasn't looking. "Huh?" the woman wondered as she sensed magic in the air. The dark blue skinned ogre female then used her Arianx magic to create a magical pendant that would let Nori cross the threshold at will making her excited, as Aria's magic would help her. Because of the authorial conflict, the novel is strongly intergenerational, placing the main protagonist on the threshold of adolescence, and its humour resulting from the power struggle between the authors of a different age and their respective discourse. Therefore, KuÅjan's prose delves into both direct and indirect types of humour arising from the generational gap, peer relations and issues of vulnerability. Furthermore, the author-against-âœauthorâ€ conflict undeniably highlights KuÅjan's status as the âœfather of modern children's detective novelâ€ and the âœmaster of Croatian la