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A recurring concern in critical discussion of James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* has been the complex nature of Gil-Martin, Robert Wringhim's demonic double.[1] André Gide expresses the judgment of most critics of the novel when he claims the characterization of Gil-Martin, Hogg's "personification of the Demon," to be "among the most ingenious ever invented."[2] Yet in spite of critical interest in Gil-Martin, only two attempts have been made to explain the meaning of his curious name.[3]

That the name is meant to be significant is obvious from the dramatic emphasis Hogg gives to its revelation. Robert is obliged to worm the name out of his new friend, to whom the subject of name and parentage is "a disagreeable one" (130). When asked his name, the as yet unidentified devil explains that he sees "no occasion for any one friend ever naming another" (129), but then concedes: "But if you cannot converse without naming me, you may call me Gil for the present" (129). "Gil! . . . Have you no name but Gil," the puzzled Robert asks, "Or which of your names is it? Your Christian or surname?" (129) Thus pressed to answer, "Gil" reluctantly reveals another name: "O, you must have a surname too, must you! . . . Very well, you may call me

Gil-Martin. It is not my *Christian* name; but it *is* a name which may serve your turn" (129). The devil's name, or, more accurately, his temporary alias, thus emerges by halves, its hyphen serving thereafter to remind the reader of his reluctance and equivocation in declaring it. Gil-Martin's suppressing his Christian name provokes Robert to ask a final question: "This is very strange! . . . Are you ashamed of your parents that you refuse to give your real name?" (129) Unwittingly, Robert has touched a sensitive nerve. The devil is piqued to further disclosure: "I have no parents save one, whom I do not acknowledge," he replies; "therefore pray drop that subject . . ." (129). Robert does. His response to the conundrum of his new friend's curious name is to invent an identity for him; Gil-Martin, he concludes, must be none other than Czar Peter of Russia in disguise (130). While the disagreeable subject is thus evaded, Robert's questions nonetheless focus attention on the mystery of Gil-Martin's name and nature, and, by extension, on the novel's pervasive concern with names and naming.

Hogg prolongs the revelation of Gil-Martin's name so as to relish the irony of the devil's scrupulously honest deception of Robert.[4] The irony of the devil's possessing a Christian name (his most devoted subjects, he tells Robert, are the Christians [136]) and of his not acknowledging his Parent are obvious. More subtly ironic is Robert's unconscious self-description in his hinting that Gil-Martin may be ashamed of his parents. Robert too has rejected his father and chooses to be called by his adoptive name, Wringhim, rather than Colwan, his father's name. Both are rejected sons who seek to possess their fathers' titles and kingdoms. Their discussion of Gil-Martin's name thus reveals another aspect of their kinship as doubles.

Gil-Martin's desire to be known only as "Gil" provides a clue to the meaning of his name. In the names for which it is a quite common prefix, "Gil" means "servant or disciple of."[5] In seeking, then, to identify himself merely as "Gil," the devil avoids naming *whom* he serves. Douglas Gifford explains that on several occasions in other works Hogg employs "Gilmouly," a folk name for the devil.[6] One can thus assume that in presenting himself as "Gil," the devil is withholding "mouly"; to satisfy the importunate Robert's desire to know his other name, the devil substitutes the alliterating "Martin" for "mouly." But what then is the meaning of "Gil-Martin"? What turn does the name serve? If the devil

speaks the truth in this instance, as he does without exception elsewhere in the novel, this name too must in some sense be truly his.

Of the literal meaning of "Gil-Martin" there can be no doubt. Gifford correctly notes that it means "servant or apostle of St. Martin"; however, Gifford's speculation that the name's significance lies in the fact of St. Martin's traditional association with drunkenness (and hence evil) is unconvincing.[7] The connection of St. Martin to the devil is, in fact, quite direct, for the most common legends about the saint concern his exorcisms and personal struggles with Satan. Paul Monceaux explains that what "most intrigued the popular imagination was his alleged personal acquaintance with the Archfiend; the stories of St. Martin's quarrels and struggles with the devil were an unending source of interest."[8] Lecoy De La Marche also notes that the most common and widely circulated legends conerning St. Martin deal with the theme of his epic struggles with Satan, "l'idée d'une lutte gigantesque avec Satan."[9] The legends of Satan's persistent following of the saint appear to be the basis of traditional expressions in which the devil is described as a "servant" of St. Martin. Brewer records "St. Martin's running footman" as a euphemism for the devil,[10] and "St. Martin's running footman" is also used by Rabelais (*Pantagruel*, ch. 23), where the term is explained to mean "the devil, who followed the good Saint about."[11] The name Gil-Martin thus appears to have been derived by Hogg either from folklore or from a literary source, such as Rabelais.

Was Hogg familiar with the legends of St. Martin? One cannot, I think, confirm either the source or the extent of his knowledge, but naming his devil figure Gil-Martin implicitly suggests that he was. There is evidence too that the primary source of legends about St. Martin, *The Chronicles of Sulpicius Severus* was widely read in Scotland.[12] Indeed, the cult of St. Martin is perhaps as old in Scotland as Christian worship there, since as Bede relates, St. Nynia dedicated the first known Christian church in Scotland (the "Candida Casa") to St. Martin.[13] John McQueen's recent research reaffirms the traditional association of Saints Martin and Nynia, supporting Bede's account.[14] A knowledge of the connection of Martin and Nynia seems also to be evident in Hogg's naming his demonic pair Gil-Martin and Wringhim. A common variant of Nynia's name is

"Ringan,"[15] a name twice used in the novel as a variant of "Wringhim" (66, 186).[16] Hogg thus ironically presents Robert and Gil-Martin as false and debased latter-day saints—a Ringan evangelist who cannot save even his own soul and a Martin who is the saint's Archenemy rather than his servant.

In addition to deriving his name from the legends of St. Martin, Gil-Martin also borrows the wiles of St. Martin's Satan.[17] In what is perhaps the best known of his temptations of St. Martin, Satan attempts to appeal to the saint's religious vanity by appearing to him in the form of the glorified Christ. Of course the saint is not taken in by special effects—the jeweled crown and blinding light—and forces the devil to vanish ignominiously in a cloud of malodorous smoke.[18] The episode of the devil's first appearance to Robert reveals an identical strategy: Gil-Martin appears as "an angel of light," an ideal, flattering image of himself: Robert glorified.[19]

The triumph of common sense and simple faith over the devil's deceits, which serves as the theme of almost all the legends of St. Martin and the devil, is also evident throughout the novel. Hogg's simple folk—John Barnet, Bessie Gillies, Bell Calvert, Samuel Scrape—are invariably unerring in their moral instinct.[20] Scrape's tale of Robin Ruthven and the devil at Auchtermuchty best illustrates the pervasive theme (198-203). When Auchtermuchty succumbs to religious enthusiasm, only Robin, a simple "auld carl," keeps his senses; boldly lifting the preacher's gown to the knee, he exposes the cloven feet and saves Auchtermuchty from the devil. Simply seeing through the devil's disguise—discovering his real name—reduces him to a lurid rainbow. The tale is more than mere comic relief; Robert is obliged to hear of Robin's routing the devil at a time when he himself has become hopelessly ensnared by Gil-Martin. The ease of Robin's triumph vividly demonstrates that Robert is the victim not of Satan's power, but of the fanatical religion that blinds him to Gil-Martin's true name.

The meaning of the name Gil-Martin relates to the novel's treatment of Robert's religious fanaticism. Like so many of Gil-Martin's ironical remarks, the name itself is a double-entendre: first, although the devil follows the saint like a servant, his intention is the opposite of service; second, although he means harm, he remains—like a servant—always subject to the will of his exorcist master. Gil-Martin prefers to think of himself as a

potentate, and takes more than an ironical satisfaction in having devoted subjects. His name's inescapable connotation of submission to divine authority—to the Parent he does not acknowledge—explains his reluctance to reveal it, to acknowledge, however indirectly, Whom he must serve. Thus in concealing his true name, Gil-Martin nonetheless speaks the truth: in spite of his aspiration to rule, he is easily mastered, even reduced to comic impotence, by a Robin Ruthven. Were Robert not warped by religious fanaticism, he too, Hogg suggests, might have penetrated Gil-Martin's disguise and seen the cloven feet. Robert's submission to Gil-Martin, a false servant, rather than to Gil-Martin's divine Master epitomizes Hogg's comment on predestinarian religion of the extreme variety Wringhim preaches.

The predicament implied in Gil-Martin's name is, however, primarily significant in its relevance to Robert Wringhim's psychology. Gil-Martin's refusal to acknowledge his Father—to reveal his surname—mirrors Robert's rejection of the father who will not acknowledge him as his son. In these parallel rejections religion and psychology coalesce, illuminating the novel's central action: Robert Wringhim's struggle to overcome his alienation from man and God, the conviction that his "name is not written in the book of life" (100). Robert is unable to solve the riddle of Gil-Martin's name because his own name is in doubt; in the shame and anger of his own dubious legitimacy he has embraced absolute justification—personified in Gil-Martin—as the sole prop and validation of his identity. For Robert to admit Gil-Martin's true name, which as the novel unfolds he increasingly suspects, is to realize his worst fear: that both father and Father repudiate him. Were he to be truly justified, his name written in the book of life, what name would it be? Colwan or Wringhim? or perhaps the two names, reluctantly and equivocally hyphenated, like Gil-Martin's? Questions about the identity of Gil-Martin—who and what exactly is he?—are invariably questions about Robert, whose hopes and fears he expresses. The uncertainty of the other characters (and the reader) about the relationship of Robert and Gil-Martin curiously mirrors Robert's self-doubt. The ambiguity of their shared identity evokes a pervasive sense of uncertainty as to what Robert, in his quest for justification and identity, has become.[21]

The crucial episode of the tennis match, in which George Colwan humiliates his brother, providing the motive for Robert's

revenge, focuses on questions about Robert's name, recalling the earlier scene in which Robert raised the disagreeable topic with Gil-Martin. Probing Robert's identity is tantamount to a blood-letting: George strikes Robert with his racket,

> so that his mouth and nose gushed out blood; and, at the same time, he said, turning to his cronies,—'Does any of you know who the infernal puppy is?'
>
> 'Do you not know, Sir?' said one of the onlookers, a stranger: 'The gentleman is your own brother, Sir—Mr. Robert Wringhim Colwan!'
>
> 'No, not Colwan, Sir,' said Robert . . . 'not a Colwan, Sir; henceforth I disclaim the name.'
>
> 'No, certainly not,' repeated George: 'My mother's son you may be,—but *not a Colwan*! There you are right.' Then turning round to his informer, he said, 'Mercy be about us, Sir! is this the crazy minister's son from Glasgow?' (23)

When Robert in turn sheds George's blood, avenging the insult to his legitimacy and seeking implicitly George's legitimate name and title, George's accusation of his killer is once again couched in the interrogative: "Oh, dog of hell, is it you who has done this!" (78), a question which Robert, having become "a being incomprehensible to [him] self," (182) later asks Gil-Martin: "Who has been the cause of all this?" (207)

After Robert acquires the Dalcastle title and the right to the Colwan name, questions regarding the names of Robert and Gil-Martin persist. In spite of possessing the title, neither consents to be associated with the Colwan name. The father is repudiated to the last. Like Robert, lawyer Linkum tries to solve the riddle of Gil-Martin's name and identity:

> 'I'm a little at a loss for your name sir . . . seen you very often, though—exceedingly often—quite well acquainted with you.'
>
> 'No, sir, you are not,' said my friend sternly . . .
>
> '*Im*possible! 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?' (178)

Gil-Martin admits neither a name nor his resemblance to George Colwan. Although both Gil-Martin and lawyer Linkum refer to Robert as "Mr. Colwan," Robert denies even his own handwriting when Linkum seeks to make him responsible for "Mr. Colwan's" business:

> 'Here is . . . your power of attorney, regularly warranted, sealed, and signed with your own hand.'
>
> 'I declare solemnly that I never signed that document . . .'
>
> 'You do not deny your own hand?'
>
> 'I deny every thing connected with the business . . . I disclaim it in *toto*, and declare that I know no more about it than a child unborn.' (179)

Linkum insists that he has three of Robert's letters and three of his signatures; Robert denies them thrice, once again disclaiming father and Father.

The final questions regarding Robert's name are raised by Johnny Dod, the weaver, in an exchange that recalls both the episodes of Robert's questioning Gil-Martin's name and George's questioning Robert's.

> I know not whether it was on purpose to prove my identity or not, but . . . the weaver, not knowing how to address me, abruptly asked my name, as he was about to put the Bible into my hands. Never having considered myself in the light of a malefactor, but rather as a champion in the cause of truth, and finding myself perfectly safe under my disguise, I had never once thought of the utility of changing my name, and when the man asked me, I hesitated; but being compelled to say something, I said my name was Cowan. The man stared at me, and then at his wife, with a look that spoke a knowledge of something alarming or mysterious.
>
> 'Ha! Cowan? said he. 'That's most extrordinar! Not Colwan, I hope?'
>
> 'No: Cowan is my sirname,' said I. 'But why not Colwan, there being so little difference in the sound?' (212)

In this last denial of Colwan identity Robert assimilates Gil-Martin's. Dressed in his double's clothes, like Gil-Martin he cunningly improvises an alias. Omitting the "l" from Colwan recalls the substitution of Martin for mouly; the affectation of candor in "But why not Colwan . . . ?" is no less honest than Gil-Martin's explaining that "Gil-Martin" is not his "*Christian* name but . . . " (129).

Robert's narrative terminates appropriately with the failure of the alias that has sustained his identity. Gil-Martin ceases to be "Gil-Martin"; the name has indeed served Robert's turn. Robert sees him no longer as a nameable entity, and once again—for the last time—questions his identity: "But, ah! who is yon that I see approaching furiously—his stern face blackened with horrid despair!" (240) The question remains unanswered. Stripped of his alias, Robert's double is only Robert himself: despairing, unjustified, and nameless.

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NOTES

[1] Ed. John Carey (London, 1969). References to this edition appear in the text. The most important essays on this aspect of the novel are those of Louis Simpson, *James Hogg: A Critical Study* (Edinburgh, 1962); Douglas Gifford, *James Hogg* (Edinburgh, 1976); Nelson C. Smith, *James Hogg* (Boston, 1980); L.L. Lee, "The Devil's Figure: James Hogg's Justified Sinner," *SSL*, 3 (April, 1966), 230-39; Barbara Bloedé, "James Hogg's Private Memoirs," *Etudes Anglais*, 26 (1973), 174-86; David Eggenschwilder, "James Hogg's *Confessions* and the Fall into Division," *SSL*, 9 (1971), 26-39.

[2] "Afterword," *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (New York, 1970), p. 237.

[3] Gifford, pp. 158, 170, and John Wain, "Introduction" to Penguin edition of *Confessions*, p. 17.

[4] Gifford, p. 170, discusses the irony of the devil's honesty.

[5] Gifford, p. 170.

[6] Gifford, p. 170.

[7] Gifford, p. 170.

[8] *St. Martin of Tours: The Chronicle of Sulpicius Severus*, ed. Paul Monceaux, trans., M.C. Watt (New York: Benziger, n.d.), p. 69.

[9] *Saint Martin* (Tours, 1881), pp. 633-34).

[10] *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (New York, 1970), p. 690.

[11] *The Works of Francis Rabelais*, ed. Albert Noch (New York, 1931), II, xcvii.

[12] Christopher Donaldson, *Martin of Tours: Parish Priest, Mystic and Exorcist* (London, 1980), p. 141.

[13] Margaret Deanesley, *The Pre-Conquest Church in England* (New York, 1961), p. 33.

[14] "Myth and the Legends of the Lowland Scottish Saints," *Scottish Studies*, 24 (1980), p. 7.

[15] Deanesley, p. 33.

[16] The theme of the double is reflected in the variants as well: Wringhim-Ringan, Colwan-Cowan (212), Dalcastle-Dalchastel (1), perhaps Gil-Martin-Gilmouly. For another interpretation of the Wringhim-Ringan variant, see Douglas S. Mack, "'The Rage of Fanaticism in Former Days': James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and the Controversy over *Old Mortality*," in *Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction: Critical Essays*, ed. Ian Campbell (New York, 1979), p. 40.

[17] There are, of course, innumerable possible sources for Gil-

Martin's various demonic attributes. See, for example, Lee, pp. 230-39.

[18] *St. Martin of Tours*, p. 132.

[19] The episode also recalls 2 Corinthians 11:14-15.

[20] Michael S. Kearns, "Intuition and Narration in James Hogg's *Confessions*," *SSL*, 13 (1978), 82-84, discusses their reliability in detail.

[21] An excellent discussion of the novel's uncertainties is that of Michael York Mason, "The Three Burials in Hogg's *Justified Sinner*," *SSL*, 13 (1978), 15-23.