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Judging a Book By Its Cover: The Context Book Covers Provide

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JUDGING A BOOK BY ITS COVER: THE CONTEXT BOOK COVERS PROVIDE

by

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Wes and Lindy; thank you for raising me to be a curious person, and for supporting me in all my endeavors, especially those that challenged me. To my sister, Grace, and my cousin, David; thank you for listening to all of my rants and complaints, and for reminding me that I am not the only one who finds their twenties to be a weird and confusing time. Finally, to Gregory; thank you for being a refuge for comfort in all of my most difficult moments.

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to prove how the context of books, specifically the book jackets and bindings, are a crucial part to understanding the history and the text of the story. The paper begins with printing history in order to illustrate how the context of books has changed, and how the Twentieth Century saw a use of book jackets to promote the book. The paper then looks at the books of a particular author, Alasdair Gray, as an example of how the context of the book can be used to enhance and reveal aspects of the text. Finally, this paper discusses how Special Collections libraries play a unique roll in the preservation of the whole book as a material object in order to preserve the full context of the book for future study.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Books have been used as a way to preserve and study history and stories, but a preference for the pages of text over the physical whole has often been the primary concern for that preservation and study. A book is more than just the pages of its text – it is also the bindings, the illustrations, and the dust jackets, all of which provide context for the pages of text within. Unfortunately, the content of the pages has often been considered more important than the context of the book, so there has been a trend of removing the pages of text from their original context. A perfect example of this preference can be seen in library accession in the mid-twentieth century – when libraries acquired a new book, they stripped it of its original binding and replaced it with a more durable, hard buckram binding in order to protect the pages of the book and increase the longevity of books in high circulation libraries.¹ The problem with the preference for pages of text is the fact that the context of the book – the bindings, the book jackets, the publishers, etc. – can provide insight to the history and the story of the text as well.

Book historians understand that the context of a book provides just as much information as the text itself, but they often focus on the *historical* revelations. The study of the context of books is beneficial to many other

¹ Weiss, 10. For more information about library bindings, see the Library Bindings Institute.

scholars as well, such as literary scholars who may use the physicality of a book to reveal the design of a book and the authorial intent behind that design. Any authorial input to the design of a book should be considered important to the text because the physical aesthetic of a book impacts the way a reader approaches a text. The context and physicality of a book are impacted by more than just the author's intention, though. In fact, they are both often affected by the publishers of the book (as much if not more so than most authors), usually for marketing purposes. Therefore, those who study the context of the book should be aware of the impacts of publishers and authors on the context before delving into an interpretation of the physicality in relation to the narrative of the book.

The aim of this paper is to examine the context of a few select books at a Special Collections library within an understanding of publishing history. Specifically, this paper seeks to show how the size of a publishing house and the financial power it has impacts the amount of artistic input or revision for the physical book, which in turn complicates the way readers approach a text; Special Collections libraries play a crucial role in preserving the publishing history, the cultural history, and the literary history of modern texts as Special Collections libraries are the only libraries whose purpose is to preserve the whole book as an artifact rather than only focusing on the pages of text. To prove this point, this paper will provide a brief history of publishing in the West with a focus on printing in the United Kingdom, and then will discuss the evolution of the physical context of a book alongside the type and size of publisher. Finally, this paper will discuss how Special Collections libraries play a crucial role in the

scholarship of book context, as they are the libraries most equipped to preserve and maintain the book as a whole artifact – pages, bindings, book jackets, and more. Moreover, the study of multiple editions and copies of two Alasdair Gray novels and the importance of the access to these multiple copies should prove the need for a completionist approach for collections.

The books chosen for this study – *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* and *Poor Things* – are by Alasdair Gray, a well-known Scottish author and artist. Gray is specifically known for being involved in the production of his books; he often illustrates the book jackets (and subsequently paperbacks) as well as designing stamps for the bindings of his books. He may be a modern exception in this regard, but he is not the only author to be wholly involved in his book production; rather, he is a part of a long tradition of artists and authors stretching back to the monks who illuminated each text they created with scenes based on Biblical stories to the well-known William Blackie. Gray's artistic input for the physical design of his books is an ideal example as his books and their artistic context are ripe for study, both literarily and historically.

Printing history in the West has often focused on its beginnings in Germany and Italy and on England in the modern era. This is understandable to an extent as Germany was the birthplace of the European printing press and Italy quickly became dominant in developing the quality and design of the printing process we recognize today. Although England was not the birthplace of the physical aspects of printing, it is the place where the modern idea of copyright began, dictating the way books were written, made, and commodified for years to

come. The focus on these three countries' printing traditions, though, means that other countries' printing history has gone fairly unnoticed. This is why a study of Alasdair Gray is of particular importance – his books serve not only as an example of modern craftsmanship but also as an example of Scottish printing trends in the Twentieth Century.

CHAPTER 2

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PRINTING

It is helpful to have a brief history of printing to understand how publishing practices and modern book styles came to be, and then how those changes or modern styles align with Alasdair Gray's books. While Gray's books were printed in the Twentieth Century, this history of printing and publishing will start several centuries earlier to establish a history of printing in the United Kingdom, specifically England and Scotland, and how it resulted in unique Twentieth Century books.

It is well known that Johannes Gutenberg brought the printing press to Europe in the mid-fifteenth century; the changes that the printing press wrought are perhaps equally well known. It is not an overstatement to say that the printing press changed history, as it allowed for the transmission of ideas and philosophies to spread quickly and multiply readily. The Renaissance and the Reformation are thought to have originated, or at least been hastened, by the arrival of the printing press and moveable type; appropriately, the printing press has been described as an "epoch-making invention."² What is perhaps less well known is the history of printing after the invention of the printing press (that is not

² Steinberg, 1996, 1

to say it has not been studied, but rather than is it not a prominent part of our cultural memory).

According to noted bibliographer S.H. Steinberg, there are five periods of moveable type printing:

(1) 1450-1550, the creative century, which witnessed the invention and beginnings of practically every single feature that characterizes the modern printing piece; (2) 1550-1800, the era of consolidation which developed and refined the achievements of the preceding period in a predominantly conservative spirit; (3) the nineteenth century, the era of mechanization... (4) 1900-1950, the heyday of the private presses and the inception of paperbacks; and (5) the post-war period, which has seen typesetting, printing and publishing turned upside down.³

Alasdair Gray's first novel, *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* was first printed in 1981 in Scotland, and *Poor Things* was first printed in 1992 in England. Therefore, the focus of this paper is on the printing history of England and Scotland in the Twentieth Century. However, it is easier to understand the significant trends of English and Scottish printing with a brief history of how printing and publishing began in the British Isles.

After Gutenberg's introduction of the printing press and moveable type, printing presses quickly sprang up around Europe. In less than 30 years after the introduction of the printing press to Europe, printing was brought to England in

³ Steinberg, 1996, 1

1476 by a German trained English merchant.⁴ That German-trained English merchant was William Caxton and is he considered hugely influential to the tradition of printing in the British Isles not just because he brought the printing press to England, but also because of his business acumen. As John Feather says, “Caxton was not a printer in the literal sense of operating a printing press; he was an employer of labour whose own function was as capitalist and salesman. In other words, he was primarily a publisher.”⁵ Caxton laid the groundwork for the important traditions of printing and literature in the United Kingdom. While many of his contemporaries on the continent were printing religious texts, Caxton was printing vernacular texts such as “romances and poetry...[and] the works of Gower, Chaucer and Lydgate, among others, and thus prepared the way for the English literary tradition of the Middle Ages to be transmitted to the writers of the Renaissance.”⁶ Indeed, Caxton’s choice of texts to publish affected the English printing tradition for centuries to come, as “the Englishness of English publishing is one of its abiding characteristics. From the beginning, it was predominantly in the English language, and predominantly literary...and popular.”⁷ Caxton’s techniques were picked up by others, and the increase in printers produced an increase in authors, both of whom began to realize they needed to protect their investments. This realization led to the introduction and prominence of publishers who acted as the intermediary between printers and authors. The development of publisher began in the mid

⁴ Febvre and Martin, 2010, 182

⁵ Feather, 1988, 10

⁶ Feather, 1988, 11

⁷ Feather, 1988, 12

sixteenth century and continued through the seventeenth century (essentially the second period of printing that Steinberg defined) and is important because they laid the groundwork for the modern book trade and the division of labor where authors dealt primarily with the text, publisher dealt with marketing and design, and printers dealt with the physical object..

William Caxton established his printing and publishing business in London before the kingdoms of England and Scotland were united. There were printing presses in Scotland before the unification of the two kingdoms in 1607, the first established in 1508 in Edinburgh by Walter Chepman and Andrew Myllar.⁸ After the unifications of the kingdoms in 1607, though, London became the dominating political and economic place in the kingdom. Since Caxton had laid the groundwork for a thriving printing community in London, the economic power of London drew printers and publishers, and there was little incentive for publishers and printers to go to Scotland. Therefore, England's publishing tradition flourished and was the place for publication of many United Kingdom authors, even Scottish ones. The printing presses that were founded in Scotland after unification mimicked much of the English production even though they often could not invest like English publishers because they did not have the same financial backing. Even Scottish publishers who had success struggled, such as James Ballantyne Co., based out of Edinburgh, who published Sir Walter Scott and yet collapsed financially in the middle of Scott's tenure.⁹

⁸ Edwards, 2011, 68

⁹ Encyclopedia Britannica, Sir Walter Scott, 2016

The 1710 Licensing Act (also known as the Copyright Act), enacted after the closing of the Scottish Parliament in 1707, further solidified the publishers power in the printing business as well as the power of London publishing houses. The Licensing Act “gave the copyright in new books to their authors rather than their publishers,”¹² and was obviously beneficial for authors because it elevated their work, giving them “a valuable commodity for which they could claim the protection of the law and as a property of which they could dispose in the open market to their best advantage,”¹³ allowing them to have negotiating power with publishers. However, the Licensing Act was also beneficial to publishers because the law now protected both the buyer and the seller of intellectual property¹⁴ which made it easier to prosecute printers for pirated editions, thereby giving more printing authority and power to the publishers. As the number of pirate printers diminished, the market steadied and publishers were able to “fix the price of [their] wares at a level which at the same time ensured [them] a reasonable profit and permitted [them] to let [the] author share in it.”¹⁵ The Licensing Act and the steadying markets worked particularly worked in favor of London publishers because licenses were created and given in London as the capital of the kingdom. The powers and protections of the Licensing Act and the safer markets eventually resulted in the payment system that we recognize today – royalties, in which an author is given a fixed portion of the money from the sale of their

¹² Rota, 1998, 27

¹³ Steinberg, 1996, 107

¹⁴ Steinberg, 1996, 107

¹⁵ Steinberg, 1996, 107

books.¹⁶ This payment arrangement made the sale and marketing of books essential if everyone in the book trade – author, publisher, printer, and book seller – were to make a profit. “Advertisements, prospectuses, stock-lists, general and particularized bibliographies, critical – if possible, favourable – reviews in newspapers and periodicals”¹⁷ were all used as a means of marketing books, but publishers soon realized that the presentation of the book would help sell them too.

The publisher who is credited with first realizing the marketing potential of the physicality of the book was John Newberry who realized that “advertising sold goods” so “he applied the lesson to his publishing work.”¹⁸ Newberry is the first recorded publisher to create edition binding, which meant he bound all of his books with an identical binding *before* sale and incorporated the expense into the retail price of his books.¹⁹ Before Newberry’s edition binding, printers rarely bound the books they printed. This separation of labor was for a variety of reasons, most of them economic. First, it was easier to ship and distribute flat paper because paper was not as heavy as bound books which were initially bound with boards. Second, printers were already investing a great deal of money into the supplies to print the text, foregoing binding divested them of another expense and instead made that expense the responsibility of the customer (who would then take the book to a book-binder and have it bound as they wished). However, after the system of royalties was firmly in place,

¹⁶ Feather, 1988, 178

¹⁷ Steinberg, 1996, 107

¹⁸ Feather, 1988, 119

¹⁹ Feather, 1988, 119

Newberry's idea of edition binding became mainstream because recognizable marketing was becoming necessary.

The relationship between publishers and authors continued to develop throughout the Nineteenth Century, but these foundations in the Eighteenth Century provided the basis for the basic duties and responsibilities of publishers today. Primarily, the eighteenth-century foundations solidified the publisher as organizer, financier, and marketer of the book trade. The changes in the physical production of books through the Nineteenth Century expanded the organizational responsibilities of the publisher to the point where, today, their responsibilities chiefly deal with preparing a book for market – “[the publisher] prepares manuscripts or typescripts for printing. He arranges for the production of the book by printers and bookbinders. He organizes the provision of illustrations and dust jackets. He advertises and promotes the book in his catalogue and through various media.”²¹ The Nineteenth Century changes of book production was due to industrialization. Papermaking and printings became mechanized, as well as the book binding²² process. The mechanization of book binding suggests that while the book trade industrialized, publishers were aware of and cared about the physical attractiveness of the book.

The physical changes to the book throughout the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century led to the modern book forms we recognize today, i.e. cloth or Linson bound hardbacks with book-jackets and paperbacks.

²¹ Feather, 1988, vii

²² Feather, 1998, 134

While aspects such as typography and paper changed alongside design and binding, for the purposes of analyzing Alasdair Gray's novels this paper will focus on design and binding as well as the introduction of book-jackets.

As mentioned earlier, the beginning of the nineteenth century saw the mechanization of book creation, and by 1820 cloth bindings were steadily replacing leather bindings. While some scholars, like noted bibliographer S.H. Steinberg, believe that the quality of book binding declined after its mechanization, this process did result in the "technical and aesthetic perfection of the cases."²³ For example, the mechanization of binding allowed for the imprint of the name of the work, the author, and the publisher on the spine of the book, a practice that is still done today. Mechanization also allowed for the experimentation of different types of cloth for binding, which ranged from the luxurious (like silk) to the hardy (like canvas). In terms of aesthetics, mechanization drove the invention of an embossing machine which could apply gold leaf to cloth covers.²⁴ Embossing drove a particularly important aesthetic development, as antiquarian bookseller Anthony Rota explains: "the spines of books not only acquired more fanciful lettering but often also rather elaborate illustrations *that gave some hint of the contents of the book* – either as reproductions of the pictures in the book or somehow symbolic of the contents"²⁵ (my emphasis added). These embossed spine illustrations seem to have influenced other aesthetic aspects of the book, as by the end of the nineteenth

²³ Steinberg, 1996, 140

²⁴ Rota, 1998, 113

²⁵ Rota, 1998, 115

century illustrations had moved to the fronts and backs of covers, endpapers became decorative rather than simply utilitarian, and the edges of book pages were gilded.²⁶ While the decorative embossing of book covers declined at the start of the twentieth century due to costs, it did have a lasting impact on the next trend of book design – the book-jacket.

The book-jacket was developed to protect permanent cloth bindings which needed to be kept clean for sale purposes. The first book-jackets were purely economical and meant to protect books as they were transported. While it is difficult to trace the history of paper book-jackets due to their transience, bibliographers and researchers have discovered that “the most commonly used jackets were at first simply plain paper with, at most, a hole cut out to make the title on the spine visible.”²⁷ The use of book-jackets seems to have risen in direct correlation with the decline of cover ornamentation, or the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. As book-jackets became the norm, “it was natural that the jacket should attract more and more attention from the publisher and designer.”²⁸ Early book jacket designs ranged from simple reproductions of title pages to illustrations borrowed from the book, but publishers quickly realized the advertising potential of book-jackets and began using the flaps and the reverse side of book-jackets to list their other titles, and in 1899 the first recorded ‘blurb’ was printed on the book-jacket of a Harper book.²⁹ By the 1920s, publishers realized they could do more than simply advertise on

²⁶ Rota, 1998, 117

²⁷ Rota, 1998, 127

²⁸ Rota, 1998, 128

²⁹ Rota, 1998, 130

the book-jackets, and they began to make their book-jackets more distinctive by either adopting a single style associated with the publisher and used for all books printed by that publisher (such as the early, distinctive Penguin books), or they commissioned an artist to create a unique piece of art for the book-jacket. The artistic design of book-jackets was and still is primarily up to the publisher's discretion. Occasionally a well-known author did and may give input for the final design, but only very rarely did and does the author also function as artist for book-jacket design.³⁰

The rarity of authors acting as their own book-jacket designers alone makes Alasdair Gray's books interesting and ripe for study, but antiquarian bookseller Anthony Rota frames why twentieth century books and their book-jackets in general are important from a collecting and research standpoint. In his book, *Apart from the Text*, Rota argues that book jackets are important to keep and preserve even if they are not artistically interesting because book jackets provide a crucial pieces of information about the book and "may provide clues to prevailing literary taste, economic circumstances, or snippets of publishing history."³¹ According to Rota, a plethora of information can be gleaned from book-jackets, from information about the author to information about the reception of the book. The creation of new book-jackets for new editions can attest to the popularity of a book, or its long print history, as publishers try new covers to attract new audiences. In the same way, the decline in popular reception can be traced through the falling prices often printed on the book-

³⁰ Rota, 1998, 133

³¹ Rota, 1998, 134

jacket. Book-jackets can also reveal the trends of a publisher based on what is advertised on the jacket and how it is advertised, or they can reveal what was important at a specific cultural moment. Perhaps one of the most interesting insights book-jackets can provide is the comparison between cultures, such as the comparison between English and American editions of the same book: "More and more frequently, they will have different jackets with different illustrations, blurbs, and, of course, prices. Simply comparing the different marketing strategies used for the same book can shed light on the subtle differences that separate nations that share a common language."³² Unfortunately, throughout most of the twentieth century, book-jackets were only considered useful in so far as they protected the book before it was sold; once a book was bought, the book-jacket was often discarded. This idea about the book-jacket's function was so prevalent that even booksellers discarded the book-jacket before handing books over to customers because they and the customer believed the book-jacket had "fulfilled its dual purpose of identifying (even promoting) the book and keeping it in perfect condition to the point of sale."³³ Fortunately, the current book collecting trade suggests that there has been a reversal in attitudes about book-jackets, at least in collecting and scholarly circles, because "not only will many collectors refuse to buy books that lack their jackets but a number will also turn down copies in jackets that have had the prices clipped from them or that show even the smallest sign of fraying."³⁴

³² Rota, 1998, 135

³³ Rota, 1998, 137-138

³⁴ Rota, 1998, 139

Rota's book, *Apart from the Text*, strongly suggests that twentieth century books have the cultural gravitas that makes their preservation a necessity, but more importantly Rota argues for the preservation of books as a whole, with the preservation of their book-jackets and original bindings due to the cultural implications and history the book-jackets and bindings reveal. Preservation of all the physical parts of a book is historically important, but this paper aims to show how preservation of the whole is important literarily as well by examining the novels *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* and *Poor Things* by Scottish author and artist, Alasdair Gray.

CHAPTER 3

ALASDAIR GRAY

Since the publication of his debut novel, *Lanark*, Alasdair Gray has been lauded as the greatest Scottish writer since Sir Walter Scott and “one of the most important living writers in English.”³⁵ *Lanark* specifically has been described as “a cultural time-bomb which had been ticking away patiently for years”³⁶ and is considered by some to be the work that reinvigorated the Scottish literary renaissance. *Poor Things*, published almost a decade after *Lanark*, is also considered one of Gray’s literary greats, as *Poor Things* won the Whitbread Prize for Best Novel as well as the Guardian Fiction award.³⁷ *Lanark* and *Poor Things* are completely different stories as far as plot and content, as one is reminiscent of Dante and the other is reminiscent of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, but both deal with a main character who is trying to come to terms with their disillusioned view of society – and it is a society that is indeed broken, which makes their reckoning all the more difficult. These novels and Gray’s others “characteristically [introduce] political and historical concerns,”³⁸ making these texts worthy of study, as they provide a look at a unique part of Twentieth Century Scotland and English literature. Gray’s books provide this unique look because their material

³⁵ Bernstein, 1999, 17

³⁶ Bernstein, 1999, 17

³⁷ Bernstein, 1999, 21

³⁸ Bernstein, 1999, 29

paratext reveal the publisher paratext and how Gray's books moved from a small, independent Scottish publisher to a large multinational corporate publisher, and how that move resulted in less authorial intervention.

Gray's stories are culturally important in their own right, as they deal with distinctly Twentieth Century themes such as the fear of nuclear fallout and the continual struggle of feminism. Gray has done more than simply write stories, though – he has also designed them. Specifically, Gray intimately involves himself in the book jacket artwork and the binding design of his books unlike most authors through the history of printing, although he follows in a long tradition of author/artist. Trained as a mural artist at the Glasgow School of Art³⁹, Gray does all the illustrations and book cover design for his works, including the cloth cover design and the book jacket design. This attention to overall design, as Stephen Bernstein explains, “make [his books] total works of art; comparisons to the visionaries William Blake and William Morris have been frequent.”⁴⁰ In fact, as can be seen in a few editions of some of his works, Gray is so attentive to detail that he has contributed blurbs and reviews for his stories, which are often placed strategically on his dust jackets. These attentions make Gray's books as a whole historically, culturally, and literarily important.

The University of South Carolina's Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections has an impressive collection of Scottish literature, including extensive holdings of Robert Burns and Walter Scott. Additionally, the collection

³⁹ Cameron, 2011

⁴⁰ Bernstein, 1999, 17

has many Alasdair Gray's works of literature and art. Therefore, the libraries at the University of South Carolina and their Alasdair Gray holdings were used for the purposes of this study alongside personal copies. Only physical copies of both *Lanark* and *Poor Things* were examined; electronic copies are of interest and worthy of study, but are a subject for a different paper. Two libraries within the University of South Carolina library system have copies of Gray's *Lanark* and *Poor Things*: the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections in Hollings Library and Thomas Cooper Library. Of the seven copies of *Lanark* that were examined for this paper, the Irvin Department holds five, while Thomas Cooper holds only one; the final copy was a personal one. Of the eight copies of *Poor Things* that were examined for this paper, the Irvin Department holds five, Thomas Cooper holds two, and again the final copy was a personal one. As mentioned earlier, Gray's novels deal with Twentieth Century issues, and since the argument of this paper is that his covers are a part of the whole story, a plot summary of each book is helpful for understanding what is going on within the artwork of the various covers.

Lanark: A Life in Four Books is Gray's first book, published in 1981 but he began writing it when he was at the Glasgow School of Art in the early 1950s. Gray grew up during World War II and had been sent to live in the highlands as a child. As a teenager and young man, then, he lived through the Cold War and fear of nuclear fallout. *Lanark* is a response to those fears and feelings of helplessness in a world that is cruel and not ruled by "the people" but rather large, impersonal powers. This is why *Lanark* is compared to Dante, for as one

Hell is left behind, another appears. The details of the novel, are difficult book to explain because it does not follow linear narrative structure. The novel is indeed composed of four different books, but begins with Book Three which starts in the city of Unthank, a sunless, timeless, decaying industrial city. Lanark, the main character, arrived in Unthank by train, but does not know who he is or how he came to be in Unthank. Unable to work because of an ineffective government, Lanark wanders around the city without direction or purpose which seems to result in an illness called dragonhide which begins to cover his body in scales. Lanark learns that many people in the city have similar afflictions, specifically a woman named Rima who Lanark falls in love with but does not reciprocate his affection. As the dragonhide takes over Lanark's body and he increasingly feels disconnected from those around him, alone and desperate he cries out for a way to escape Unthank. In response, a mouth opens in the ground and swallows Lanark, bringing him to the Institute and curing him of his disease. The Institute is well lit, runs efficiently, and has many working, productive people. For a while, Lanark is happier and he is given the task of studying the most stubborn cases of dragonhide. The longer Lanark is in the Institute, though, the more he begins to suspect the way it runs; he discovers that the Institute runs off the lost cases, or the people whose afflictions are too far gone, or people who are otherwise considered unfit by Institute standards – these "lost cases" are ground up and used for energy, both as power and as food. Horrified, and having just saved Rima from such a fate, Lanark decides to leave the Institute in search of a better place.

This brings the novel to Book One followed by Book Two, both of which tell the story of Duncan Thaw. Book One follows Thaw through his childhood and adolescence in Scotland during World War II and traces the difficulty Thaw has with understanding his world which is on the brink of nuclear warfare. From a young age, Thaw finds it difficult to connect with people, and alternately sees the world as grotesque and as beautiful. This duality warps his teenage sexual fantasies, making it even more difficult for him to connect to the women in his life, including his mother and his sister. Book One ends with the death of Thaw's mother and his entrance into the Glasgow School of Art which quickly eclipses the former event. Book Two begins with Thaw's attendance at the Glasgow School of Art where he trains as a painter. Although at first excited, Thaw becomes disillusioned with the school as he feels his art and his abilities are underappreciated by teachers and students alike. Meanwhile, Thaw tries to win over a young art student, Marjory. Over time, it becomes clear Thaw feels like the problems with his artwork are exacerbated by his inability to connect with women, especially Marjory. Thaw's inability to connect with people, but especially women, is apparent throughout Books One and Two, although in Book Two it drives him to insanity. Unable to complete a mural and upon having it and himself portrayed as grotesque by a female reporter, Thaw seeks solace in a prostitute who turns him away because of his eczema. This drives Thaw to search the city for a woman to connect with, but his wanderings are driven by insanity and the connection he makes is through murder. Book Two ends with Thaw leaving Glasgow for the Scottish Highlands; seeking distance from civilization, Thaw

wanders off to the sea where he finally throws himself into the waves and drowns.

After Thaw's suicide, the novel returns to the Institute and Lanark and Rima's pending departure. They discover that instead of being able to go a city with sunlight, they must go back to Unthank with the promise that they will soon be allowed to move onto a better city called Provan as the city of Unthank is scheduled for demolition. Rima gives birth to their son shortly after arriving in Unthank, and Lanark tries to find work again, but the situation is much the same as the first time Lanark was in Unthank; the government is still inefficient and does not or cannot help its citizens. Lanark, in a last ditch effort to be of use for improving his community decides to go to Provan to argue *against* the destruction of Unthank –Upon arrival in Provan, though, Lanark discovers it to be as Hellish as Unthank and the Institute because the Council in Provan is corrupt and does not care about the poverty or destruction It wreaks on places like Unthank. Returning to Unthank without having accomplished anything, Lanark arrives just in time for the destruction of his city; he is reunited with his son Alexander and Rima one last time, but his continual absence from their lives in pursuit of a better world leaves him disconnected from them as well. Ultimately, Lanark welcomes death alone.

Lanark was first published by Canongate Publishing in 1981. Canongate is based out of Edinburgh, Scotland and was founded in 1973 as an independent publisher. Their mission is “to unearth and amplify the most vital, innovative

voices we can find, wherever they come from.”⁴¹ Canongate’s status as an independent publisher means they are not owned by a parent company, nor have they subsumed other publishing companies. Thus, the independent status usually indicates that a publisher is a smaller, less powerful publishing house compared to larger publishing firms. Although today Canongate is considered a “successful global niche publisher,”⁴² it did not always have the power it has today – *Lanark* is considered to be the work that made Canongate a viable force in the publishing world. It should be remembered, however, that Canongate is still labelled as “niche” meaning even today it does not carry the power and financial backing of large publishing firms.

The Irvin Department has two copies of the first edition of *Lanark*, published in 1981 by Canongate Publishing, but these copies were printed and bound in the United States of America by Fairfield Graphics. The fact that this first edition was published by a company in the United Kingdom but printed in the United States is significant. As discussed earlier, Canongate was still a small press in 1981, and *Lanark* is considered to have been its break into the larger world of publishing. Prior to *Lanark*, however, Canongate did not have the full financial backing it would take to print a book the size and complexity of *Lanark*. Therefore, Canongate had a grant through the Scottish Arts Council which paid for the costs of printing. This particular situation in which a small publishing house outsourced the printing to a company in another country and paid for it through a grant illustrates the lack of financial power that smaller publishing

⁴¹ Canongate, 2017

⁴² Kovac and Squires, 17

houses have, but the following discussion of the different cover artwork (for both *Lanark* and *Poor Things*) aims to reveal how small, independent publishing houses may have more flexibility for author design involvement than larger publishing houses.

This is not a bibliographic paper so copy specific details are not necessary. The details of the binding and book cover attributed to the first edition are important, though. Both copies in the Irvin Department share these binding and book jacket details. For instance, both are bound in black cloth with “Lanark, Alasdair Gray, Canongate” stamped on the spine in gold, with bright red endpapers and flyleaves. There is no other ornamentation on the bindings for these editions (see Figure 3.3). This may be because Gray had not yet decided to include decoration on the bindings of his books, or it may have been because the printing costs for a smaller press that was already printing from grant money could not support decorative bindings. Either way, it is an important detail when compared to later editions of many of Gray’s other works.

The book jacket of the first edition is the most recognized cover for *Lanark*, although it is not the only cover used over the years. This book jacket is especially important for the first edition because the binding of the book does not bear the art of the author, while the book jacket does. The cover artwork by Gray wraps around the book and is a black and grey drawing of a cityscape with images of people throughout. The front side of the cover has a naked woman on the right side of the image standing in the sea and looking like she is about to step out into the city. Her arms are above her head and she is holding the sun

which is colored gold (see Figure 3.1). Above her is a god who is shooting a gold lightning bolt out of his eyes toward the man on the left side of the drawing, which also happens to be on the back side of the cover. The man mirrors the woman on the front in many ways, as he is also large, naked, and has his arms above his head. He appears to be holding the moon (again, mirroring the woman), but his hands are unclear and ill-defined (see Figure 3.2). In fact, in comparison to the woman on the front cover, the man on the back is unclear both linearly and structurally. What this means is the woman on the front cover is clearly defined with decisive, black lines outlining all parts of her body, from her nipples to her abdomen to her pubic hair. Additionally, the woman is obstructed by nothing else in the drawing – there are no other images within her body and no part of the title obstructs her. Comparatively, the man naked man on the back cover is undefined in a number of ways. For instance, within the man's abdomen is a woman tied up, and two swans are flying away from her. There is no definition of muscle to his body, but rather his body is shaded in a way that suggests infinite space, with stars beginning to fill his arms. These elements ultimately obscure him from the viewer. The information about the books, in an arrow on fire that spans the artwork and holds the title of the work (saying LANARK ALASDAIR GRAY on the front and spine and A LIFE IN 4 BOOKS on the back) also partially obstructs the reader's view of the man, almost covering his face. Even the moon that the man holds is partially obstructed, as it is a half moon rather than a full moon. Although the man is prominent based on perspective, these obstructive elements suggest he is not the focus of the story.

In addition to the two large naked figures, there are portraits of five people across the bottom of the piece – a man with black hair, a woman, a man with a mustache, another woman who is looking at the viewer, and an old man in a tweed hat and jacket. In terms of perspective, these five profiles appear closest to the viewer. On the spine of the cover is a baby being born from the view of the mother, with a dragon like creature and two seraphs watching above the spine scene.

The interspersing space is covered in architecture from a city, like smokestacks, bridges, government buildings, and churches. The back of the cover has three particular images that suggest the cityscape is that of Glasgow, Scotland; the distinctive statue of John Knox from the city Necropolis is visible, as is the cathedral and the Glasgow Victoria Infirmary Teaching Hospital. The text of the story also suggests the book jacket artwork is of Glasgow, as Duncan Thaw is working on a painting of the city in Book Two and the description of it seems similar – “The enlarged landscape would show Blackhill, Riddrie, the Campsie Fells, the Cathkin Braes and crowds from both sides mixing around the locks in the middle.”⁴³ However, the story reveals Unthank may be a Hellish version of Glasgow, so it is unclear which version of the city the artwork portrays. The people on the cover suggest both – the large woman could be Rima with her dark hair or Marjory who was supposed to model naked for Duncan Thaw. The large ill-defined man looks young with no beard so could be Duncan Thaw (and the tied up woman is indicative of his perverted sexual desires), but the ill

⁴³ Gray, 2016, 287

definition could be Lanark who is covered in dragonhide and struggles to understand who he is. The point is the cover presents a little bit of both narratives and literally illustrates how they are the same.

Some of the inner artwork of *Lanark* is important to mention because it plays an important part in future editions as well as the interpretation of the story. As the title of the novel suggests and as mentioned earlier, the novel is split into four books. Gray illustrated a frontispiece for each of the books, which will be discussed in the order in which they appear in the novel. Book Three's frontispiece has a woman named Magistra Vitae, or teacher, in the middle of the image. She is clothed in armor and is holding up the world which is full of monsters and both real and fictional places, while stepping on the skeletal bodies of Mors (death) and Oblivio (forgetfulness). Magistra Vitae is flanked by two women, Experientia (experience) on the left and Veritas (truth) on the right. Experientia is an old woman with a covered head and holds plumbing tools. She is between two columns covered in books and symbols of learning. Veritas is a naked young woman holding nothing and is between two columns with images of youth. One column is covered in flames and says, "Lux Veritatis" loosely translated to light of truth, while the other column is covered in greenery and says, "Vita memoriae" loosely translated to living memory. There are two more women at the top of the image; Fama Bona or Good News, and Fama Mala, or Bad News. Fama Bona is above Experientia and is in the light while Fama Mala is above Veritas and is in the dark. Both are blowing trumpets above the world, toward the word "Providentia."

The frontispiece for Book One varies from the style seen in Book Three. There are no allegorical figures. Instead, this image has a ship, a sea monster, and a recreation of Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan – only half of the Leviathan is visible, and is the half holding a sword. These figures are in the sea, which is flooding a city, presumably Glasgow based on the text in the image. The text of the image is placed on two columns (which are not holding anything up); the left column says, "Let Glasgow Flourish" and the right column says, "By Telling the Truth." A lightning bolt coming from the Leviathan's mouth goes behind one column and around the other, heading for Glasgow. Finally, there are three portraits at the bottom of the page – a man on the left and two women on the right. One woman is young and one is old; the young woman is looking down while the old woman is looking out toward the reader. The man is looking at the women, although it seems as if he is focusing on the young woman.

The imagery used in the frontispiece for Book Two returns to some of the imagery from Book Three, or the first book in the novel. The frontispiece for Book Two is within a lecture hall, and the room is full of men. A woman is being dissected on the table, and a skeleton oversees the operation at the head of the table. The windows reveal the night sky, and two naked children, who may be cherubs based on their flight, holding a seal with a tree, a book, a bell, a fish, and a scepter. The book reads "Via Veritas Vita" loosely translated to "The way of life and truth" The floor of the lecture hall is checkered, and a sign at the bottom says, "Homo a se coctum esumque crustum est hoc fecit separatio." This Latin phrase was difficult to decipher because of the conjugations, but a loose

translation translates this phrase to “Man himself a cooked meat pie made with this separation.

Finally, the frontispiece for Book Four returns to the imagery found in the Book One frontispiece but is more directly reminiscent of Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan* frontispiece. Gray’s Leviathan looms above a city much like the Leviathan in Hobbes’ frontispiece. However, Gray’s version rises out of the sea which indicates that the city Gray’s Leviathan looms above is Glasgow. Like Hobbes’ Leviathan, Gray’s Leviathan has a body made up of many people, he is wearing a crown, and he is holding a sword on the left and a scepter on the right. Gray’s Leviathan differs in subtle ways, though, such as the fact that the Leviathan’s eyes are closed, and the sword and scepter he holds are named “Force” and “Persuasion,” respectively. In the clouds surrounding Gray’s Leviathan the phrase “Foremost of the Beasts of the Earth for Pride, Job c41,v34.” The bottom third of the frontispiece is also structured like Hobbes’ frontispiece, with panels of civilization surrounding a banner. Gray’s frontispiece only has eight panels, but the illustrations also seem to illuminate civilization, although Gray’s illustrations come from civilizations of the Twentieth Century. From left to right and top to bottom, the images are: a nightstick; a police and military cap; the union jack and lines of soldiers being inspected; a city scape burning with a plane overhead and a tank aiming at citizens (men, women, and children); a scroll; a graduation cap and lawyers wig; a classroom with a male teacher teaching math to a full class; a factory making automobiles. The curtain in Gray’s frontispiece only says, “Book Four,” but Gray borrows from Hobbes’

frontispiece once more when he inscribes a plaque at the bottom of the piece with the phrase, “The Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth.” (see Figure 3.4)

The reason for describing these frontispieces becomes readily apparent when discussing the next edition of *Lanark*. The Irvin Department owns a 1982 paperback edition of *Lanark* that was printed by Granada publishing, which in the 1980s operated out of London, Toronto, Sydney, and New York. This paperback edition was printed and bound in Great Britain by Hazell Watson & Viney Ltd. It is difficult to find information on Granada Publishing today because it has since dissolved. The University of Glasgow has records that reveal some of the history of Granada Publishing – it appears that Granada publishing actually started off as The Hour Press Limited but was renamed Granada Publishing in 1966 when it was made a subsidiary of the Granada Group Incorporated. Granada Publishing Inc. operated as the Granada Group’s publication branch and through the 1970s acquired other publishers. By 1999, though, the Granada Group had sold Granada Publishing, which was subsequently dissolved by its new company.⁴⁴ This history reveals that by the time it was publishing the 1982 paperback edition of *Lanark*, Granada Publishing was part of a large publishing firm with a great deal of financial backing and oversight.

The cover for the Granada 1982 paperback does not use the original book jacket artwork but rather takes the frontispiece from Book Four and transposes it

⁴⁴ University of Glasgow Archives, 2008

onto the cover. The cover does not use the entirety of the frontispiece, either, but rather uses only the part with the Leviathan rising out of the sea above Glasgow. It cuts out the panels of civilization and it does not include the quote above the Leviathan's head. Additionally, rather than incorporating the title into the artwork as is done on the first edition's cover artwork, the full title is placed above the artwork while a quote of praise and the author's name are placed below (see Figure 3.5). Oddly, the spine and the back cover do use elements from the first edition book jacket artwork, such as the mother's perspective of the birth of her baby, the profiles of the men and women, and part of the cityscape. Specifically, the 1982 Granada edition used the images of John Knox's statue and the cathedral from Gray's original cityscape. The choice to take a frontispiece from within the novel and make it the cover artwork raises the question of how much Gray was involved in the production of this particular edition. Additionally, this cover artwork choice prioritizes one section of the book over the other as readers will recognize the art when they arrive at Book Four.

In 1985, another hardback edition of *Lanark* was printed, but it was published by the United States publisher George Braziller who founded, owned, and operated George Braziller Incorporated in New York City. Braziller founded the company in 1955, and it remains an independent publisher to this day. George Braziller Inc. is like Canongate in this way, as it has not been subsumed by a large publishing firm at any point in its history. While this means that George Braziller Inc. may not have the financial flexibility of a large firm, it does mean the company has been able to focus "on publishing serious literary works and works

of art history, architecture, and criticism” as well as “timely and beautiful visual books.”⁴⁵

The 1985 George Braziller Inc. edition has new book jacket artwork and a new binding design. The new artwork is by Gray and is related to the story, while the binding design an early indication or attempt at the way Gray would eventually design all his hardback bindings. The book jacket artwork is by Gray, but does not wrap around the cover. The cover is beige and the front illustration has a white and black pen drawing, with a large naked woman coming out of the frame slightly. She splits the image between day and night and holds the moon, while a naked Zeus wields a lightning bolt and has an eagle behind him on the woman’s forehead. She appears to be walking off a stage in a round auditorium where there are many rows of people. The image is framed by the entirety of the title which runs along one side of the illustration while the author’s name is underneath (see Figure 3.6). Like the 1982 Granada paperback edition, the spine of the cover has three illustrations, separated by the title and the author’s name. The top image is the portrait of an old man looking away and a young woman looking at the viewer. The middle and largest illustration is the part of the cityscape of Glasgow, with John Knox’s Necropolis statue, the cathedral, and the Glasgow Victoria Infirmary hospital in flames, and people fleeing the scene at the bottom of the illustration. The final, bottom illustration is of a child being born from the perspective of its mother. The back of the 1985 cover has two illustrations. The top is the Leviathan from Book Four’s frontispiece, but only illustrates him

⁴⁵ George Braziller Inc., 2017

from the waist up, holding a sword and scepter and a city scape on both sides of him. The bottom is a portrait of four people, two men and two women, alternating. The woman on the left is the same woman from the spine of the book, and these four portraits are the same from the 1981 edition. In between these two illustrations are "Praise[s] for "Lanark"" and some quotes from people/reviews. The book is bound in black cloth with LANARK stamped in gold down the spine. ENDURE/YOU A is stamped in gold on the back, and E NOT/ALONE is stamped on the front cover. If the book is opened all the way, the A and E intersect with the R in LANARK, so that the cover reads ENDURE/YOU ARE NOT/ALONE.

The new artwork and binding of the 1985 edition provide a new perspective for the novel. The book jacket artwork described above is related to the story, but while the 1981 edition provided a look and focus on Glasgow/Unthank, the auditorium on the 1985 edition suggests the council in Provan that Lanark attends as a delegate in Book Four, while the woman who occupies most of the space in the image may represent the love or purpose Lanark tries to find while in Provan. The binding of the 1985 edition also provides a message for the reader, although the phrase "Endure you are not alone" may have many meanings or connotations. Regardless, the 1985 edition's cover and bindings provide a new access point for the reader, and this revision of the context seems to have been Gray's choice based on the fact that this edition's cover has completely new artwork and the bindings begin a trend of binding design seen on later Gray books.

In 2001, Canongate printed a new edition of *Lanark* and there are many indications that Alasdair Gray was intimately involved in the production of this new edition. This is evidenced by the fact that it was a limited run (only 2000 copies were printed), and the fact that there was a space printed specifically for a signature on the box the edition came in. This edition is vastly different from former editions in many ways. To begin with, the 2001 edition is printed in four volumes. This means that each volume has a new book jacket, and each of the book jackets has a different piece of artwork. All of the artwork is by Gray, but from before his career as an author, which is to say all of the pieces of art were created and finished before *Lanark* was published. This first volume, which is also Book Three, has cover art that wraps around the book, like a mural, and is framed in white with room on the bottom for “LANARK (in gold letters)/ A LIFE IN FOUR BOOKS/ BY ALASDAIR GRAY (in black letters)/ VOLUME 1, BOOK 3 (in red letters). The spine of the book jackets says, “LANARK VOLUME 1” with Lanark and Volume in white, the number is in red. According to back flap, the cover art is a painting by Alasdair Gray, titled *Cowcaddens Landscape 1950*, painted in 1963. The painting seems to be a city street corner, allowing the viewer to look up one street on the front of the cover and up another on the back. The street corner is not barren, as there are several people both near and far, but none seem to interact with each other (see Figures 3.6 and 3.7). The front flap has a synopsis of the contents of Volume 1, Book 3;

The first volume of this novel is Book Three because it starts in the middle.

The location is a clockless city where the sun rises for only a few minutes

at irregular intervals and nobody does essential work. Lanark has recently arrived there with no memory of other places. He joins a clique led by Sludden, a smart manipulator, and at last discovers that he is in Hell. He escapes to a subterranean institute that turns out to be another region of Hell and here wins the love of a woman he seems to have known in an earlier life. This book ends with him contacting an Oracle who will tell him what the earlier life was. It is the story told in Volumes 2 and 3.

As for the binding of Volume 1, Book 3, the book is bound in maroon Linwood paper, with a design stamped on both the front and back covers in gold. The design is two thistles, between which a cherub is emerging from a broken skull at the bottom of the design. The phrase “work as if you lived in the early days of a better nation” are written on a ribbon that curls between the two thistles, ending above the cherub’s head. The ribbon breaks the continuity of the gold frame around the image (see Figure 3.12). The image is repeated on the back cover. Additionally, the book has navy blue endpapers and flyleaves. The detail of the color of the endpapers is significant because of the colors of the rest of the Volumes/Books.

Volume 2, Book 1 (which actually contains Book 1 and the Interlude) has cover art that, according to the back flap, is a Gouache painting by Gray, titled *Two Hills*, painted in 1950. The painting is confined to the front and the back rather than wrapping around the spine like a mural. The art work on the front is a cityscape; on the left is a church on a hill, and on the right is a factory also on a hill but the perspective suggests the factory is in the distance. Regardless of the

perspective, the factory is almost level with the church (see Figure 3.8). The back cover has the same painting but in mirror of the front. The art is framed by white and there is room at the bottom once again to have the title, author, and volume/book listed (in same color scheme as Volume 1/Book 3). The spine announces the book's title and volume again, just like Volume 1, but this time the title and volume are in gold letters. The front flap of this volume also has a synopsis:

This tells the story of Duncan Thaw from his infancy in a pleasant Glasgow housing scheme in the early days of the Second World War to his acceptance as a student by Glasgow Art School, in the high noon of the British Welfare State. Like other confused adolescents Thaw sees the world as a horrid reflection of his own condition, but the good sense and humour of his family, of his friend Coulter, and of friendly teachers brings this book to a happy ending.

Volume Two is bound in navy blue paper with the same design as Volume 1, but stamped in silver (see Figure 3.13); the back is once again the same design, and the endpapers and flyleaves are maroon. In essence, then, the binding of Volumes 1 and 2 are opposites. This is especially interesting when considering the contents of the volumes – one contains the story of Lanark and the other contains the story of Duncan Thaw. When looking at Volumes 3 and 4, it becomes apparent that one style is used for Lanark's story and another is used for Duncan Thaw's story, and that this style extends beyond the bindings but also to the book jacket construction and artwork.

For example, Volume 3, Book 2 is bound exactly like Volume 2, Book 1, which is to say it is also bound in maroon paper, has the same design stamped in silver, and has navy blue endpaper and flyleaves. The book jacket also mimics that of Volume 2, Book 1 in that the image on the book jacket is confined to the front and back rather than wrapping around the book like a mural. Additionally, this painting is framed in white with room on the bottom for the title, author's name, and volume/book, all in the same color scheme as previous volumes, while the spine's title and volume match the color scheme found on Volume 2, Book 1's spine. The painting on the Volume 3, Book 2 cover is again by Gray, titled *The Garden of Eden*, and was painted in 1967. There is a couple embracing in the middle of the painting, but the male figure has his face hidden by the woman's hair and he is red. They are watched by God, but only the back of God is visible to the viewer. There is another couple to the top left, where the woman is simultaneously picking fruit and handing it to a man who is sitting down. There are many animals but none of them in pairs, and the top of the painting holds scenes from outside of Eden, as it is a rough sea and a burning town. Specifically, these scenes depict stories from later in the Bible; Noah's ark, Moses and the ten commandments, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the crucifixion (see Figure 3.9). Like Volume 2, Book 1, this painting is mirrored on the back cover. The front flap once again has a synopsis, which says,

This continues the story of Duncan Thaw from his entry into Glasgow School of Art through his training and effort to paint a huge masterpiece, an effort leading to madness and suicide. Three things stop this from

being a wholly miserable tale. (1) Black comedy. (2) The vitality of the people he meets. (3) Our knowledge that he will be reincarnated as Lanark, whose only ambition is to find some love and sunlight, so has more hope of succeeding.

The choice of this painting for this Volume/Book is especially significant based on what happens in Book Two – the huge masterpiece that is referenced in the synopsis is a mural that Thaw paints within a church, so the subject of his mural is religious. The book describes this painting almost exactly as part of the mural:

The reporter looked at the Eden wall and said, “Who’s that behind the bramble bush with a lizard at his feet?”

“God,” said Thaw, glancing uneasily at the minister...

“But why is Adam a Negro?”

“He’s actually more red than black,” the minister murmured, “and the name ‘Adam’ derives from a Hebrew word meaning ‘red earth.’”

“But Eve is white!”

“Pearly pink,” said Thaw. “I’m told that for a few moments love makes different people feel like one. My outline shows the oneness, my colors emphasize the difference.”⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Gray, 2016, 325-326

The book jacket artwork for this book emphasizes this particular part of the book, and visually represents an integral part of the story, as Thaw's inability to complete the mural and find consolation for that fact drives him to insanity.

The fourth and final volume of this 2001 Canongate edition is Volume 4, Book 4. The book is bound in maroon paper, the thistle and ribbon design is stamped in gold, and the endpapers and flyleaves are navy blue, just like the binding of Volume 1 Book 3. Additionally, the artwork on the book jacket wraps around like a mural again just as it did with Volume 1, Book 3. This binding and book jacket design matches Volume 1, Book 3's binding and book jacket design because both contain the story of Lanark rather than Duncan Thaw. The artwork for the Volume 4, Book 4 book jacket is again by Gray, and is titled *The Triumph of Death*, 1960. It depicts the destruction of an industrial city, most likely Glasgow based on the cathedral and Glasgow Victoria's Infirmary hospital on the back side of the book jacket, which is a reoccurring image of Glasgow in Gray's works (as is evidenced on some of the covers of other editions of *Lanark*). The destruction appears to be at the hands of skeletal demons, many of which have only huge, gaping mouths for heads. The humans in the painting have expressions of suffering but are not taking any action (see Figures 3.10 and 3.11). Again, as with the other volumes, the front flap of the book jacket has a synopsis which says,

Accompanied by the woman he loves, Lanark returns to the dark city of Unthank, for he has been told it is a way-station to the sunlight he desires. Here his son is born, and the mother leaves him for Sludden who is now

Unthank's Lord Provost. Sludden persuades Lanark to attend a world congress as a spokesman for the place where the only peoples he loves now live. Lanark's experiences of being politically great and sexually desirable is shown to be a delusion, but he learns he was always supported by more love than he ever noticed, and sees the dawn of a new long day breaking over Unthank, the dark side of any city.

Like Volume 3/Book 2, Volume 4/Book 4 also has a description within the text which reflects the painting on the book jacket. It comes when the author, Nastler, is telling Lanark about the end of his story and the destruction of Unthank:

"...the landscape is tilted at a peculiar angle, rioters are attacking the clock towers and much of the city is in flame...you stand with Rima on the height of the Necropolis watching flocks of mouths sweep the streets like the shadows of huge birds, devouring the population as they go."⁴⁷ Once again, the choice of this painting for the book jacket makes this passage stand out to the reader, as well as the chapter where Unthank is indeed destroyed. A great deal of action happens in Book 4, and many other details are important, but the book jacket art forces this focus. This focus is not a bad thing, but it certainly different from the focuses of previous editions' artwork.

In addition to the new artwork which forces focus on certain parts of the text, the deliberate contrasts and consistencies in the bindings and the book jacket design allow the reader to physically see which parts of the story are

⁴⁷ Gray, 2016, 497

connected before they begin reading the text, i.e. that Volume 1/Book 3 and Volume 4/Book 4 are Lanark's narrative while Volume 2/Book 1 and Volume 3/Book 2 are Duncan Thaw's narrative. This split and order allow Gray to accomplish what he set out to do, as documented in *Lanark*; "I want *Lanark* to be read in one order but eventually thought of in another."⁴⁸ Although former editions of *Lanark* made readers read the novel in one order, the 2001 Canongate edition lends a physical delineation that makes the reader think of the novel in a different order. This is not to say that the 2001 edition is a more perfect edition of *Lanark*, but rather that the physicality of the volumes allows for a different approach to the text.

The latest printed edition of *Lanark* is the 2016 Canongate paperback edition. This paperback has the same artwork from the first edition by Canongate (Figure 3.14 and 3.15). However, there are some key differences in the coloring. To begin, the drawing is in black and white rather than grey, although the artwork is framed in a light grey. Additionally, the sun that the woman holds has no color – in the original it is gold. The arrow that goes around the cover of the book has red colored flames around it rather than gold ones, and LANARK is in red rather than gold too. The arrow has nothing on the spine, but a red vertical stripe containing the words "Alasdair Gray LANARK" and the Canongate logo runs down the spine, across and obstructing the artwork. The back still says, "A LIFE IN 4 BOOKS" but it is in red rather than black. The barcode for the book is on the back and obscures the large man's lower-half, making it difficult to discern that

⁴⁸ Gray, 2016, 483

he is a man in the first place, as his face is androgynous, he has no muscle definition, and the viewer can no longer see his genitalia. The insides of both covers are bright red, mimicking the endpapers of the first edition, but inside covers have quotes about the book, and the back inside cover has a self-portrait by the author (whereas former editions did not). Nothing about this edition particularly suggests that Gray was involved in the design of this newest edition, and the attempt to ask the author about his involvement in this edition went unanswered. This question leads back to the question of publishers, however, which is useful.

Over the course of the discussion of these different editions of *Lanark* by multiple publishers, a pattern has emerged. Two independent publishers produced editions of *Lanark*, while one larger publishing firm produced a paperback edition. The editions published by the independent publishers were the 1981, 1985, 2001, and 2016 editions. Canongate produced the 1981, 2001, and 2016 editions, and while each edition illustrates the author involvement and revision of design, the 2001 edition is the best example of how Canongate gave Gray the opportunity to create a new way to literally see his texts. Since Canongate was Gray's first publisher and has the production rights to *Lanark*, it may seem like the reason they allowed this revision of design was because *Lanark* played such an important role in their growth. However, the production of the George Braziller Inc. 1985 edition proves this assumption to be false. George Braziller Inc., another independent publisher, has a new book jacket and binding obviously designed by Gray just four years after the first edition of *Lanark* was

released. The implication here is evident when the 1982 Granada edition is brought into comparison. The Granada edition not only did not use the original cover artwork, but it also did not commission a new piece of art for the cover – instead, Granada Publishing pulled a frontispiece from the inside of the book, chopped it in half, and pasted it on the cover. The cover of the 1982 Granada edition makes it obvious that this larger publishing firm did not approach Gray for the rights to his book jacket artwork, nor did they look for him to create a new design. The George Braziller Inc. edition, however, did. The difference here appears to be that the revision of the context of the novel was allowed and perhaps encouraged by smaller, independent publishers (Canongate and George Braziller Inc.), while the larger publishing firms did not.

All the editions of *Lanark* examined for this paper have been discussed at this point, as well as a discussion of how each new cover provides a new insight into the text of the novel and insight into the printing and publishing process of smaller, independent publishing houses. There is one last copy of *Lanark* that was examined for this paper, however, and its inclusion provides insight into the problem of preservation of these unique books. The Thomas Cooper Library at the University of South Carolina, or the main academic library at the University, has a copy of *Lanark*. In fact, Thomas Cooper owns a first edition of *Lanark*, the 1981 Canongate hardback edition (an edition that now sells for upwards of \$1,500 on ABEbooks)⁴⁹. It has the same black cloth binding, the same red endpapers and flyleaves, and the same gold stamped title on the spine.

⁴⁹ Gray, Alasdair, AbeBooks, 2017

Unfortunately, Thomas Cooper's copy no longer has its book jacket – it was removed by the library, although the front flap of the book jacket was cut and literally pasted onto the inside back cover. The rest of the cover and its artwork are gone. This literally removes a part of the story from the reader and a point of access – as discussed earlier, the 1981 edition book jacket is at once a portrait of the main characters (Lanark and Duncan, Rima and Marjory) and the dual city of Unthank and Glasgow. While it is impossible to escape understanding these characters and places are related after reading the book, the book jacket artwork makes it obvious that they are actually one and the same. The lack of book jacket art makes it possible for a reader to walk away thinking these narratives, people, and places are simply related or new iterations, but the artwork reveals their oneness.

Poor Things: Episodes from the Early Life of Archibald McCandless M.D., Scottish Public Health Officer is, in essence, a retelling of the Frankenstein story. In Gray's retelling, though, he sets himself up as the editor rather than the author, thereby framing the story as a historical one. The story, set in Victorian Glasgow, is narrated by Archibald McCandless but is about a medical scientist, Godwin Baxter, and his creation, named Bella Baxter. Godwin tells McCandless that he created Bella when he found a pregnant woman who had drowned herself in the river; he created her by implanting the infant's brain into the body of its drowned mother. After introducing Bella to McCandless, Godwin decides he must take Bella on a trip around the world to give her brain time to develop. The trip is

meant to be a civilized education, but proves to be problematic since Bella's body is that of a grown woman and still has the sexual desires of a grown woman.

Godwin returns to Glasgow with Bella but is downtrodden as he realizes that she cannot and will not love him as anything more than creator (evidenced especially to the reader through Bella's referral to Godwin as "God" throughout the narrative). McCandless, who has fallen in love with Bella, asks Bella to marry him and Godwin agrees to the arrangement. Before they can wed, though, Bella elopes with another man, Duncan Wedderburn. Bella and Wedderburn travel around Europe together for a while but Bella eventually abandons him for her own adventures and eventually returns home to Glasgow. Back in Glasgow, Bella is a more independent, sexually liberated woman, but is confronted by her backstory when her wedding to McCandless is interrupted by her former husband, or her body's former husband, General Blessington. In the ensuing disagreement, Bella finally learns of Godwin's experimentation but learns that her former husband had suggested she have a clitorrectomy for her extreme sexual desires while having a mistress. Bella concludes that her previous life as Victoria Blessington had indeed been miserable enough to drive her to suicide, even when pregnant. Bella successfully avoids being coerced or abducted back to her old life as Victoria Blessington and instead drives her former husband and his accomplices from Godwin's house, marries McCandless, and becomes a doctor. After these events, McCandless' narrative quickly wraps up in a neat manner, which is to say he leaves no loose ends.

The book does not end with McCandless' narrative, though. Instead, it is followed by a letter from Victoria McCandless, MD, who states she was the wife of Archibald McCandless but the events relayed within his book are completely fantastical. She then gives her own brief narrative of her life in which she recounts her childhood as Victoria, her marriage to General Blessington, as well as why she left him and changed her identity to Bella Baxter. The novel finally ends with historical notes from Alasdair Gray that give insight into different parts of each narrative. However, the sum of the historical notes does not favor one narrative over the other, so the reader is left to decide which narrative to believe.

Poor Things was first published by Bloomsbury in 1992. Bloomsbury was founded in 1986 “on the principle of publishing books of the highest quality,”⁵⁰ and was based solely out of London, England. The company quickly grew – in 1994 they expanded their operations to paperback books, and in 1998 they extended their publishing house to the United State of America (founding Bloomsbury USA). Today, Bloomsbury has branch companies in Sydney, Australia and Delhi, India as well. Bloomsbury's extension to paperback books in under a decade shows just how fast the company and its power grew in the publishing world. In order for a publishing house to produce both hardbacks and paperbacks, it must have an immense amount of financial power, which Bloomsbury had; in 1994, they earned £5.5 million when the company went public⁵¹, which allowed them to extend their publishing power. However, Bloomsbury produced *Poor Things* prior to this growth, and is still considered an

⁵⁰ Bloomsbury, 2017

⁵¹ Bloomsbury, 2017

independent publisher, although that label means something different for Bloomsbury today. In 1992 when *Poor Things* was first published, Bloomsbury would have operated in much the same way that Canongate and George Braziller Inc. did; today, Bloomsbury has not been subsumed by a larger corporation, but has instead acquired and incorporated other smaller publishers into its company.⁵² The point of this is to say that in 1992, Bloomsbury was more similar to Canongate and George Braziller than it is today; for the purposes of this paper, that means Bloomsbury and the relationship it had with Alasdair Gray's work will be discussed in relation to its publication of *Poor Things* and its role as a small independent publisher in 1992.

While the bindings and book jackets of *Lanark* went through several changes over the course of its printing, the bindings and book jackets of *Poor Things* went through significantly less changes. The British first edition, printed in 1992, is bound in navy blue cloth with violet end papers and a yellow ribbon marker, and the cover is stamped with a repeating tall, silver thistle motif (see Figure 3.17). Both the front and back covers have "Work as if you live in the early days of a better nation" stamped in silver along the top – this phrase has become an integral part of Gray's publications and is now incorporated into each of his new works. For example, this phrase was used by Gray for the 2001 edition of *Lanark*, as was mentioned earlier. The spine of the British first edition of *Poor Things* is stamped in the same silver as the covers, and includes the title, the author, a thistle design, and the publisher. The dust jacket of the British first

⁵² Bloomsbury, 2017

edition has *Poor Things* emblazoned in purple around the edges of a colorful mural by Gray depicting a scene from the novel, specifically from Chapter 19, “My Shortest Chapter.” The mural depicts Godwin Baxter sitting on a sofa in front of a window, cradling Bella Baxter and Archibald McCandless on his lap in a room strewn with scientific documents and models. The novel describes the scene:

Then she sat on his knee, embraced him as far round the waist as her arms could reach, rested her head upon his chest and seemed to fall asleep. He too closed his eyes and his normal colour slowly returned. Feeling relieved but jealous I watched them a while. Eventually I sat by Bella, embraces her waist and rested my head on her shoulder. She was not completely asleep, for she moved her body to let mine fit it more easily. The three of us lay a long time like that.⁵³

The book jacket mural depicts more than this scene describes, though. To begin with, the book jacket is painted with bright colors; bright red curtains frame the scene, Godwin Baxter wears a bright yellow vest, Bella wears a magenta dress, and the surrounding room décor (such as the sofa and the rug) are varying shades of bright green (Figure 3.16). The book jacket also includes elements such as the rabbits Godwin Baxter experimented with at the beginning of the novel, a skeleton standing behind the sofa with its skull obscured by the framing curtains, and the head of a female sits on a table with the top of her head

⁵³ Gray, 1992, 193

removed to reveal the brain within, which is black and grey, suggesting it is dead even though the face of the female is flushed as if alive.

Artistic intervention is not confined to the outside of the book jacket – Gray also contributed blurbs and reviews. The front inside flap of the dust jacket has the blurbs for the common reader and the sophisticated reader under the labels “Blurb for a popular paperback” and “Blurb for a high class hardback”, while the back inside dust jacket flap has depreciating reviews from fictitious reviewers. The level of detail in the binding and covering of *Poor Things* shows how involved Gray was with the production of this first edition. These elements impact the way readers approach the text, as the artwork may make them focus on Chapter 19 as a pivotal point in the story, which it is. In Chapter 19, Bella has discovered her body has a cesarean section scar and she asks Godwin about and what happened to her baby, but he and McCandless skirt around the truth – Bella does not learn what happened until General Blessington’s arrival. The bright color scheme may make the reader view this scene and grotesque tale as something other than horrific, which adds a layer of complication because story *is* grotesque and horrific in many ways. Subsequent editions of *Poor Things* remove elements of Gray’s design and artistic decisions without adding new design decisions from the author, so it is not unreasonable to say that the British first edition is the ideal edition pertaining to authorial intent.

An American edition was also printed in 1992, but the American edition was produced by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich in the United States. Like Granada Publishing, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich was difficult to research because it is

such a large conglomerate and has changed names, hands, and purpose many times since it was first founded. For example, the company appears to have started as Harcourt Brace and Company, but changed its name in the 1970s when the company had a new president, William Jovanovich (thus becoming Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).⁵⁴ During Jovanovich's time as president, the company was known as "a major publisher of textbooks, scientific books and books for the legal and medical professions"⁵⁵ and even owned theme parks and an insurance business.⁵⁶ Finally, as a later edition of *Poor Things* reveals, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich merged with Houghton Mifflin to become Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Inc. The point is that Harcourt Brace Jovanovich was not an independent publisher in 1992, nor was it a small publishing company. Instead, it was part of a much larger conglomerate company. For the American first edition, this fact seems only somewhat relevant, but it is important when considering later editions.

The American first edition followed much of Gray's design direction and was printed in the same year (1992), so at first glance looks incredibly similar to the British first edition. Upon closer inspection, however, subtle differences appear which may be the result of publishing company decisions rather than artistic/authorial decisions. For instance, the color of the cloth binding on the American first edition is blue, but quite a different color from the British first edition (see Figure 3.17). Rather than a deep navy blue, the American first

⁵⁴ Encyclopedia Britannica, William Jovanovich, 2001

⁵⁵ Prial, 1982

⁵⁶ Fabrikant, 1987

edition is covered in a dark royal blue. While the difference in cloth color may seem inconsequential, it does raise the question of whether or not Gray was as involved in the production process of the American first edition as he was for the British first edition. Other small differences between the American and British first editions are that the American edition does not have a ribbon marker, and the dust jacket does not include any of the blurbs that Gray wrote. Instead of a blurb for the a high class hardback and a popular paperback, the front inside dust jacket flap has an award for *Poor Things* listed at the top, with a blurb from the publisher, written to connect this novel to the larger literary tradition: “With its tantalizing reminders of Mary Shelley, Wilkie Collins, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Lewis Carroll, this is an up-to-date nineteenth-century novel, informed by a thoroughly twentieth-century sensibility.”⁵⁷ In other words, the American blurb is significantly less satirical than the blurbs published in the British first edition. The back inside flap has a brief bio about Gray rather than the fictionalized reviews.

It is important to note that the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections owns two copies of the first American edition, but they have binding differences. One copy is as described above – it is bound with royal blue cloth, stamped in silver, has violent end papers, and *does not* include Gray’s blurbs from the British first edition (see figure 3.18). The other copy has the same royal blue cloth for the binding and the same silver thistle stamp design. On the inside of the book, however, the second copy has white endpapers and flyleaves with text printed onto them (see figure 3.19). The book jacket must be removed to

⁵⁷ Gray, American first edition, front flap

read what is printed on the front endpaper, which is an announcement of the book's prestige – "Winner of Britain's prestigious Whitbread Award."⁵⁸ The front flyleaf has the blurbs for "A High-Class Hardback" and "Blurb for the Common Reader," however they are truncated in comparison to the British first edition versions. The verso side of the front flyleaf also has something printed on it, one of the fictitious reviews from the British first edition. The back flyleaf of this particular American first edition also has text printed on it, but rather than borrowing from the contextual elements of the British first edition, this copy has a self-portrait of Alasdair Gray on the recto side and real reviews on the verso side.

The reason for this is unknown, but can be speculated upon. It is possible that the publisher Harcourt Brace Jovanovich was trying two different designs in order to market their book in the best way they could. The review copy of *Poor Things* and subsequent copies of the American first edition reveals which design they went with. The other American first editions examined, the review copy and a personal copy, matched all of the details first described – they have the royal blue binding and violet endpapers (without text), and book jackets that have the publisher's blurb.

Like *Lanark*, Gray's novel *Poor Things* became significant enough to quickly warrant subsequent publishing, and was converted into paperback first by Penguin Books in 1993, and then by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich in 1994 as one of their Harvest editions. Obviously, notable aspects of the original design were not used in the production of a paperback, simply because of the nature of

⁵⁸ Gray, front endpaper of American first edition

paperback, which does not allow for two coinciding cover designs. Unfortunately, the Penguin Books 1993 paperback edition is not owned by any of the libraries at the University of South Carolina, and so could not be examined for this paper, but it was described for a bibliography, and the description is applicable to this paper. According to Phil Moores, a scholar who composed a bibliography of Alasdair Gray's works, the Penguin Books edition uses the original jacket design, but it "has been reduced in size for the front cover. The back cover carries and amended version of the original 'Blurb for a Popular Paperback.'"⁵⁹ The cover design chosen for the Harvest edition is also the original artwork used for the book jacket – it is possible the reasoning for this decision was that the book jacket artwork was more recognizable than the binding design of thistle silver stamps on blue background. Interestingly, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich used the same layout as the dust jacket (including the size of the artwork), which restricted their space for other information such as reviews or blurbs, as the book jacket artwork wraps around the book (see Figure 3.20). On the hardback copies, the dust jacket only has the title and the author around the border of the illustrated scene on both the front and back – the paperback cover instead has a short blurb at the top and reviews from *The Boston Globe*, *Daily News* (Los Angeles), and *The New York Times Book Review* on the side. The blurb found on the Harvest edition is completely different from the ones found on the British first edition as well as the American first edition, suggesting that once again a design/production choice was made by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich rather than the author, meaning

⁵⁹ Moores, 2002, 209

Gray had less control over the design of his novel due to the size of the American publisher.

The final edition of *Poor Things* examined for this paper was a paperback from the Dalkey Archive Press, published in arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company (previously Harcourt Brace Jovanovich). The Dalkey Archive Press started in the 1980s as a part of *The Review of Contemporary Fiction*⁶¹ and is based out of and supported by Illinois State University. This is an important detail, because the Dalkey Archive Press' connection to a state university meant the press must run as a nonprofit organization, which impacts the financial backing that the press has. Regardless of its earning status, the goal of the Dalkey Archive press was to "publish and keep in print significant, challenging writing ... that commercial publishers ignore or abandon."⁶² The Dalkey Archive Press has been known to publish obscure authors or to actively search out the works of authors that have gone out of print, but adhering to their goals has been difficult due to the funding they must find and the oversight of a large state university. The Dalkey Archive Press is a very different press from the others discussed in this paper as it is neither an independent publisher nor a large corporate publisher. It operates as a small press, but has the oversight of a larger press because of its relationship with Illinois State University.

⁶¹ Barone, 1996, 223

⁶² Barone, 1996, 223

The particular copy examined is a second printing of the Dalkey Archive edition, printed in 2009, the first Dalkey Archive edition being printed in 2001. The binding of the Dalkey Archive edition is vastly different from any of the copies previously examined. To begin with, the Dalkey Archive edition shrunk the original cover artwork in order to make it fit on the front cover rather than allowing the artwork to wrap around. In addition, the Dalkey Archive edition is the only one examined that actually lists Alasdair Gray as the author of *Poor Things*, saying “A novel by Alasdair Gray.” All other copies have simply listed the title and the name, leaving the reader to assume Gray is the author, but allowing for the possibility that he is simply the editor of the novel, as is stated within the introduction to the story. The spine of the Dalkey edition is a lilac color with the author and title listed again, and the back cover is white, with a lilac box to highlight reviews of *Poor Things*. Like the Harvest edition, there are three reviews, but the Dalkey edition reviews list the reviewers’ names alongside the publications in which they wrote the review – Geoff Ryman from the *New York Time Book Review*, Barbara Hardy from the *Times Literary Supplement*, and Merle Rubin from the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*. The inclusion of reviewers’ names hints at a desire on the publisher’s part to make this edition of *Poor Things* seem desirable and credible. As was noted earlier in this paper, publishers are concerned with the business side of printing and book production, which explains why in successive editions more information about reviewers was added in order to make sure *Poor Things* sold. Finally, the blurb for the novel on the back cover of the Dalkey Archive edition is quite different from the blurbs on

any other copy examined, and starts off by stating, “One of Alasdair Gray’s most brilliant creations, *Poor Things* is a postmodern revision of *Frankenstein*...”⁶³ The relationship between the Dalkey Archive Press and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company (previously Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) is not entirely clear, but the fact that the Dalkey Archive Press published this book *in arrangement with* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt suggests that Houghton Mifflin Harcourt had a stake in the production and marketing of this edition of *Poor Things*. This may explain why the smaller press did not reach out to Gray for authorial artistic revisions like George Braziller Inc. did with *Lanark*, or it is possible that by the time Dalkey Archive had the opportunity to publish *Poor Things* it was too far removed from the author to have the input he gave with *Lanark*. Whatever the case, the Dalkey Archive Press edition reveals the complicated relationship small presses have when they work with larger corporate publishing houses.

The various editions and copies of *Poor Things* alongside an understanding of the history of the publishers who produced them reveals how the production of *Poor Things* differed significantly from that of *Lanark*. *Poor Things* was fully designed by Alasdair Gray when it was published through Bloomsbury, an independent publisher. The book design was never able to go through an author involved revision, though, because Bloomsbury made a deal with Harcourt Brace Jovanovich for an American edition, and Harcourt Brace Jovanovich has dominated the production of *Poor Things* since, even when working with the smaller Dalkey Archives Press. On their own, the American first

⁶³ Gray, Dalkey Archive edition, back cover

editions examined for this paper reveal the transformations Harcourt Brace Jovanovich considered, but none of them seem like changes Gray would make based off his previous design revisions. The later editions' adherence to the original artwork of *Poor Things* is admirable, but compared to the many editions of *Lanark* reveals the lack of Gray's participation which means that Gray did not have the opportunity to create a new point of access for his readers. This is not to say that visual and physical revision of the context of the book is necessary, but the evolution of *Lanark* shows how Gray invested in that revision, so it is possible that the publishing practices of large publishing corporations has resulted in readers missing out on interesting authorial intervention.

The copies of *Poor Things* discussed so far reveal the ways in which larger publishing companies make authorial contextual revision difficult, but there is one more copy of *Poor Things* that should be mentioned. As with *Lanark*, the University of South Carolina's Thomas Cooper Library owns a copy of *Poor Things*. In fact, as with *Lanark*, Thomas Cooper owns a British first edition of *Poor Things*. It too is missing its book jacket. Unlike the copy of *Lanark*, though, Thomas Cooper's copy of *Poor Things* does not have part of the book jacket cut out and pasted on the inside – all elements of the book jacket are gone. Once again, this physical removal results in the reader missing a way of situating the narrative as both the blurbs and the artwork of the book jacket are gone. The binding is still intact, fortunately, but the missing cover removes part of the nuance of the story. The removal reveals the dilemma of libraries – how do they preserve the physicality of all the parts of the book when they must also provide the public access to these books?

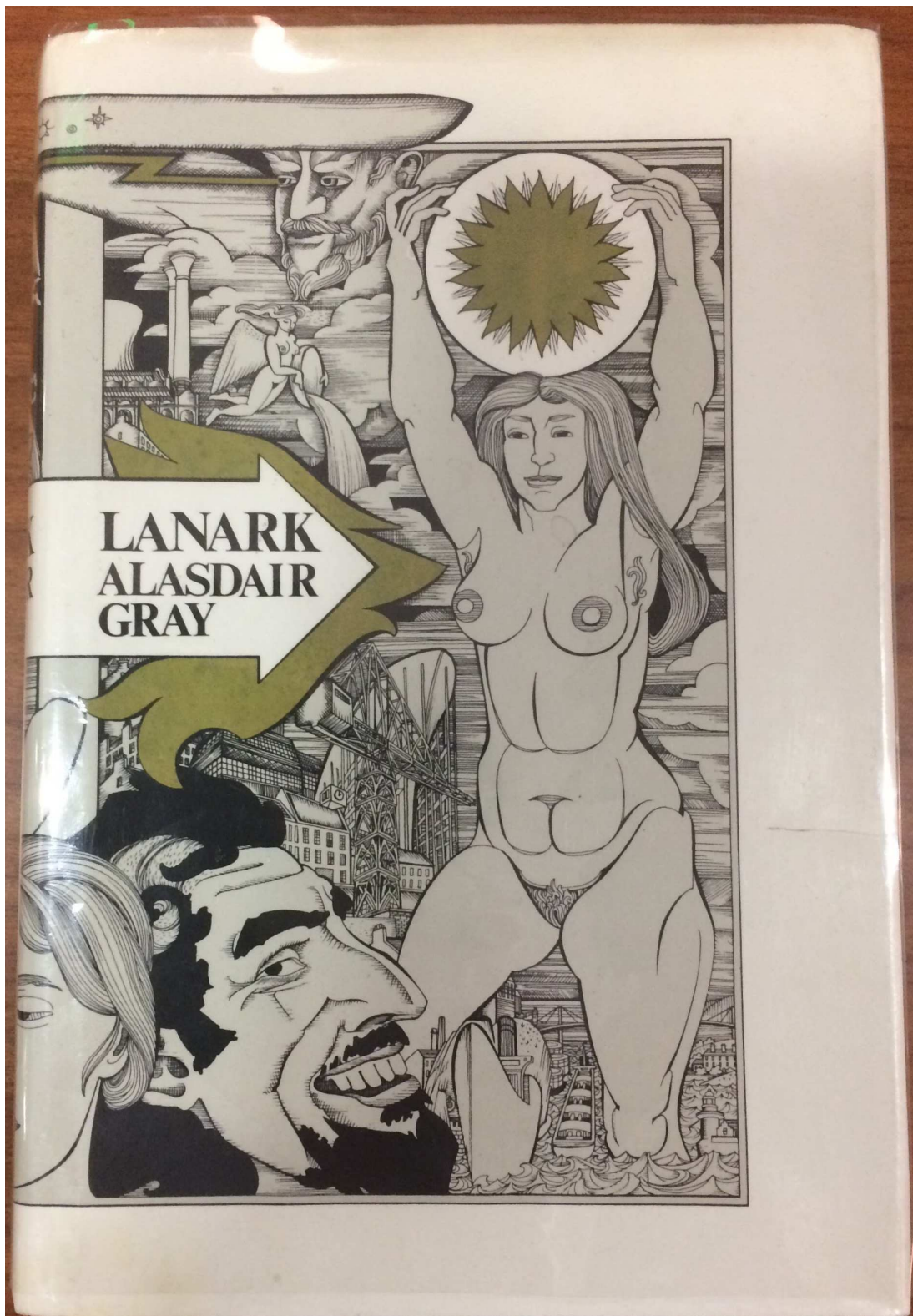


Figure 3.1 *Lanark* 1981 Canongate front cover

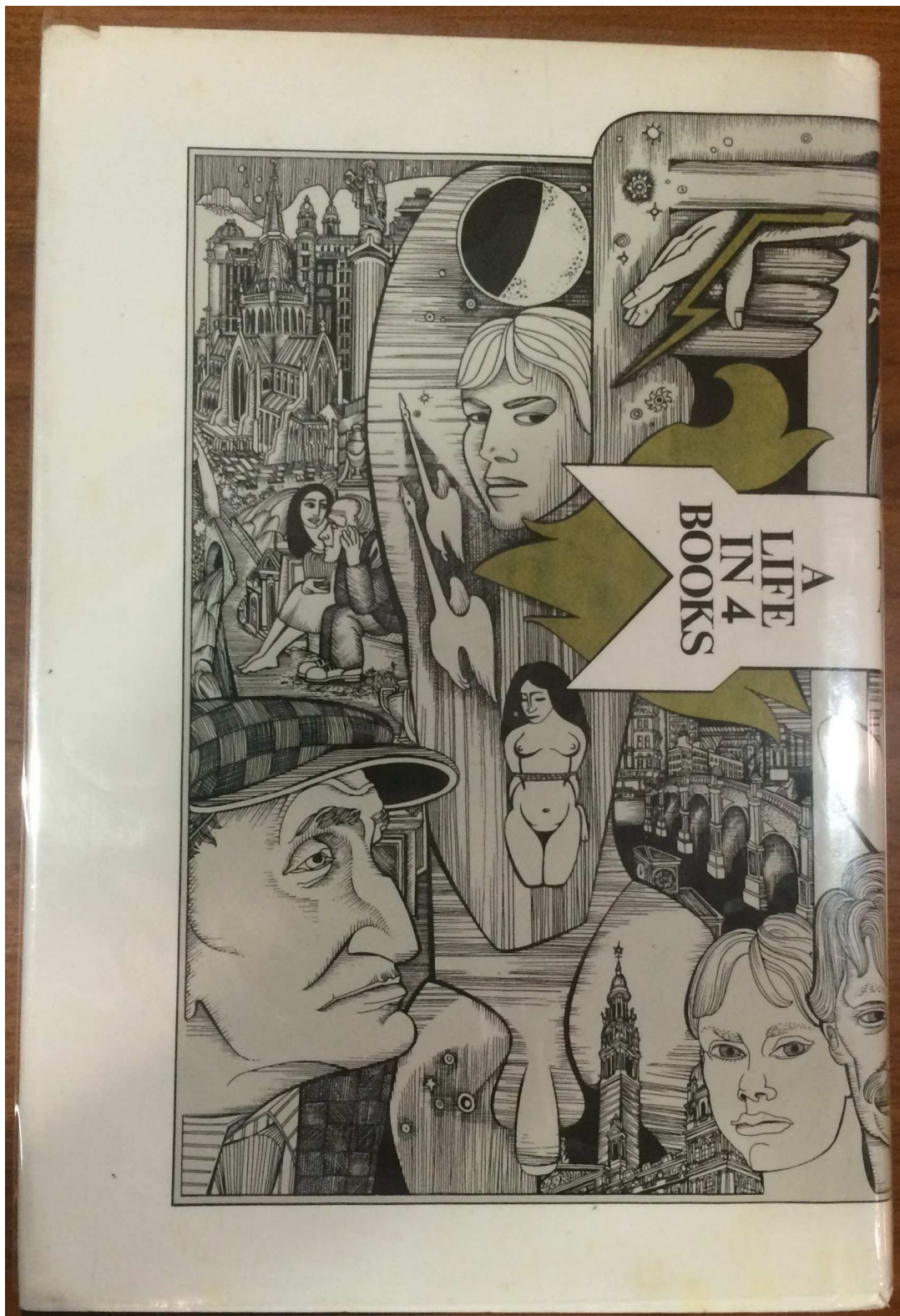


Figure 3.2 *Lanark* 1981 Canongate back cover

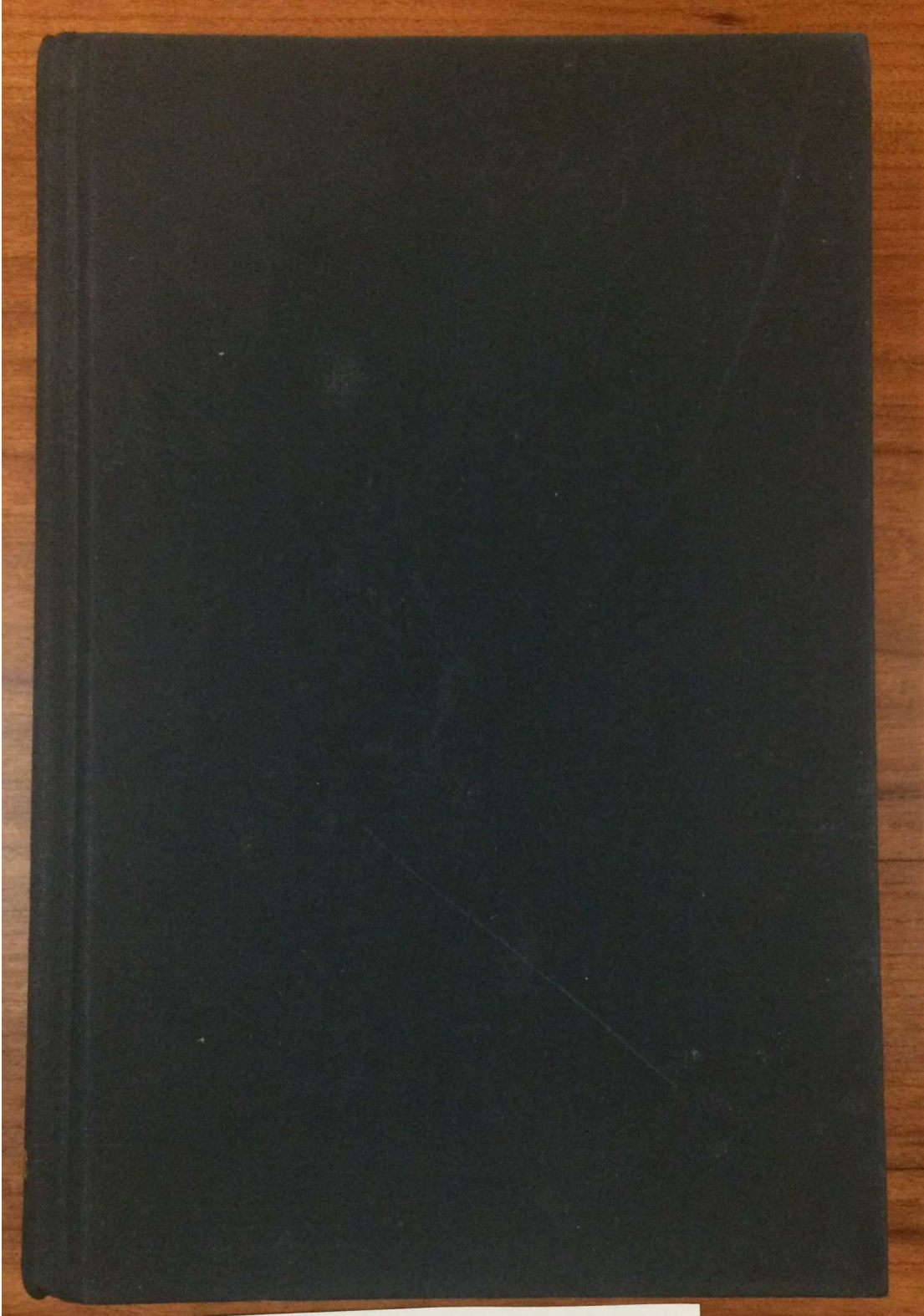


Figure 3.3 *Lanark* 1981 Canongate binding

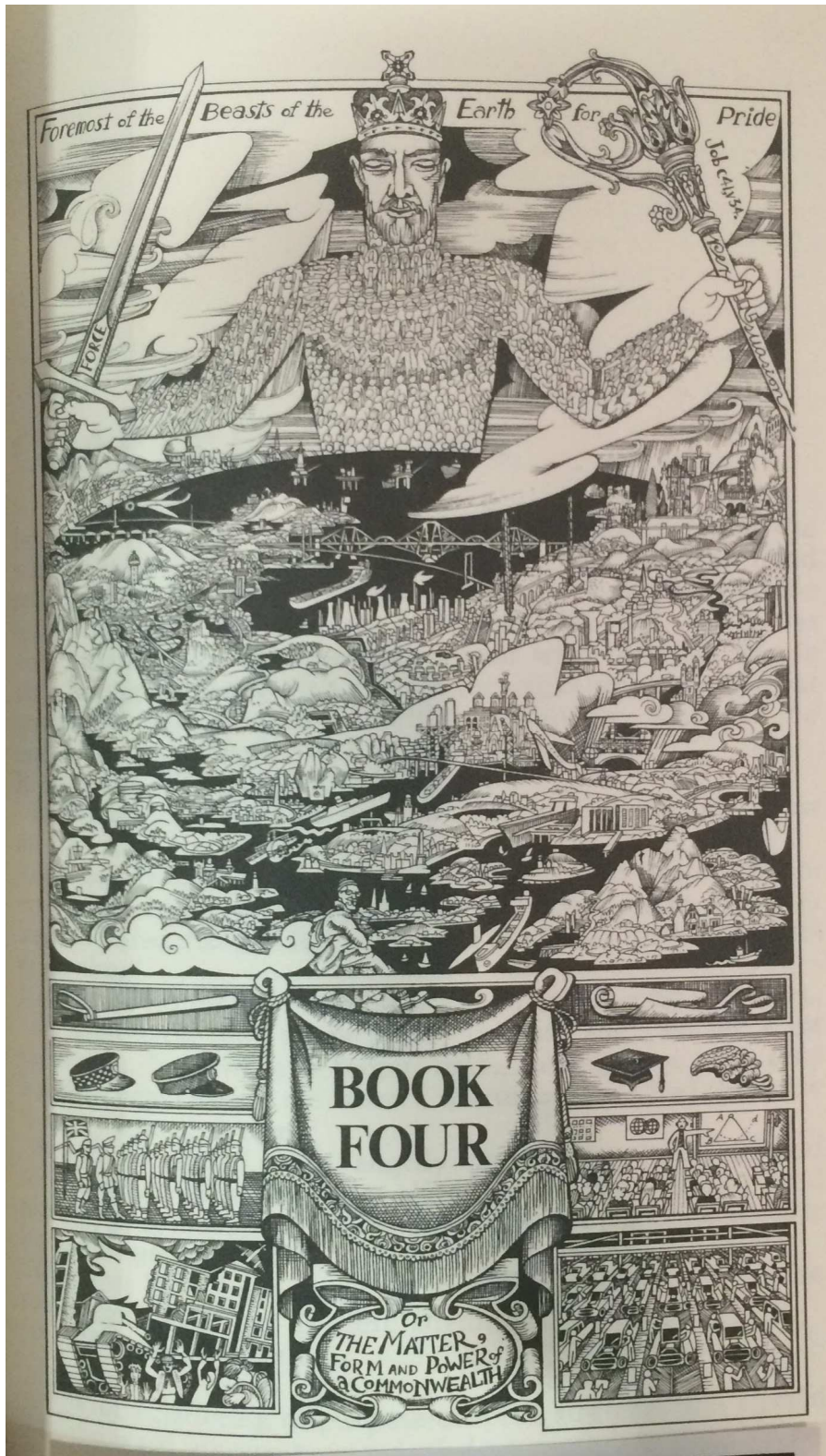


Figure 3.4 *Lanark* 1981 Canongate Book 4 frontispiece

LANARK

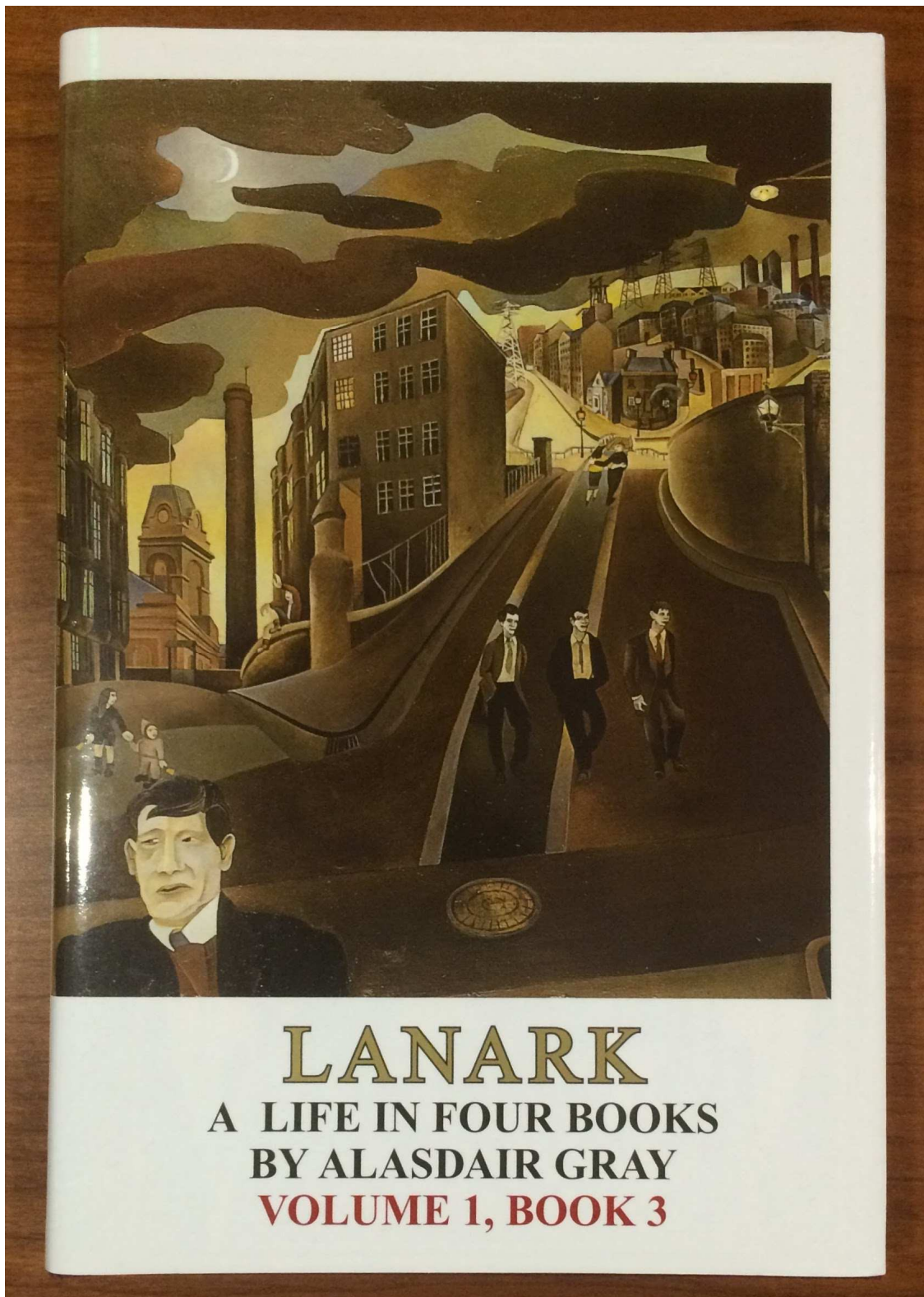
A LIFE IN 4 BOOKS



**'AN AMBITIOUS AND MARVELLOUSLY
INVENTIVE NOVEL'**
MALCOLM BRADBURY

ALASDAIR GRAY

Figure 3.5 1982 Granada paperback front cover



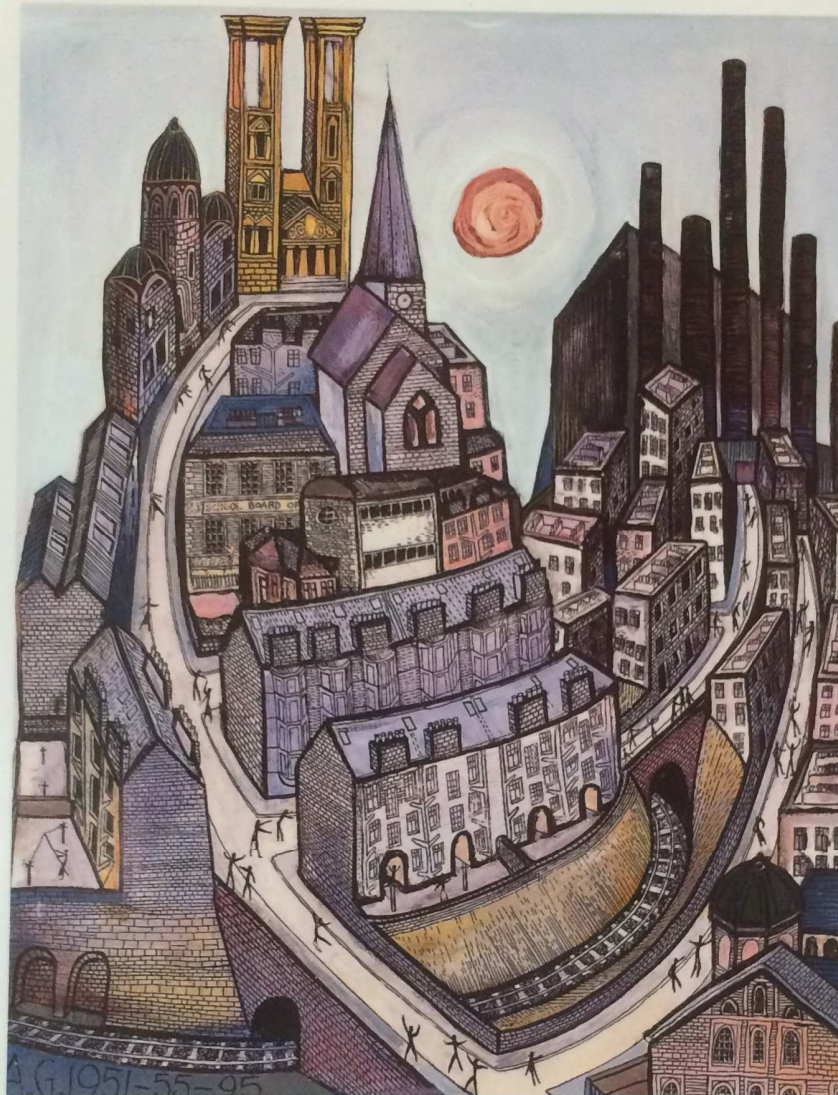
LANARK
A LIFE IN FOUR BOOKS
BY ALASDAIR GRAY
VOLUME 1, BOOK 3

Figure 3.6 *Lanark* 2001 Canongate, Book 3 front cover



LANARK
A LIFE IN FOUR BOOKS
BY ALASDAIR GRAY
VOLUME 1, BOOK 3

Figure 3.7 *Lanark* 2001 Canongate, Book 3 back cover



LANARK
A LIFE IN FOUR BOOKS
BY ALASDAIR GRAY
VOLUME 2, BOOK 1

Figure 3.8 *Lanark* 2001 Canongate, Book 1 cover



LANARK
A LIFE IN FOUR BOOKS
BY ALASDAIR GRAY
VOLUME 3, BOOK 2

Figure 3.9 *Lanark* 2001 Canongate, Book 2 cover

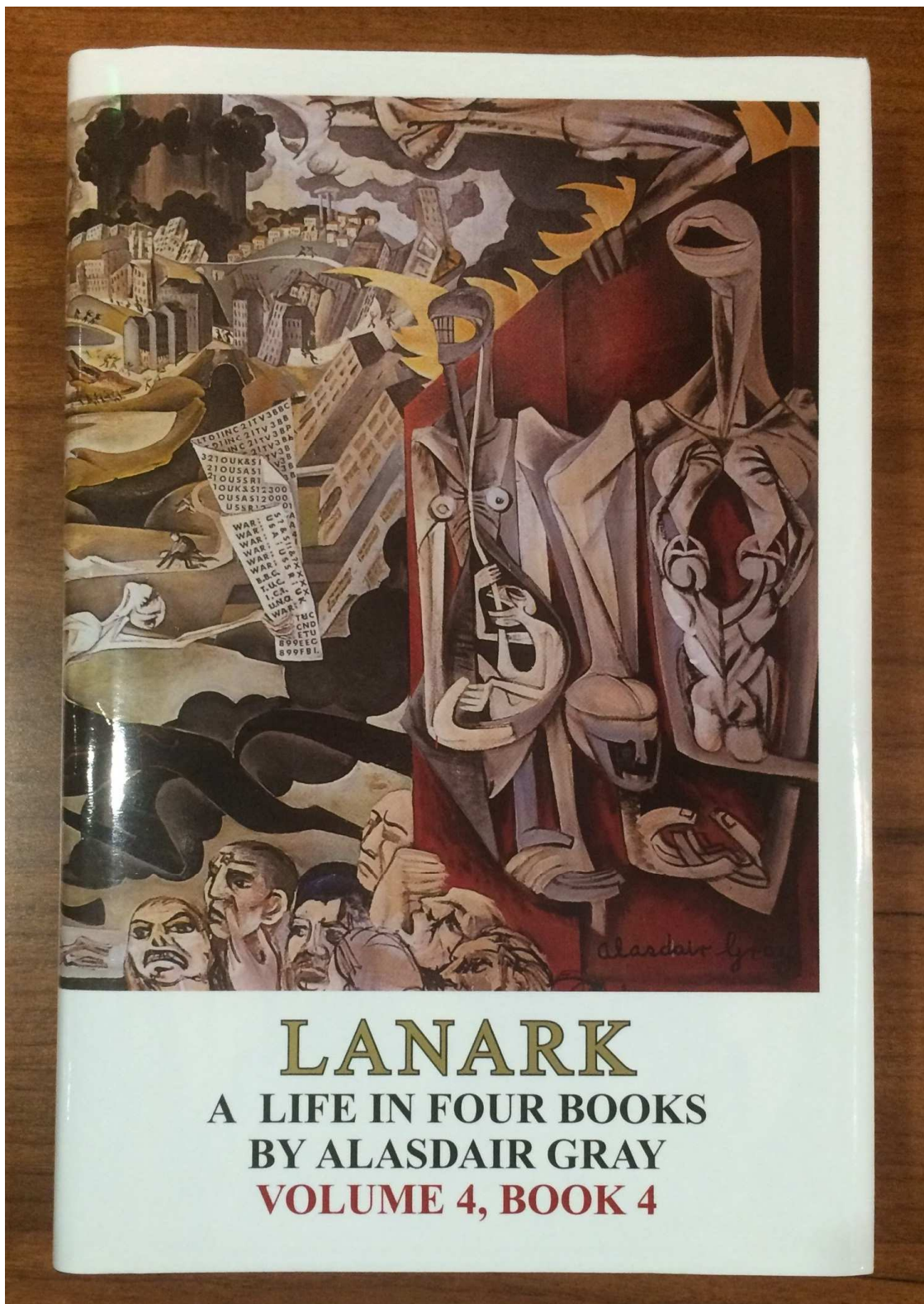
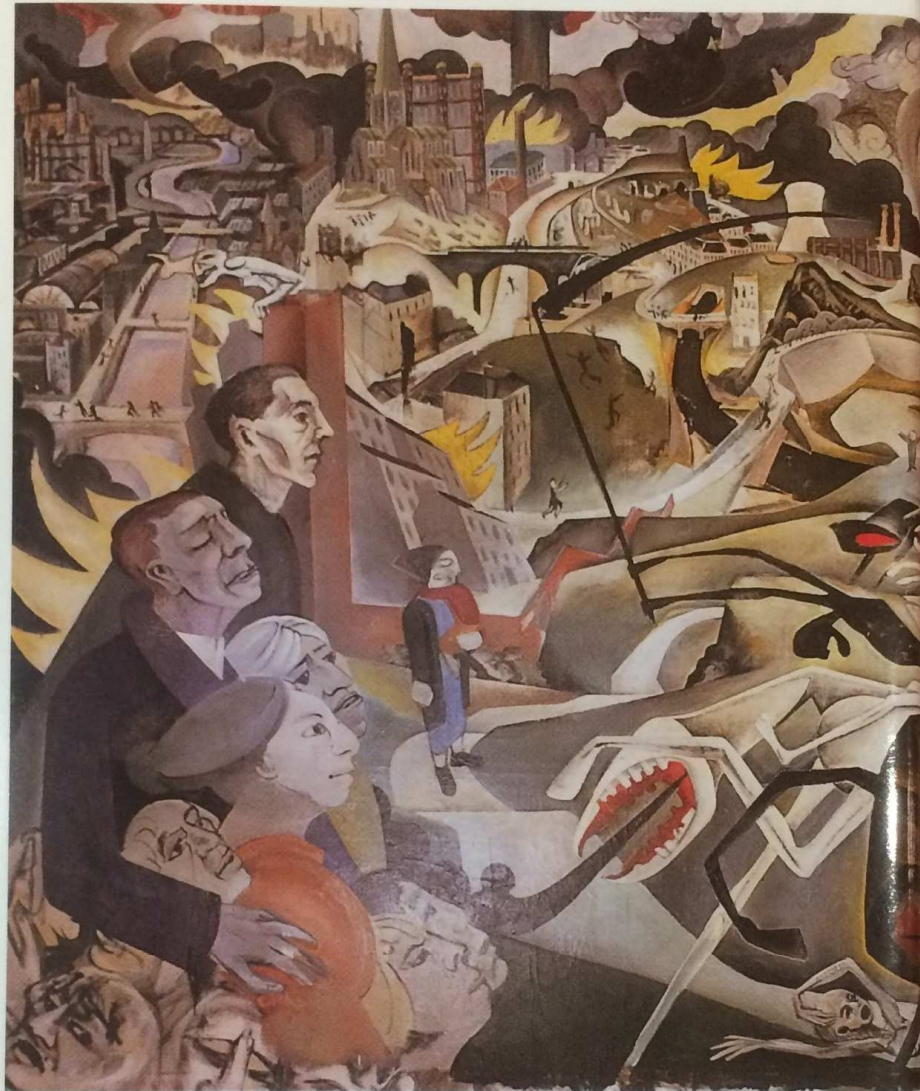


Figure 3.10 *Lanark* 2001 Canongate, Book 4 front cover



LANARK
A LIFE IN FOUR BOOKS
BY ALASDAIR GRAY
VOLUME 4, BOOK 4

Figure 3.11 *Lanark* 2001 Canongate, Book 4 back cover

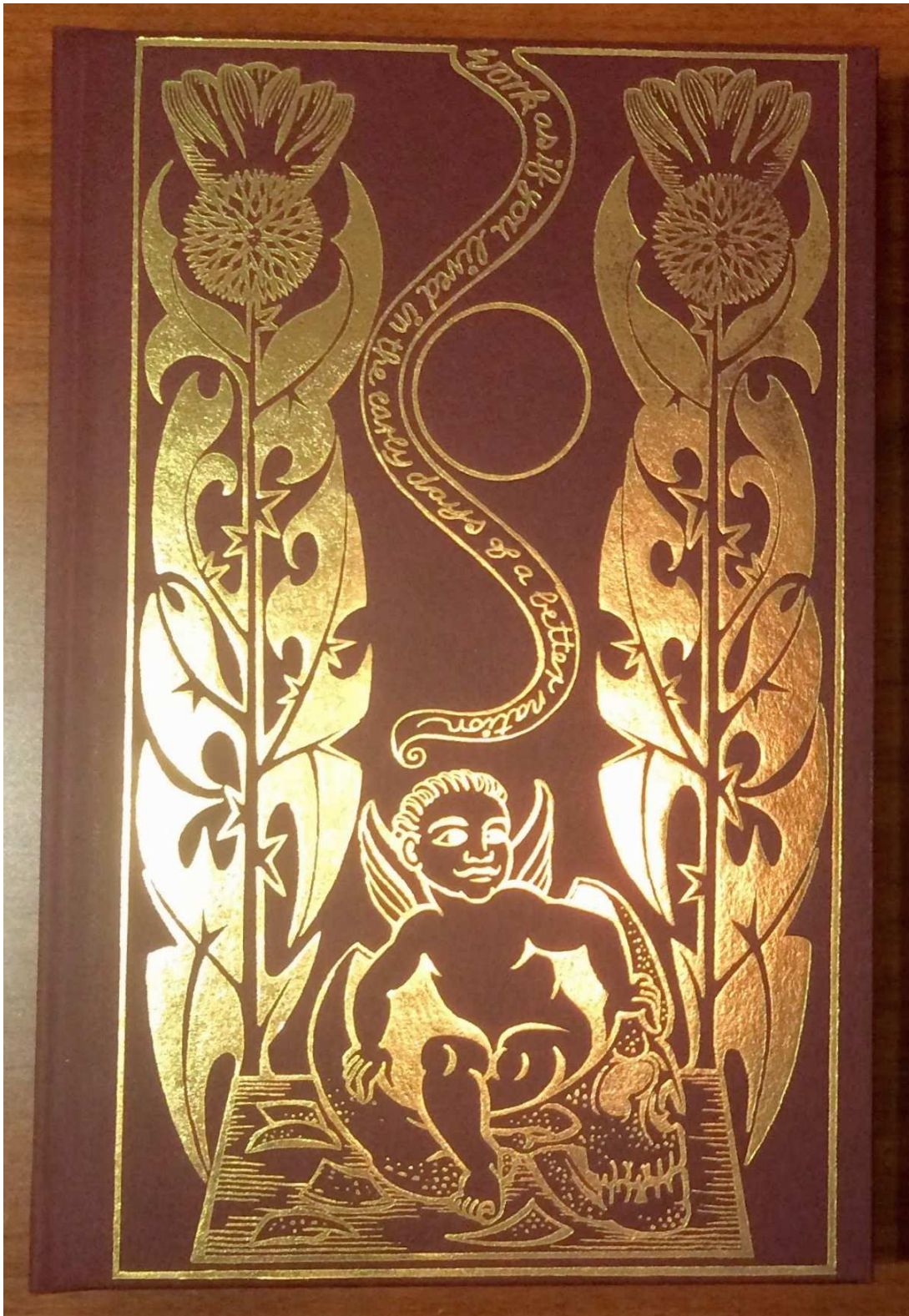


Figure 3.12 *Lanark* 2001 Canongate, Books 3 and 4 binding

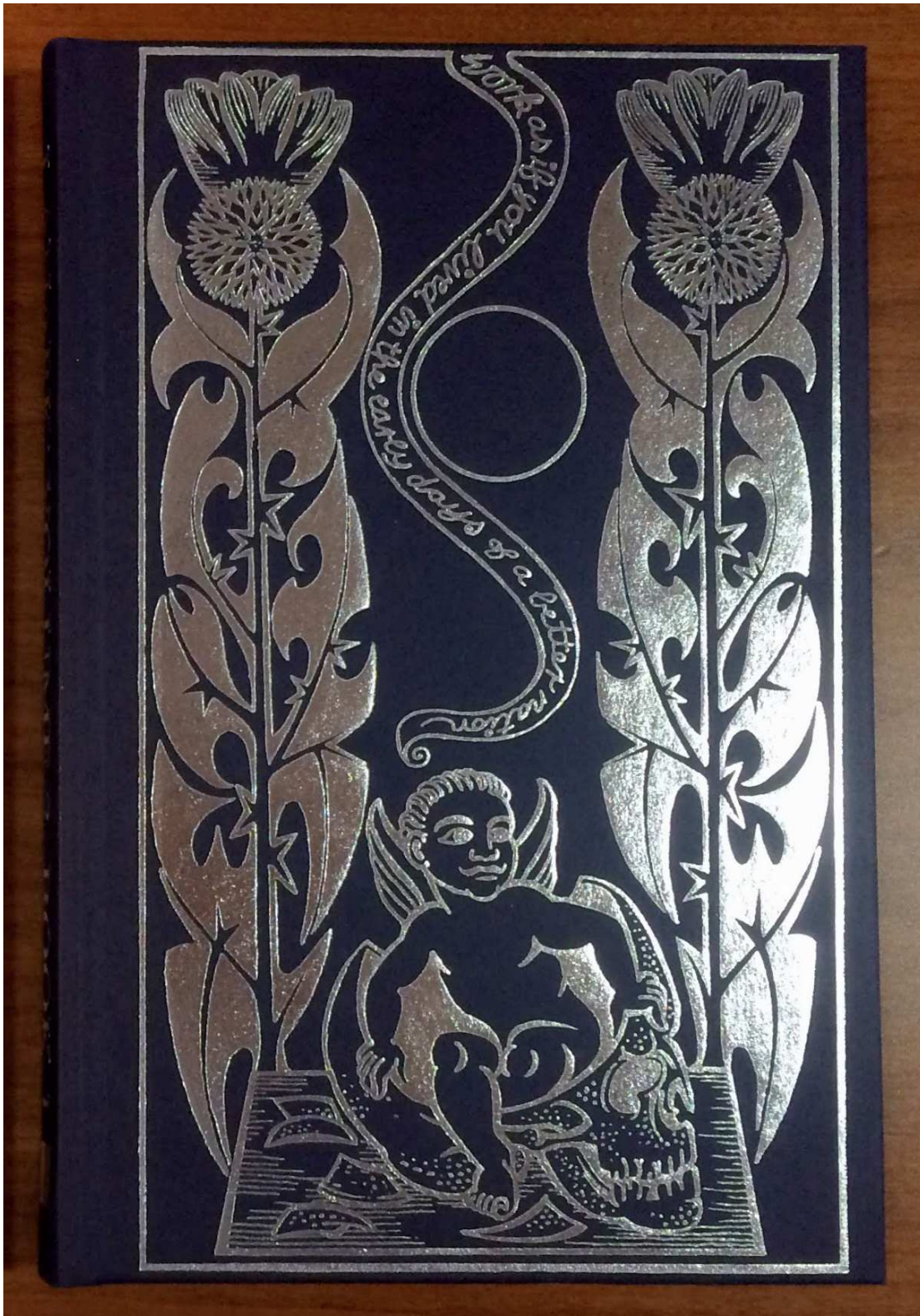


Figure 3.13 *Lanark* 2001 Canongate, Books 1 and 2 binding

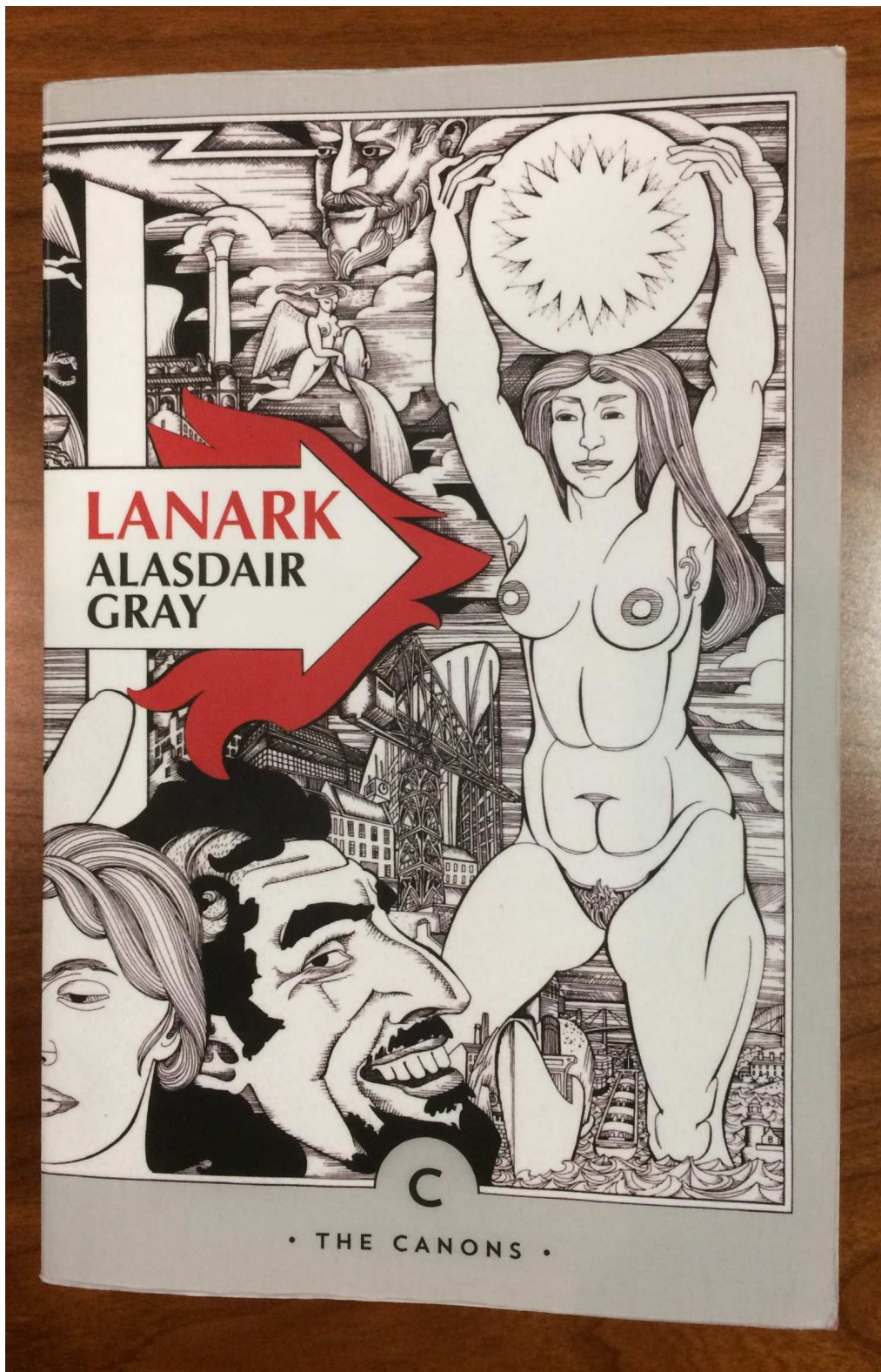


Figure 3.14 *Lanark* 2016 Canongate paperback front cover

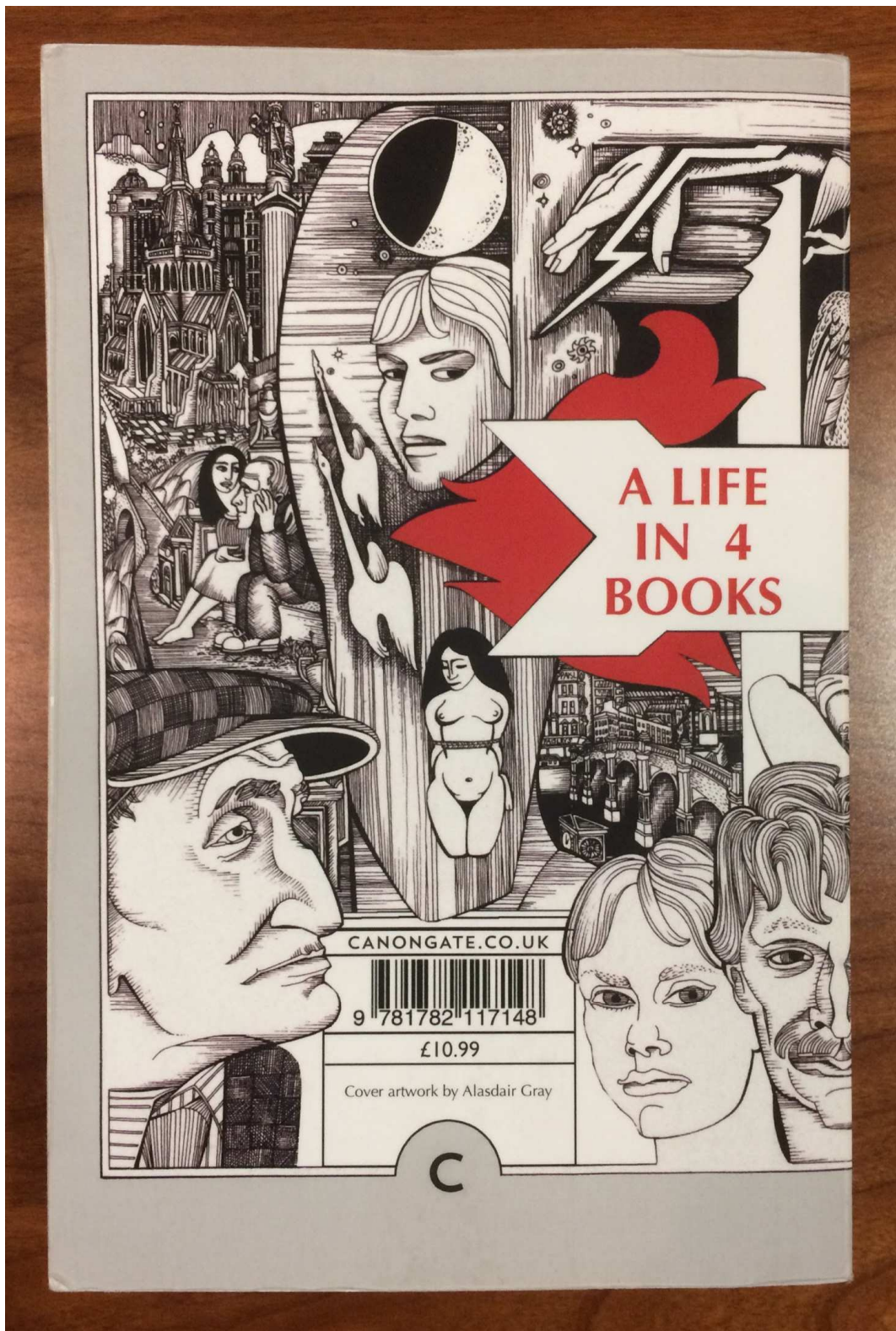


Figure 3.15 *Lanark* 2016 Canongate paperback back cover

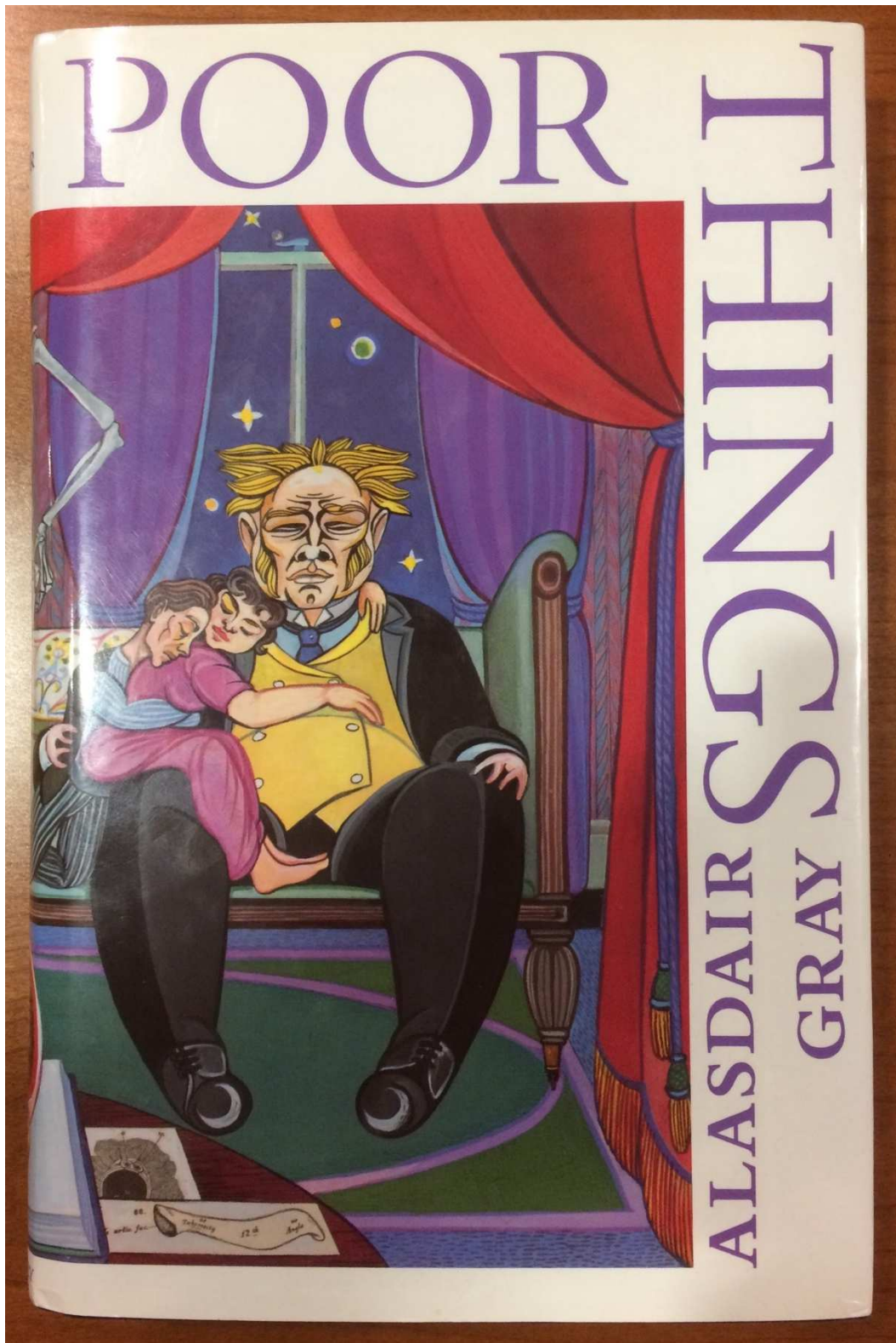


Figure 3.16 *Poor Things* Bloomsbury 1992, front cover

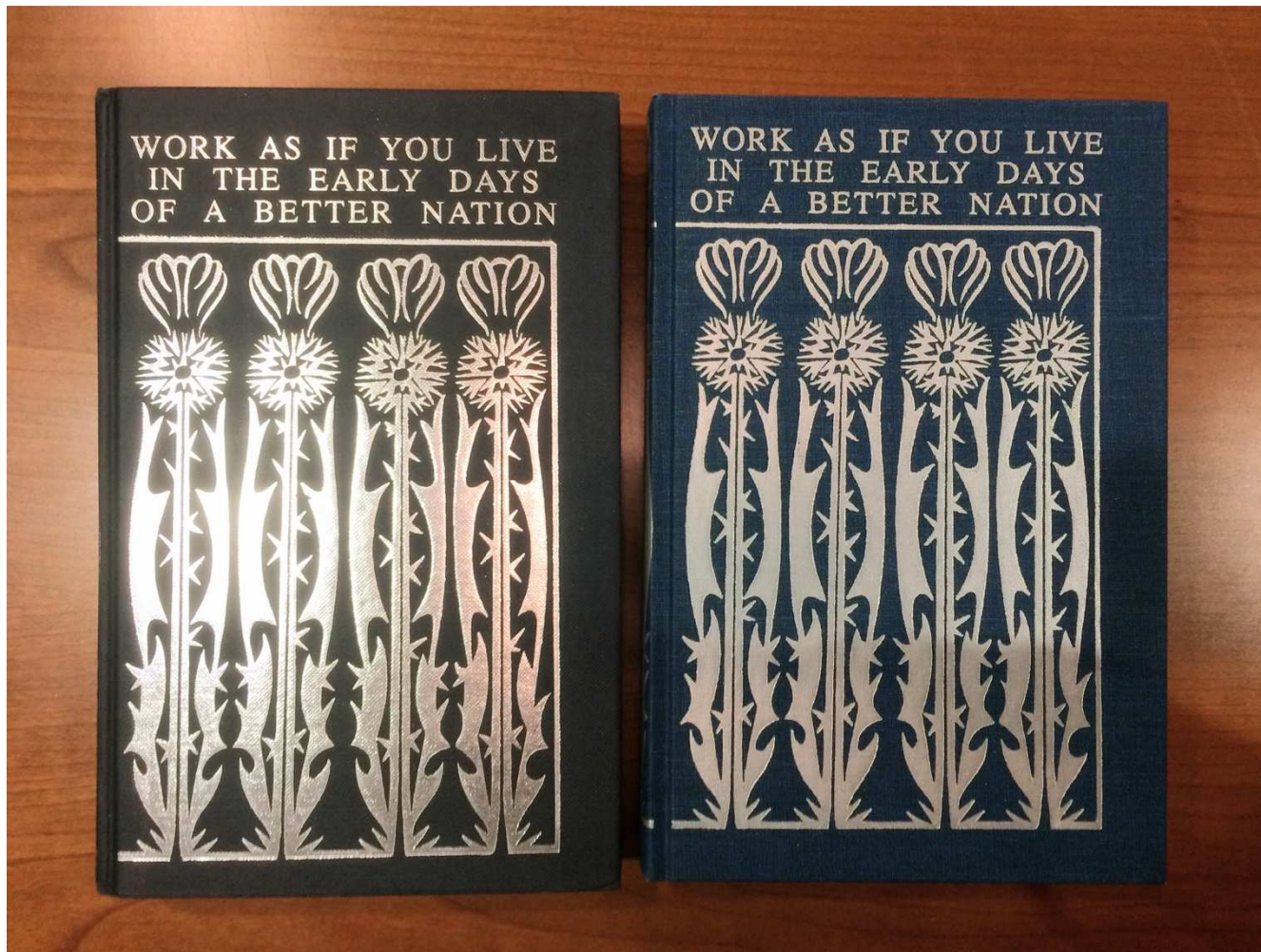


Figure 3.17 *Poor Things* bindings: British first edition (left) and American first edition (right)

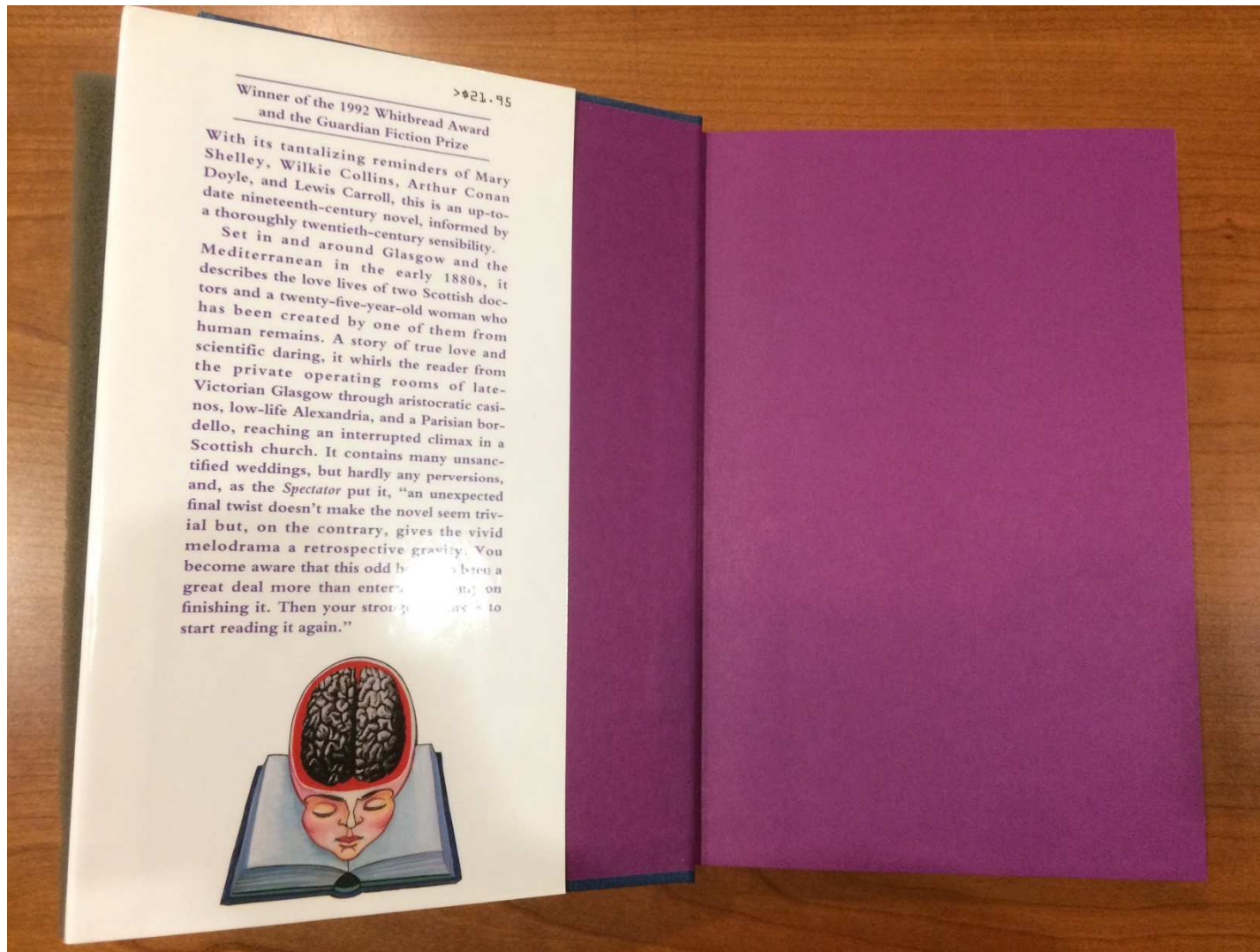


Figure 3.18 *Poor Things* American first edition violet endpapers 1992

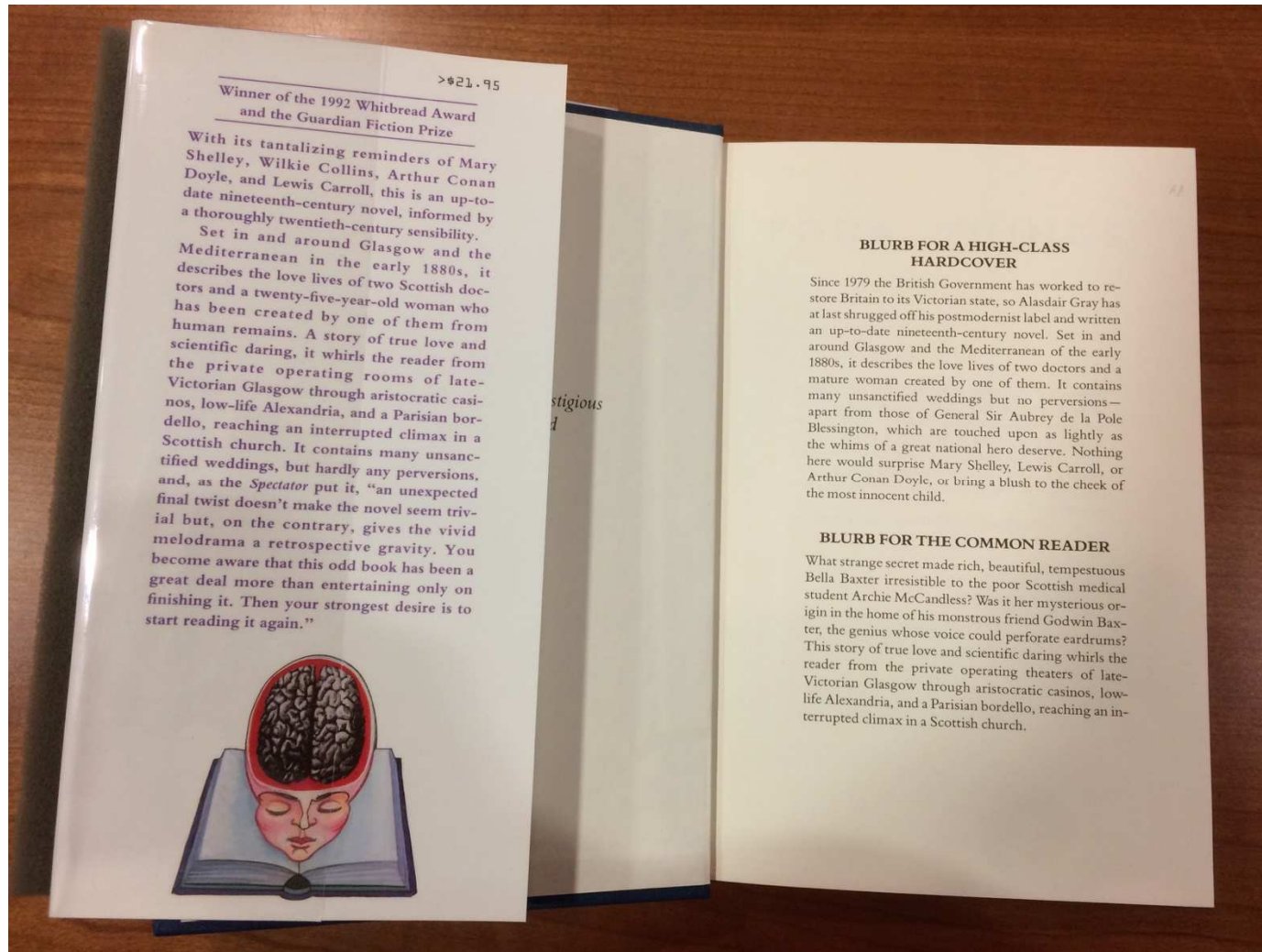
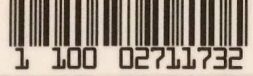


Figure 3.19 *Poor Things* American first edition white endpapers: 1992



Figure 3.20 *Poor Things* Harvest paperback edition: 1994

University of South Carolina - Thomas Cooper



R OF THE WHITBREAD AWARD

POOR THINGS



A NOVEL BY

ALASDAIR GRAY

"The greatest Scottish novelist since Sir Walter Scott."
Anthony Burgess

Figure 3.21 *Poor Things* 2009 Dalkey Archive Press

CHAPTER 4

THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES

The examination of two of Alasdair Gray's novels and the variety of their designs meant to show how the context and physicality of a book can signal a point of focus for the reader, or may influence the ways in which they approach a text. The discussion of the publishers of each edition meant to show how smaller, independent publishers allowed more design and design revision from Gray over the life of the book, thereby creating new ways for readers to access the text, while larger publishing corporations did not seem to afford an opportunity for that type of revision.

The point that was not fully addressed was the reason for mentioning the copies of each book that were found in the academic library (Thomas Cooper) at the University of South Carolina, but there was a reason for mentioning them. The reason is that these several copies acquired for use by the student body have had a crucial part of the context removed – the book jacket. The removal of the book jackets removes a point of access for Gray's novels – Gray's novels, often called postmodern, can be difficult to follow at times. The visuals of the cover artwork act as a way of understanding confusing descriptions within the text, while simultaneously complicating the action of the story.

Although this paper has explained why removing the book jacket is problematic, academic libraries have a reason for removing book jackets (and it should be noted that the books examined for this paper were left in their original binding rather than being rebound with library buckram binding). Since academic libraries serve academia and scholars, the basic role of academic libraries is to “build broader and deeper collections and to arrange for users to access those collections *only on terms which ensure their long-term integrity*”⁶⁴ (emphasis mine). At a time when academic libraries are facing budget constraints, high competition for funding, and a larger student body “resulting in heavier use of collections,”⁶⁵ the long-term integrity of the materials in the collection is highly important. Many academic libraries have preservation departments or programs which are responsible for contracting and seeking out materials that meet specific library binding standards, as well as in-house binding and repairs.⁶⁶ The budget and funding issues academic libraries currently face means they must conserve resources, including resources that allow them to repair books. Although academic libraries have moved away from their mid-century practice of rebinding all the books in their collection with library buckram binding, academic libraries are still interested in cutting down on the parts of the book they may need to repair, inevitably resulting in the removal of the book jacket.

It is not reasonable to ask academic libraries to change their practices when their purpose and mission is to make a breadth of knowledge accessible to

⁶⁴ Brophy, 2005, 47

⁶⁵ Elkington, 1999, 226

⁶⁶ Elkington, 1999, 227

a large audience, which includes handling materials in a way that will prolong their longevity while cutting down on costs. However, the preservation of the material context is important for future study and research of book history, literary history, printing history, publishing history, marketing history, and more. Fortunately, there is a type of library that focuses on the preservation of the material paratext in addition to the pages of text – Rare Books and Special Collections libraries.

Rare Books and Special Collections libraries rose in prominence in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries and were at first connected to universities much like academic libraries. The purpose of the Rare Books and Special Collections libraries was to care for books that needed “special security, care, and development,”⁶⁷ but the books in these early libraries were not “rare” exactly; early Rare Book and Special Collections libraries were concerned with “the assembly and preservation of the books of the time.”⁶⁸ Additionally, the “rare books” part of Rare Book and Special Collections libraries is actually a misnomer since the definition of “rare books” changes continuously because “books that were previously considered common acquire new significance when new areas of research...are practiced by the scholarly community.”⁶⁹ The point is, Rare Books and Special Collections libraries have from their beginning valued and preserved contemporary books, and they have been concerned with the security and care of all the physical aspects of the book, from the pages to the bindings.

⁶⁷ Galbraith and Smith, 2012, 5

⁶⁸ Galbraith and Smith, 2012, 2

⁶⁹ Galbraith and Smith, 2012, 2

Special Collections libraries in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Century are still concerned with acquiring contemporary books and they have the unique task of preserving the entirety of the book as material object. Specifically, today many Special Collections libraries are concerned with “modern fine printing, or the work of contemporary authors” and these libraries understand the importance of “the book as physical object and not just vehicle for text” which makes it necessary to “take precautions that such parts of the physical object as dustjackets and slipcases are retained.”⁷⁰ Special Collections libraries, then, are perfectly situated to acquire and preserve books like Alasdair Gray’s so they can “be used to show the history of writing and printing”⁷¹ for a variety of future scholars.

The University of South Carolina is lucky to have a Rare Books and Special Collections department, and to have one that has such extensive collections. Many colleges and universities across the United States do not have the scholarly luxury of direct access to a variety of rare and special materials, from medieval manuscripts to first editions of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. In an effort to preserve and provide as much of the history of a book as possible, the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections also acquires multiple editions of books when feasible. The reason for this is to provide scholars with multiple editions and iterations of a book in order to provide the fullest context of the book, such as the movement between publishers or different marketing styles. The Irvin Department’s Alasdair Gray collection sets an example of how Special Collections should develop their collections – this study would not have

⁷⁰ Cave, 1982, 19

⁷¹ Silver, 2012, viii

been possible if there had not been multiple editions of Gray's works to examine. There are other editions of both *Lanark* and *Poor Things* that the Irvin Department does not own, however, and would have benefited the analysis of these books as well as the relation of design and production to the publisher.

A great deal can be learned from the study of the context of Twentieth Century books such as authorial intent, authorial revision, and publisher relationships, but a great deal more can be discovered when there are multiple editions and copies to compare. Thus, while a breadth of information is necessary for university scholarly communities, the breadth philosophy should apply to academic libraries rather than Special Collections libraries. Special Collections libraries have the unique position of being able to focus on the depth of their collections to aid new scholarship.

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