# Cripping Work, Welfare and the Nation:
# Autonomist Narratives of Disability
# in Modern Scottish Writing

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**ABSTRACT**

This thesis explores what I will call autonomist narratives of disability, namely representations of disability that intensify critiques of waged work and welfare capitalism, in twentieth- and twenty-first century Scottish writing. Disability has never been considered as a category of analysis through which to study Scottish writing. My investigation will argue that what forecloses a disability studies approach in Scottish literature, and makes invisible narratives of disability in Scottish writing, are derogatory metaphors and narratives of disability specific to Scottish studies and culture. Both these discourses on disability and the nationalist contextualism of Scottish literature in which they are rooted, which emphasises the importance of national(ist) contexts in the study of Scottish writing, dominated cultural discourses in the run-up to the 2014 independence referendum. This thesis will therefore propose a post-indyref perspective on Scottish literature with a two-fold aim: to foreground the persistence of disablist discourses in Scottish studies and of their nationed and contextualist roots; and to examine the ways in which such discourses can be interrogated through the very logics they disqualify from analysis in the discipline of Scottish literature alongside the narratives of disability these logics inform. In order to respond to the latter and make visible the former, I will develop an autonomist disability perspective which brings together disability studies with Marxist autonomist theory. Through the lenses of this perspective, my analysis will examine the critique of waged work and welfare capitalism which emerges from the intersection between narratives of disability, work, welfare and the nation in twentieth- and twenty-first century Scottish writing. In doing so, it will argue that autonomist narratives of disability in Scottish writing problematise the discourse of welfare state nationalism that originates at the same intersection but has never been theorised as relevant to Scottish literature.

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**AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that all critical and other sources (literary and electronic) have been specifically and properly acknowledged, as and when they occur in the body of my text.

Signature:

Date: 31 January 2018

**Introduction**

**Cripping Scottish Literature:**

**Towards an Autonomist Disability Perspective in Scottish Literature**


For Robert McRuer the practice of 'cripping' consists in disrupting exclusionary

orders by exposing and refusing their discriminatory norms of belonging through

the insertion of a disability logic and presence.[1] This thesis is going to explore the

ways in which what I will call autonomist narratives of disability, namely

narratives that combine representations of disability with critiques of waged work

and welfare capitalism, crip ideas of work, welfare and the nation as these are

imagined in Scottish literature. It will adopt an expanded focus on welfare to

include the whole spectrum of social efforts aimed at providing support to

individuals in need, from community relationships of care to the welfare state, so

as to grasp the connections between the two in the sphere of social reproduction.

My exploration will take as its starting point the imbrication between capitalism

and normalcy, or the system that enforces 'normality by upholding some

impossible standard to which all bodies must adhere'.[2] If, as Rosemarie Garland-

Thomson suggests, normate 'is the constructed identity of those who, by way of

bodily configurations and cultural capital they assume, can step into a position of

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[1] Robert McRuer, 'Cripping Queer Politics, or the Dangers of Neoliberalism' in *The Scholar & Feminist Online*, No.10.1-10.2 (Fall 2011 – Spring 2012) http://sfonline.barnard.edu/a-new-queer-agenda/cripping-queer-politics-or-the-dangers-of-neoliberalism/
[2] Lennard Davis, *Bending Over Backwards: Disability, Dismodernism & Other Difficult Positions* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2002), p.38

authority and wield the power it grants them',[3] such prestige and the attendant

devaluation of disability are inseparable from disability's marginal and resistant

position with respect to waged work and welfare under the capitalist modes of

production and social reproduction. My focus on intersecting oppressions on the

basis of class and bodily or mental difference under capitalist normalcy means

that the autonomist disability perspective with which this thesis will work will be

informed by Lennard Davis' dismodernist definition of disability. Davis theorises

disability as a socio-political phenomenon rooted both in the Enlightenment

project to assert the rights of all men as created equal, thus not providing for 'the

inequality of particular bodies' (Davis 2002, p.27), and in the postmodernist one

which approaches all identities as equal but retains as its universal subject an

individual who is 'still whole, independent, unified, self-making and capable'

(Davis 2002, p.26). As against both projects, dismodernism extends the concept of

disability 'so that it applies broadly across society as a civil right for all – the right

to be ill, to be infirm, to be impaired without suffering discrimination or

oppression' (Davis 2002, p.1).

David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder note that 'literature does not always

take up disability in order to salvage its routinely denigrating social definitions',

but 'the socially "forbidden" nature of the topic [has] compelled many writers to

deploy disability as an explicitly complicating feature of their representational

universes'.[4] The Scottish writing under consideration deploys representations of

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[3] Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p.8
[4] David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000), p.2

disability as literary devices in order to intensify the critique of work and welfare with which it is concerned. These narratives of disability, through the function they fulfil to amplify social critique, thus function as what Mitchell and Snyder call 'narrative prostheses', which index a 'discursive dependency upon disability' in literary texts (Mitchell and Snyder 2000, p.5). However, they do not function as textual prostheses by alleviating discomfort through 'the erasure of disability via a "quick fix" of an impaired physicality or intellect'; on the contrary, they make for 'continued vigilance' on the part of the audience (Mitchell and Snyder 2000, p.8) by leaving 'the wound of disability undressed' and 'the disabled body as a troubled and troubling position within culture' (Mitchell and Snyder 2000, p.8). My decision to adopt an autonomist disability perspective on Scottish writing in selecting which literary texts to consider has led me to focus on those in which 'the ruse of prosthesis fails in its primary objective: to return the incomplete body to the invisible status of a normative essence' (Mitchell and Snyder 2000, p.8). In doing so, I have answered Mitchell and Snyder's call on critics to 'undo the quick repair of disability in mainstream representations and beliefs' specifically through choice and reading of texts (Mitchell and Snyder 2000, p.8).

I am interested in how the texts and narratives of disability that I have chosen for consideration provide insights into the workings of disability as a literary device. In these texts and narratives disability can be approached both as a prism through which social phenomena are refracted and as generating a form of representation that oscillates 'between a pure process of abstraction and a set of

material conditions'.[5] To Michael Davidson's question 'How might the aesthetic itself be a frame for engaging disability at levels beyond the mimetic?'[6] I will thus not respond by rejecting a contextualist approach. Rather, I will closely attend to the 'anchor in materiality' that disability provides to literary texts (Mitchell and Snyder 2000, p.63), suggesting that the representations of disability that feature in the literary texts I will analyse sharpen their social critique through the power they have to anchor this in materiality.

At the same time, if the aim of disability studies is to theorise 'the utility and appearance of disability in literary narratives' (Mitchell and Snyder 2000, p.1), my work will be concerned with the specificities that can be identified as unique to disability imaginaries in Scottish literature intended as a discipline and as a corpus of literary texts. My investigation will therefore address the relationship between aesthetic and sociological concerns in Scottish writing by mapping out the ways in which narratives of disability inject a form of materiality in critiques of work, welfare and the nation. It will suggest that the aesthetic framing of disability via its encounter with these three dimensions holds the key to the cultural assumptions with which disability is invested in a Scottish cultural context, proving Davidson's point that 'disability becomes the ethos of the social insofar as it exposes cultural assumptions about the corporeality of the social body' (Davidson 2008, p.5). I will return, in my conclusion, to the tension

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[5] Ato Quayson, *Aesthetic Nervousness: Disability and the Crisis of Representation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p.24
[6] Michael Davidson, *Concerto for the Left Hand: Disability and the Defamiliar Body* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008), p.2

between aesthetic and sociological concerns that a Scottish studies perspective in disability studies and a disability studies perspective in Scottish studies inflect.

In the current section, this introduction will introduce the rationale behind my development of a theoretical perspective which combines disability studies, autonomist Marxism, and what I will call a post-indyref perspective, namely a perspective informed by analysis of discourses that circulated during the debate in the run-up to the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence. Through this integrated approach, I aim to expose the disablist structures that have so far prevented a disability studies perspective from influencing the study of Scottish writing, and to create a space in which both the plethora of representations of disability in Scottish writing, and the disablist narratives of disability in Scottish studies, will become more visible for theorisation. The second and third sections of this introduction will consider the 'Nationed Frameworks of Analysis' and the 'Nationed Contexts' that constitute the discipline of Scottish literature, where 'nationed' identifies 'discourses and imaginaries articulated around the signifier of the nation'.[7] The fourth section will conclude by discussing the methodology through which I will be both recuperating for analysis neglected narratives of disability, and foregrounding their antagonistic interconnection with Scottish literary studies. First, having established the exclusionary mechanisms set up by the nationed frameworks at work in Scottish literature, as well as their enhanced visibility from a post-indyref perspective, I will address 'Welfare State Able-

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[7]David Featherstone and Lazaros Karaliotas, 'Challenging the Spatial Politics of the European Crisis: Nationed Narratives and Trans-local Solidarities in the Post-crisis Conjuncture' in *Cultural Studies* (Published online: 07 Aug 2017), note1
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09502386.2017.1354050?journalCode=rcus20

Nationalism' as the point of contact, defined by conflict, between Scottish nationalist discourse in Scottish politics and culture, and narratives of disability in Scottish writing. I will finish with some 'Notes Towards an Autonomist Disability Perspective in Scottish Literature'. These will delineate how a theoretical approach that brings together the insights of autonomist Marxism and disability studies illuminates the conflict between the logics of nationalism, and its welfare state variant, and the politics of disability narratives that carry a trenchant critique of work and care as organised under welfare capitalism.

My decision to use the autonomist strand of Marxist theory to discuss the intersection between narratives of class and disability in Scottish writing has been informed by considerations analogous to those that underpin Roberto Del Valle Alcalà's analysis of British working-class fiction. Del Valle Alcalà argues that literary representations of work in British fiction 'have tended to focus more on the derivative social aspects of the work relation' in terms of 'social context and cultural formation (rather than as the central figure of a power relation)'; this has prevented 'the clear visualization of the latent or explicit antagonisms underpinning capitalist society' and, as a result, has meant that 'a critical discourse avowedly committed to the radical questioning of capitalism often runs the risk of leaving the nucleus of the capitalist operation unquestioned'.[8] Scottish literary criticism is no exception despite, and because of, its pluralist concern to reach beyond nationalist themes by responding to writing concerned with

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[8] Roberto Del Valle Alcalà, *British Working-Class Fiction: Narratives of Refusal and the Struggle Against Work* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), p.2

'questions of class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and so forth':[9] it includes class only in proportion as it fits under the umbrella of its new identity politics rather than as a socio-economic category invested in claims for egalitarian redistribution. Instead, Del Valle Alcalà brings 'the antagonistic logic rehearsed by the Marxist analysis of work as a foundational problem of capitalist society (as a basic operation of power designed to shape society according to its value-creating interests) back to the central stage of literary critical concerns'. He does so by drawing on autonomist Marxism and its assumption that capitalism can be resisted only if the central operator of the class relation, work, 'becomes the target of every resistant move' (Del Valle Alcalà, p.2). This thesis will similarly draw on autonomist Marxism to make visible the fraught relationship between disability and work, as well as welfare, as portrayed in Scottish writing. In turn, if only contestation of the 'assumption of an undifferentiated Scotland with a shared set of interests and priorities'[10] can render the notion of 'class, as a "collective agency"' thinkable',[11] the disability focus that will inform my analysis will suggest how narratives of disability in Scottish writing contribute to this contestation. It will do so by foregrounding the exclusionary underpinnings of the capitalist modes of production and social reproduction, as well as the foreclosure of their critique that is entrenched by the nationed frameworks of analysis that still

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[9] Matt McGuire, *Contemporary Scottish Literature: A Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p.52

[10] Lynne Poole and Gerry Mooney, 'Governance and Social Policy in the Devolved Scotland' in *Exploring Social Justice in the 'New' Scotland*, ed. by Gerry Mooney and Gill Scott (Bristol: Policy Press, 2005), p.46

[11] Michael Lavalette and Gerry Mooney, 'Introduction: Class Struggle and Social Policy' in *Class Struggle and Social Welfare*, ed. by Michael Lavalette and Gerry Mooney (London: Routledge, 2000), p.3

overdetermine critical practice in Scottish literary studies, despite the pluralist

direction in which the field has been moving.

The pluralist trend in Scottish studies has also failed to feature an

engagement with disability studies in ways that beg interrogation because

disability studies and Scottish studies are ideally placed to come into

conversation. First of all, a dialogue between the two fields would be fruitful

because both seek to contribute to political projects. While what defines Scottish

literature is conformity to procedures that presuppose a nationalist commitment,

Ato Quayson illuminates the political rationale of disability studies by drawing

attention to its 'methodological predisposition of reading literature for social

analysis', within a sociocultural critical framework that 'interprets disabilities as

being an interaction between physical impairment and the social and cultural

environment'.[12] Secondly, the two disciplines are in an ideal position to speak to

one another because both, through their political investment, are concerned with

concepts of the nation. In the case of Scottish criticism, the preliminary decision

its practitioners make to adopt the national style of literary history means that, as

Alex Thomson points out, 'once we accept that a nation is not so much a thing we

can touch, as a story in which we believe, the historiography of Scottish literature

itself becomes an act of determination, part of the continual re-imagination of the

nation's forms of life'.[13] Within this context, as we will see, Scottish political and

cultural discourse has put forward ideal types and attitudes considered to belong,

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[12]Ato Quayson, *Calibrations: Reading for the Social* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), p.101

[13] Alex Thomson, '"You can't get there from here": Devolution and Scottish Literary History' in *International Journal of Scottish Literature*, Vol.3 (2007), p.5

and types and attitudes considered not to belong within the nation, with disability falling into the latter category. As for disability studies, for Davis the field must attend to the ways in which 'there is no neat distinction between the world of the body and the world of the body politic' (Davis 2002, p.111), in a context where the representative democracy of the nation assumes the exclusionary form of 'normalcy or, to try another neologism, normocracy' (Davis 2002, p.110).

However, no conversation between disability studies and Scottish studies has taken place. As I have written elsewhere,[14] the failure of Scottish literary criticism to embrace disability as a legitimate category of analysis is puzzling when considered alongside its commitment in recent decades to develop approaches informed by gender, class and race studies so as to evade the straitjacket of cultural nationalism associated with the field. Scottish literary studies underwent enlargement to address issues other than national ones. This moment was exemplified by James McGonigal and Kirsten Stirling's collection of essays, which aimed to attend to the representation of communities which 'need not necessarily be the nation' in Scottish writing, and therefore to Scotland's 'sheer diversity'.[15] The expanded focus, however, did not encompass narratives of disability and disability studies perspectives. On the one hand, this is in line with Davis' reflections on the relationship between normality, diversity and disability.

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[14] See my 'Avoiding Disability in Scottish Literary Studies? Scottish Studies, Ablenationalism, and Beyond' in *Disability, Avoidance and the Academy: Challenging Resistance* (Routledge, 2015) and 'A Post-Indyref Perspective on the "remainder of normal at the end of normal" in Scottish Literature: Disability, Miserablism, and Constitutional Patriotism' in *HJEAS*, Vol.21: Scottish Studies: Where is the Field Now? (2015), pp.163-81

[15] James McGonigal and Kirsten Stirling, 'Introduction' in *Ethically Speaking: Voice and Values in Modern Scottish Writing*, ed. by James McGonigal and Kirsten Stirling (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006), p.10

Davis argues that the concept of normal is being 'decommissioned as a discursive organiser', and replaced by 'the term *diverse*', so that '*diversity* is the new *normality'*.[16] According to Davis, this does not apply to disability because 'in contrast to this roving, complex, and shifting nature of identity that is part of the notion of the diverse… Disabled bodies are, in the current imaginary, constructed as fixed identities' (Davis 2013, p.7). Consequently, disability represents 'the remainder of normal at the end of normal' (Davis 2013, p.14). On the other hand, within a Scottish context, this underscores the extent to which narratives of diversity in politics and criticism remain hinged to nationed disciplinary frameworks; as Gavin Miller suggests, the 'sustained attack upon the myth of Scottish cultural unanimity and homogeneity' masks the fact that 'cultural diversity itself is offered as the new essence of Scottishness'.[17]

From the perspective of disability studies, this marginalisation comes as no surprise when one considers the negative significance with which disability is invested on a cultural level. Tobin Siebers notes that 'in every oppression system of our day… the oppressed identity is represented in some way as disabled', so that disability can be considered 'the master trope of human disqualification'. However, for Siebers, the interest of this for the cultural critic lies in 'understanding the work done by disability in oppressive systems'.[18] Thus, it is necessary to examine the specific dynamics at play in Scottish literary studies and

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[16] Lennard J. Davis, *The End of Normal: Identity in a Biocultural Era* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2013), p.1

[17] Gavin Miller, 'Scotland's Authentic Plurality: The New Essentialism in Scottish Studies' in *Scottish Literary Review*, ed. By Sarah Dunnigan and Margery Palmer McCulloch, Vol.1, No.1 (Spring/Summer 2009), p.138

[18] Tobin Siebers, *Disability Aesthetics* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2010), pp.26-7

culture in order to grasp the unexamined rationale which discourages analysis of disability in Scottish writing from a disability studies perspective attentive to its socio-political implications. Lisa Diedrich contends that in examining the relationship between national contexts and narratives of illness and disability the latter may be approached as 'fictions' but they are nonetheless 'useful in better understanding the specific cultural narratives of illness that are available in different sociocultural contexts, as well as the particular cultural anxieties that these narratives often keep concealed'.[19] Heeding Diedrich's insight, this thesis will map the derogatory imagery of disability that recurs in Scottish studies as an index of the cultural narratives available in Scottish culture. It will relate these to the defining concern of the field with the pursuit of 'cultural confidence', arguing that this makes less legible narratives of disability in Scottish writing that represent disability as a socio-political phenomenon on terms unconstrained by those set by Scottish studies.

As we will see in chapter one, critical discourses in Scottish studies work to distance disability from perception in Scottish culture in proportion as they comment on its obtrusive presence. Scottish cultural and literary discourse has oscillated between visions of Scottish culture and society perceived, or metaphorically described, as defeatist / miserablist, neurotic, underdeveloped or deformed and conceptualisations which have re-valued them as 'normal' and 'healthy'. Both perspectives have produced unexamined assumptions regarding the undesirability of disability in Scottish studies. Indeed, the lack of a sustained

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[19] Lisa Diedrich, *Treatments: Language, Politics, and the Culture of Illness* (University of Minnesota Press, 2007), p.i

dialogue between Scottish studies and disability studies can be attributed to the derogatory deployment of disability imagery in connection with the Scottish political and cultural discourses of abnormal development, miserablism / defeatism and inferiorism. When this is considered alongside the participation of Scottish literary criticism in the rejection of such discourses as harmful to the politics and culture of the nation, it is no surprise that portrayals of disability in Scottish writing have suffered critical neglect. Thus, the specificity of the discourses of disqualification that underpin the marginalisation of disability in Scottish studies needs to be explored in relation to the nationed framework of Scottish literature. Mitchell and Snyder ask 'what circumstances lead to cultural devaluation in the midst of an outpouring of textual, statistical, and visual materials on the subject?', intimating that disability suffers a 'paradox of devaluation in the midst of perpetual discussion'.[20] In the context of Scottish studies the 'the paradox of devaluation in the midst of perpetual discussion' which attends disability is grounded both in the politics of belonging of the field, and in the link these establish between cultural confidence and the political context to which Scottish studies is bound by its national determination.

As this introduction will lay out, on the one hand the disciplinary framework of Scottish studies is defined by, and privileges, nationed narratives of literary and cultural analysis. As we will see, critical approaches, whether driven by cultural nationalism or by postmodernist pluralism, are concerned to determine which traits and themes may be suited to represent Scottish culture and literature.

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[20] David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *Cultural Locations of Disability* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), p.20

On the other hand, the interconnection between cultural and political contexts intensifies these dynamics. As Scott Hames has suggested, 'for the past twenty years, it has been very difficult to locate the politics of individual Scottish writers (or their artworks) in any context separable from politicized national identity – a pattern sponsoring the reduction of all politics to identity politics'.[21] Within the nationed framework of Scottish literature, which works 'to collapse aesthetics into the social… by reading the state of national confidence from the confidence of its artists and intellectuals' (Thomson 2007, p.11), disability must be rejected on the grounds of its imbrication with defeatism / miserablism and derogatory imagery, and of the consequent harmful impact it may exert on Scottish culture, society and politics. When this is considered alongside Miller's question 'what would it really mean to investigate Scottish literature for its health-giving properties? … What if it turned out that Scottish literature was bad for you?',[22] it is difficult to escape the impression that the investigation of Scottish literature in relation to its supposed health-giving properties has been a constitutive feature of the field since its flourishing in the 1980s.

In the run-up to the 2014 referendum, nationed metaphors of disability organised, intensified, and brought together, under the umbrella of discourses on cultural confidence, narratives of defeatism / miserablism and underdevelopment specific to different periods in the development of Scottish studies. Political commentator Fintan O'Toole suggested that independence would allow a national

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[21] Scott Hames, 'Introduction: Don't Feel Bought, You're Buying' in *Unstated: Writers on Scottish Independence*, ed. by Scott Hames (Edinburgh: Word Power Books, 2012), p.5
[22] Gavin Miller, 'Sick of Scottish Literature?' in *The Bottle Imp*, Issue 15 (May 2014) https://www.thebottleimp.org.uk/2014/06/sick-of-scottish-literature/

culture such as Scotland's to overcome the anxiety of self-definition connected to national vanity, graduate to a mature culture defined by confidence and national pride, and embrace a plural identity.[23] Indeed, cultural confidence and the need to achieve it so as to valorise national diversity have been long-standing preoccupations in Scottish studies, yearned for by cultural nationalists and ethical pluralists alike, within the framework of competing identity politics. This common concern, however, raises more questions about the politics of belonging in terms of what is allowed to belong within Scottish culture in a quest for self-confidence, than about the politics of belonging determined by emotional or ontological attachment.[24] This is particularly so when discourses on cultural confidence intersect with derogatory narratives of disability. Such an encounter forecloses any disability studies perspective and, in so doing, foregrounds the essentialist and the contextualist frameworks of Scottish literature – by 'contextualist' I intend a framework concerned with defining the essence of Scottish writing and both its correspondence and its potential to make a contribution to Scottish society – as both nationed and responsible for the invisibility of the plethora of narratives of disability in Scottish writing.

With this in mind, I will propose a 'post-indyref- perspective' on Scottish literature and on the symbolic marginalisation of disability from the field through disablist discourses. By 'post-indyref perspective' I mean a viewpoint informed by analysis of the cultural narratives that defined the national conversation in the

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[23] Fintan O'Toole, 'The Art of Growing Up: A Foreword' in *Caledonian Dreaming: The Quest for a Different Scotland* (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2014)

[24] Nira Yuval-Davis, *The Politics of Belonging: Intersectional Contestations* (Los Angeles and London: Sage, 2011), p.10

run-up to the 2014 independence referendum. Rogers Brubaker suggests that, in approaching nations, 'shifting attention from groups to groupness, and treating groupness as variable and contingent rather than fixed and given, allows us to take account of… moments of intensely felt collective solidarity'.[25] With Brubaker's argument in mind, a 'post-indyref perspective' brings into focus trends that emerged during the indyref debate as intensifying similar patterns animating Scottish culture but less visible in moments not characterised by the'intensely felt collective solidarity' that accompanied the debate. In particular, I will argue that a post-indyref perspective illuminates the nationalist and contextualist frameworks of Scottish literature as much as the recurrent nationed images of disability in Scottish culture these draw on, as chapter one will examine.

This thesis will be framed by a post-indyref perspective in a two-fold manner: first, my investigation will approach the related discourses on miserablism / defeatism, underdevelopment and cultural confidence that acquired urgency during the referendum debate as prisms through which to grasp the nationed essentialism that drives, in twentieth- and twenty-first century Scottish cultural and literary studies, the pursuit of cultural confidence through the discursive devaluation of aspects of Scottish society and culture perceived to be detrimental to it. Secondly, it will follow a reverse chronological order in exploring representations of disability in twentieth- and twenty-first century Scottish writing. In so doing, it will reproduce, at the structural level, the parallel processes of unpicking the sedimentation of disability's invisibility in Scottish

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[25] Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), p.12

cultural and literary studies and of unearthing the accumulated layers of its representations in Scottish writing.

## Nationed Frameworks of Analysis: Nationalism, Pluralism, and Essentialism in Scottish Literary Studies

In Scottish literary criticism all narratives are nationed, or 'articulated around the signifier of the nation', because of the circularity that bedevils the definition of Scottish literature as a field of study, as underlined by Alex Thomson. For Thomson, 'framed in national terms, the study of literature in Scotland will always tend to become the analysis of Scottish literature, and ultimately, of what is "Scottish" about that literature' (Thomson 2007, p.6). From this perspective, it is critics who constitute Scottish literature in defining their object of study as national: for Thomson, 'the writing of historiography in the national style does not describe the reaffirmation of national identity: it hopes to enact it' (Thomson 2007, p.5). Liam Connell suggests as much in warning that the coherence of Scottish literature 'is defined by a political concept of Scottishness' because '"Scottish" is not a language' and therefore 'Scottish literature is always literature from Scotland'.[26] Within this framework, critics like Eleanor Bell who propose pluralism as a way out of essentialism have been critiqued for their neglect to justify their choice of themes and texts. Referring to Bell, Thomson warns that 'the preliminary circumspection of the area of study presumes some form of

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[26] Liam Connell, 'Modes of Marginality: Scottish Literature and the Uses of Postcolonial Theory' in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol.23, No.1 (2003), p.41

minimum identity amongst its component parts' but 'she does not acknowledge that to take Scottish literature as a starting point is itself a decision, an act of exclusion and preferment'.[27]

Thomson's problematisation of the nationed framework of Scottish literature chimes with Aijaz Ahmad's response to Fredric Jameson's argument that all texts from the so-called third world are national allegories, whereby 'third-world texts, even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic, necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory'.[28] Ahmad's critique of the use of the category of 'Third World Literature' is grounded in his rejection of its assumed internal coherence, and illuminates the functioning of the nationed framework of Scottish literature too. For Ahmad, there is no such thing as a category of the 'essentially descriptive'. To assert as much 'is to assert a level of facticity which conceals its own ideology, and to prepare a ground from which judgments of classification, generalization and value can be made'.[29] This occurs in the context of the overvalorisation of nationalism (Ahmad, p.102) as a 'unitary force of determination in the sphere of ideology' (Ahmad, p.119). Because 'most literary productions… are not always available for that kind of direct and unitary determination by any one factor' (Ahmad, p.120), for Ahmad the positing of this unitary determination grounds exclusion of what cannot be read as national. In order to identify the dynamics

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[27] Alex Thomson, 'Review: Scottish Culture after Devolution' in *Scottish Affairs*, No.55 (2006), p.130
[28] Fredric Jameson, 'Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism' in *Social Text*, No. 15 (Autumn, 1986), pp. 65-88, p.69
[29] Aijaz Ahmad, 'Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the "National Allegory"' in *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London and New York: Verso, 1992), p.99

that underpin the marginalisation as inauthentic of disability narratives in Scottish literature I will now consider the essentialism embedded in its definition as a national literary tradition and in the selection of themes and identities taken to constitute such a tradition. I will argue that this constitutes the hinge on which the unitary determination of Scottish literature and the exclusions it predicates turn.

The ways in which in Scottish literary criticism all narratives are nationed, or 'articulated around the signifier of the nation', and the constraining effect they generate in the field, are refracted through the issue of essentialism. As I will argue in chapter one, the roots of the foreclosure of a disability studies approach are located in the essentialist aspect of the nationalist framework of Scottish studies. Critics have foregrounded the necessity for essentialism to inform the definition of a Scottish literary tradition as a national tradition, whereby representative attributes testifying to its specificity are identified. Gerard Carruthers and Liam McIlvanney note that 'essentialism', or 'taking a dogmatic view on what constitutes a culture and the criteria for belonging to a culture', is inevitable in a Scottish context. This is because 'with Scottish literature, (as with any other literature qualified by a national prefix) the problematic question of belonging or "canonicity" inevitably arises. How are we to define "Scottish literature"?'.[30] Berthold Schoene agrees that essentialism is inevitable in debating the possibility of a coherent literary tradition for a stateless nation: for him, the

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[30] Gerard Carruthers and Liam McIlvanney, 'Introduction' in *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature*, ed. by Gerard Carruthers and Liam McIlvanney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.11

question is: 'if Scotland's literature is indeed marked by an essential difference, then what exactly might be the most salient attributes of this essence'.[31]

Traditionally, cultural nationalists have asserted the specificity of a Scottish literary tradition in relation to its difference from English literature and to its rootedness in a Scottish context as the foundation of the field. Kurt Wittig made this point forcefully by noting that 'from London… the work of Scottish writers is seen in a false perspective' because 'literature is not written in a vacuum, but grows out of the life of the community, and must therefore be studied as a product of that particular community in which it originated'.[32] Robert Crawford has argued for the need to valorise a distinctive literary tradition by way of defence against 'the majoritarian impulse of English literature'.[33] However, parallel to the assertion of difference has gone anxiety over the perceived vulnerability of Scottish culture. Consciousness of vulnerability was indeed proposed as the very essence of Scottish literature by Francis Russell Hart. For him, the Scottish novel is defined by 'several distinctive and often paradoxical motifs' originating in 'the assumption that cultural survival is doomed or unlikely'.[34]

Within the same framework of cultural nationalism, however, critics have articulated concern over the construction of totalising narratives and proposed a

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[31] Berthold Schoene, 'Going Cosmopolitan: Reconstituting 'Scottishness' in Post-devolution Criticism' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature*, ed. by Berthold Schoene (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p.9
[32] Kurt Wittig, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1958), p.3
[33] Robert Crawford, *Devolving English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p.5
[34] Francis Russell Hart, *The Scottish Novel: From Smollett to Spark* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p.407

heterogeneous, if specific, literary tradition. What Carla Sassi values in Scottish

literature is the way in which it is 'dominated by the notions of fluidity and

plurality' due to the loss of statehood as well as its ethnic, linguistic and religious

fractures.[35] The same fluidity characterises Alan Riach's tradition, constituted by

icons, or masks, which enshrine continuity through their return alongside

discontinuity through their continual reappropriation, and preserve a relational

rather than essential national identity. He points out 'I do not intend to suggest

that various forms of Scottish cultural production conceal an essential, irreducible

national identity, but rather that they present themselves as ways and forms in

which relations are expressed and revealed'.[36] Similarly, Cairns Craig's literary

tradition is one organised by a national principle which accommodates

heterogeneity and fluidity. For Craig, the modern Scottish novel is an 'embodied

argument',[37] namely 'a space of debate, a dialogue between the interacting

possibilities of a medium shaped by the conditions of those living in Scotland'

(Craig, p.33).

The recourse to notions of heterogeneity and fluidity within cultural

nationalism has not satisfied critics who, voicing pluralist sensibilities, have

contested the very pre-eminence of national specificity as the criterion for

understanding Scottish literature. For them such a criterion obscures the cultural

diversity Scottish writing embodies. This is exemplified by Bell's argument that

'readings of Scotland that are dependent on cultural nationalist underpinnings

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[35] Carla Sassi, *Why Scottish Literature Matters* (Edinburgh: The Saltire Society, 2005), p.3

[36] Alan Riach, *Representing Scotland in Literature, Popular Culture and Iconography: The Masks of the Modern Nation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.3

[37] Cairns Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p.6

repeatedly fail to accommodate the diversity and changing nature of Scottishness'.[38] Christopher Whyte too warns against the homogenising intent of cultural nationalism. He reflects that the tendency to view literature, 'either synchronically or diachronically', in terms of national character and of 'sameness or identity to self' seizes on internal difference 'as a species of yeast which is gradually integrated into the majority ranks of those who are the same'.[39] Within this framework, calls for a plural tradition have been forcefully made: Carruthers and McIlvanney advocate the recognition of 'a plurality of "traditions" rather than a singular "tradition"' (Carruthers and McIlvanney, p.2) and James McGonigal and Kirsten Stirling suggest that 'there is no simple way to talk about Scottish literature as if it were one thing' because the diversity it accommodates makes it 'plural' (McGonigal and Stirling, p.20). However, as already noted, the position of anti-essentialism rooted in pluralism is critiqued by Miller as elevating plurality to 'the new essence of Scottishness' without troubling the issue of essentialism itself (Miller 2009, p.158).

In their rejection of cultural nationalism these positions are rooted in sociological insights regarding the irrelevance of the nation-state in a postmodern world, such as David McCrone's. McCrone notes that for a long time Scotland could not be the object of sociology due to its stateless status but in a globalised world one no longer needs to prove that Scotland exists as a unit of analysis: he

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[38] Eleanor Bell, *Questioning Scotland: Literature, Nationalism, Postmodernism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.79

[39] Christopher Whyte, 'Nationalism and its Discontents: Critiquing Scottish Criticism' in *'What Country's This? And Whither Are We Gone?': Papers Presented at the Twelfth International Conference on the Literature of Region and Nation*, ed. by Derrick McClure, Karoline Szateck-Tudor and Rosa E. Penna (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), p.35

suggests that 'We now recognise that there are very few genuine nation-states in which political and cultural boundaries intersect, and that the world is a much messier – and more interesting – place because of that'.[40] And within this framework, McCrone points out the invalidity and danger involved in the search for a national identity in non-modernist times where identities multiply: 'the search for a single carrier of national identity is doomed to ignore the pluralism and complexity of identities in modern life' (McCrone, p.142). Following McCrone, Bell argues that 'who we are becoming' is 'intrinsically connected to the post-modern revisioning of identity, where forms of belonging are increasingly becoming more self-consciously stratified and multi-faceted' (Bell, p.80). However, on Bell's account, this pluralist identity politics remains situated within the larger context of the nation, and she emphasises that 'the postmodern fragmentation of national identity, while challenging the rigid premises of cultural nationalism, does not abandon the notion of tradition altogether either. Rather, it may actually help interrogate forms of stasis that often lurk within uncritical notions of national identity' (Bell, p.72).

The oscillation between the assertion of national specificity and its problematisation indexes a tension between nationalist and pluralist identity politics in criticism. This is replicated when it comes to isolating the themes which constitute Scottish literature. On the one hand, within the framework of cultural nationalism, privileging writers' engagement with issues of national identity has been commonplace. Douglas Gifford and Alan Riach set forth

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[40] David McCrone, *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Nation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p.2

national identity as the theme defining Scottish poetry, suggesting that narratives

of Scotland may be taken to function as metanarratives, working with 'the notion

of a kind of *meta*-Scotland'.[41] The theme of Scotland becomes 'a distinctive and

differentiating feature of Scottish literature' (Gifford and Riach, p.xvii). These

convictions are echoed by Dorothy McMillan, according to whom it is impossible

for novelists to transcend the idea of the nation.[42] On the other hand, these

positions have been problematised by critics who perceive a dangerous

reductionism in the focus on national identity as the defining theme in Scottish

literature. Whyte expands on what he calls 'obligatory Scottishness'. He notes that

'the prevailing emphasis in Scottish criticism' on national identity 'runs the risk of

trapping writers, their work, and our readings of it in what [he calls] the Scottish

tautology' (Whyte, p.24).The Scottish tautology consists in the assumption that 'it

is not sufficient for texts to have a demonstrable connection with the geographical

space known as Scotland today, or with a person or with peoples who inhabit or

have inhabited that space. They must demonstrate their Scottishness once again,

in terms of both theme and treatment' (Whyte, p.24). These concerns are shared

by Bell, who denounces a state of Scottish literary criticism in which 'there is a

certain factor of reducibility at work, where texts produced by Scottish authors

must in the first instance be explained in terms of their Scottishness' (Whyte, p.2).

For Bell, 'such approaches tend to perpetuate the introversion of a discipline that

in actuality needs to expand its conceptual boundaries' (Bell, p.2). Matt McGuire

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[41] Douglas Gifford and Alan Riach, 'Introduction: Making Poetry out of Scotland' in *Scotlands: Poets and the Nation*, ed. by Douglas Gifford and Alan Riach (Manchester: Carcanet, 2004), p.xvii
[42] Dorothy McMillan, 'Constructed Out of Bewilderment' in *Peripheral Visions: Images of Nationhood in Contemporary British Fiction*, ed. by Ian A. Bell (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), p.81

too attacks a literary criticism focused on issues of national identity. For him, as 'a highly diverse body of literature, writing from Scotland can no longer in reality be subsumed within the critical straitjacket of cultural nationalism' (McGuire, p.52).

We have seen how the tension between a homogeneous and a heterogeneous Scottish literary tradition revolves around the need to select features adequate to represent Scottish culture within an inevitably essentialist framework. Narratives of disability trouble these politics of representation: as chapter one will explore, disability is repeatedly registered as undesirably connected with Scottish culture, but an imperative emerges in criticism not to allow these encounters to be actually taken as representative of Scottish culture. The discursive exclusion of disability from the space of the nation is further entrenched by the connection between cultural and political contexts.

**Nationed Contexts and Literary Criticism: Nationalism, Contextualism, and the Need for a Post-Indyref Perspective in Scottish Literary Studies**

In Scottish literature cultural nationalism has traditionally presupposed a link of efficacy between writing and Scottish nationalist politics. For Thomson this is confirmed by how aesthetics is expected to revitalise the national context, while being in turn energised by its connection with it. He notes that 'a link between devolution and the "revival" of contemporary Scottish literature has become a critical commonplace' (Thomson 2013, p.3), and this within a larger context in which the national style of criticism tends 'to collapse aesthetics into the social by

identifying the literary vanguard with the spirit of the nation', and to derive 'the state of national confidence from the confidence of its artists and intellectuals' (Thomson 2007, p.1). Hames confirms that after 1979 there originated the feeling that cultural autonomy could become a 'crucial substratum' for political autonomy 'on terms shaped by artists rather than politicians' (Hames 2012, p.5). He identifies a 'narrative of antecedence' in Scottish literary studies whereby cultural emancipation preceded its political part in a way that leaves 'unclear whether the primacy of culture is a matter of causation, displacement or surrogacy – culture driving politics, culture instead of politics, or culture *as* politics'.[43]

Both Thomson and Hames have problematised the link between politics and literature, not only in terms of its invalidity, but also in terms of the constraints it imposes on critical approaches to Scottish writing. Thomson foregrounds the dangers involved in conflating culture and politics in his review of Michael Gardiner's *The Cultural Roots of British Devolution* which, as common with cultural criticism, 'over-estimates the political impact of culture, while under-estimating its political inscription' (Thomson 2006, p.131). Along similar lines, Hames notes that 'writers, musicians and performers may have articulated a sense of Scottish disenfranchisement in the 1980s and 90s… but the conservative political process we call devolution – no more or less than an effort to re-legitimise the UK state – was, in the end, not meaningfully shaped by them' (Hames 2012, p.17). Among the distortions imposed on Scottish writing by assumptions regarding the imbrications of literature and politics, what Thomson

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[43] Scott Hames, 'Narrating Devolution: Politics and/as Scottish Fiction' in *C21 Literature: Journal of 21st-century Writings*, Vol.5, No.2 (2017), p.4

calls 'a re-nationalisation of criticism of contemporary British writing', is the reduction of Scottish writing to 'a narrow concern with identity' (Thomson 2007, p.16). This has been denounced both by Thomson and by Hames, who highlights the reduction of all politics to identity politics within a context in which 'the politics of Scottish devolution, and the contemporary debate over political independence, are self-evidently far less radical, passionate and imaginative than the politics of the writers most often invoked as symbols of their cultural rootedness and legitimacy' (Hames 2013, p.10).

However, as Hames has more recently pointed out, after the 2014 No vote 'devolution is Scotland's indefinite future' (Hames 2017, p.22) and 'the opportunity to revisit the political self-constitution of "Scottish literature" as a subject' that the post-indyref scenario creates 'should be welcomed' (Hames 2017, p.20). Why this is the case is illuminated by Pascale Casanova, who provides useful insights into the relationship between nationalist contextualism and national literatures. Casanova specifically engages with the contextual forces that perpetuate nation-ness as a defining framework of national literatures. She delineates a scenario in which at the nation-building stage literature is intertwined with politics, arguing that 'with the spread of nationalist ideas in the nineteenth century and the creation of new nations, political authority served as a foundation for emerging literary spaces'.[44] As a result, for Casanova 'there exists a relation of dependence with regard first to the state, then to the nation' (Casanova, p.36). While Casanova's interest lies in connecting the political order peculiar to the

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[44] Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. by M.B. Debevoise (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2004), p.35

literary world with a literary geopolitics, in Scottish studies the relation of dependence of literature to the state has been seized upon to posit its potential to exert an active influence, whether positive or negative, on the development of Scotland's constitutional status. Thus, delineating a divergence from Casanova's chronology whereby, gradually, literature has 'succeeded in freeing itself from the hold of the political and national authorities that originally it helped to establish and legitimise' and in refusing 'to submit to the national and political definition of literature' (Casanova, p.37), in a Scottish context this emancipation of the literary from a national political context is made unthinkable by the active status of the pro-independence drive. A post-indyref perspective thus both responds to the political conjuncture during which my research has been produced, and makes visible the contextualism that defines Scottish literature and the exclusionary discourses it grounds.

The renewed interconnection between contextualist and essentialist nationed frameworks in Scottish literary studies means that in considering the nation-ness that informs critical narratives in Scottish literature it is necessary to follow the double trajectory of investigation Pheng Cheah examines in relation to Benedict Anderson's work on the nation as an imagined community. For Cheah, Anderson's focus is primarily on 'the genesis of *how* nations are imagined rather than *what* they imagine themselves as'.[45] This is encapsulated in Anderson's examination of the technologies whereby the nation can be imagined by individuals who 'will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or

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[45] Pheng Cheah, 'Grounds of Comparison' in *Grounds of Comparison: Around the Work of Benedict Anderson*, ed. by Jonathan Culler and Pheng Cheah (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), p.5

even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'.

This happens within a framework in which national communities 'are to be

distinguished, not by their falsity / genuineness, but by the style in which they are

imagined' (Cheah, p.6). However, a second trajectory in Anderson's thought can

be identified which examines nations as ideologically imagined in terms of what

they are imagined as, 'at a later historical stage, once the nation has been born',

when 'more determinate and even ideological uses can be made of the novel'

(Cheah, p.7). And relevant to this moment is Anderson's suggestion that the

nation 'is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality

and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a

deep, horizontal comradeship' (Cheah, p.7). Anderson's double trajectory

explains what a post-indyref perspective illuminates: how disability owes its

uncomfortable positioning in Scottish literature both to the contextualist aspect of

the field, which empowers culture to function as a means through which the

nation is imagined, and to its essentialist counterpart, which selects

representations suited to participate in this imagining of the nation.


**Welfare State Able-Nationalism, Internal Exclusion, and Disability: Notes
Towards an Autonomist Disability Perspective in Scottish Literature**


Anderson suggests that nationality and nation-ness are modular, or 'capable of

being transplanted, with varying degrees of self-consciousness, to a great variety

of social terrains, to merge and be merged with a correspondingly wide variety of

political and ideological constellations'.[46] It follows that, in order to work out the rationale behind the exclusion of disability as a category of analysis in essentialist and contextualist fields such as Scottish literature, the question to be posed is what political and ideological constellation nation-ness merges with. My contention will be that there is a double point of contact between nationed narratives and narratives of disability in a Scottish cultural context: on the one hand, that constituted by nationed metaphors of disability deployed to conceptualise undesirable attributes of the nation (as chapter one will explore); on the other, that provided by the discourses of welfare state nationalism where nation, welfare, work and disability converge but disability provides a damning critique of, and resistance to, narratives of work and care sanctioned by the welfare state regime (as chapters two to five will unpack). The extent to which these two dimensions of marginalisation and conflict are interconnected can be grasped through Étienne Balibar's idea of internal exclusion.

Balibar introduces the idea of internal exclusion to discuss the phenomenon whereby 'the excluded can be neither really accepted nor effectively eliminated, or even simply pushed into a space outside the community', according to a logic which engenders double-edged processes of 'integration and repression, of positive discrimination but also stigmatisation'. On the one hand is 'a logic of commodification of individuals on the capitalist market' which reifies subjects; on the other is 'a logic of racialization that derives from the essentialist representation of historical (especially but not exclusively national) communities'.

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[46] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2006), p.5

This identifies the other in the midst of the national community and, in so doing, 'exacerbates a fantasy of purity, homogeneity, and unity'.[47] This thesis will map out how the internal exclusion of disability is dramatised in Scottish writing and refracted at the discursive level in Scottish studies. It will start by exploring, in chapter one, how disability becomes the object of internal exclusion through its devaluation at the symbolic level typical of the identification of subjects as internal others in the space of the nation-state; and it will proceed, in chapters two to five, to consider narratives that dramatise the integration of disability into the capitalist mode of production through waged work and welfare, alongside disability's intractability to being commodified and reified as a useful part of the working class.

For Étienne Balibar, the two heterogeneous logics that organise internal exclusion, one of commodification and the other of communitarian othering, are connected 'to the development of the capitalist labor market' as much as 'to the essentialisation (even the sacralisation) of the nation-state', and 'bear a normative modality of the individual's association to the collectivity' (Balibar, p.203). It is within this framework that the logics of commodification and communitarian othering proceed 'through the transformation of human beings into things', defined by their use-value and vulnerable to being made redundant or disposable as soon as they lose this, and 'via the transformation of outsiders… from merely Others into absolute Others and thus enemies' (Balibar, p.202) respectively. The nationed framework of Scottish literature reproduces the latter logic at a

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[47] Étienne Balibar, 'What Are the Excluded Excluded From?' in *Equaliberty: Political Essays*, trans. by James Ingram (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), p.201

discursive level through essentialist *cum* contextualist structures aimed at identifying, and expelling, narratives unsuited to representing the nation, as we will see in chapter one; instead, as we will examine in chapters two to five, Scottish writing features a wealth of narratives of disability which expose and undercut the logics of commodification and identification while positing, and valorising, disability's non-belonging within the world of the capitalist social national state – by which Balibar intends the welfare state defined by national boundaries.

Through their dramatisation of the ways in which disability troubles the inclusive rhetoric of the social national state, narratives of disability clash with the ideology of welfare state nationalism. As Nicola McEwen argues, the concept of welfare state nationalism allows us to relate territorial politics to the development of the welfare state because the welfare state, 'and the institutions and services it embodies', represents a 'tool of territorial management'.[48] Disability bedevils the nation-building function of welfare state nationalism by exposing its two-fold exclusionary rationale: if the nation-building function of the welfare state contributes to 'renewing or "reinventing" the collective dimension of the nation' (McEwen, p.67), it does so by silencing the denunciation of a regime of work and welfare structured *not* to accommodate disabled people. Moreover, if the nation-building function of the welfare state is 'embodied in the symbolic significance of its institutions', which 'represent a common heritage, a symbol of shared risks and mutual commitment, and a common project for the future' (McEwen, p.62), it

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[48] Nicola McEwen, *Nationalism and the State: Welfare and Identity in Scotland and Quebec* (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2006), p.50

relies on the exclusion of disability as symbolically encoded in disablist narratives of the nation in Scottish culture and studies, and as materially enacted through disablist social structures universally. And if the welfare state of welfare state nationalism aims to fashion itself as people's protector in times of need by guaranteeing social security 'as a right of citizenship' so as to 'be better able to command the loyalty of… citizens' (McEwen, p.63), its project(ion) is fundamentally undermined by disability's antagonism, rather than loyalty, to the welfare state regime which structurally and symbolically excludes it.

Thus, welfare state nationalism fuses with the nationed framework of Scottish literature as a variant of what Mitchell and Snyder call 'able-nationalism'. For Mitchell and Snyder, able-nationalism indicates a regime whereby citizenship is extended to disabilities which can be easily accommodated under a rhetoric of inclusivity but is denied to those which are not assimilable and therefore remain undesirable. Able-nationalism indicates 'the degree to which treating people with disabilities as an exception valorises able-bodied norms of inclusion as the naturalized qualification of citizenship'.[49] Within this framework, a 'normalisation of some disabilities is created against other non-normative, less easy to accommodate differences' (Snyder and Mitchell 2010, p.119). Lynn Hollen Lees argues that 'transference of some income from richer to poorer has been a common survival strategy of communities', but 'each decision brought into question the boundaries of the group and the inequality it was prepared to

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[49] Sharon L. Snyder and David T. Mitchell, 'Introduction: Ablenationalism and the Geo-Politics of Disability' in *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies*, Vol.4, No.2 (2010), p.113

tolerate'.[50] In just this way, the exclusion of disability from the nationed contexts and discourses relevant to Scottish literature appears to be profoundly rooted in disability's incompatibility with the profit-making that is central to the organisation of the capitalist mode of production and the welfare state regime that attempts to make it sustainable. In response to this, I will now delineate an autonomist disability perspective to counter the ideology of welfare state able-nationalism, and the better to make visible the critique of welfare and work that is carried by disability narratives in Scottish writing, occluded as it is by the able-nationalist framework that defines Scottish studies.

In order to appreciate the dynamics of welfare exclusion and antagonism on which disability's relationship with the welfare state hinges, it is necessary to depart from the social democratic view of the welfare state that underpins welfare state nationalism. This is encapsulated in McEwen's definition of the welfare state 'as a form of state that intervenes in the economy and the society to provide a degree of social protection and security to its citizens' (McEwen, p.55). Relatedly, Asa Briggs posits the welfare state as 'a state in which organised power is deliberately used (through politics and administration) in an effort to modify the play of market forces'.[51] I take a more critical view. While McEwen and Briggs approach the welfare state as a benign force that merely encounters the capitalist mode of production, the former can instead be seen to further the latter through its guarantee of private poverty and its simultaneous maintenance, via social security,

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[50] Lynn Hollen Lees, 'Introduction' in *The Solidarities of Strangers: The English Poor Laws and the People, 1700-1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.11
[51] Asa Briggs, 'The Welfare State in Historical Perspective' in *The Welfare State Reader*, ed. by C. Pierson and F. Castles (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), p.18

of both the working class and its poverty. An autonomist critique of welfare state capitalism rejects an understanding of the welfare state as maintaining the working class as a way of ending or alleviating poverty or creating a more equal society. Instead, it conceives of the welfare state as 'maintaining a useful working class… as a service to capital so that it can find the workers it needs even after it has discarded them'.[52] On this account, while the welfare state is presented in social democratic discourse 'as reacting to and dealing with the effects of the capitalist economy', it 'is in fact a contribution to its maintenance', as evinced by social security structures which are 'meant to make life on the dole so miserable as to not present a real alternative to wage labour, i.e. to producing profits for capitalist companies' (Kittens 2015). Thus, disability is marginal(ised) within the welfare state regime, despite its centrality at a symbolic level, precisely because it is incompatible with the capitalist mode of production that Balibar's social national state is responsible for sustaining.

As I have discussed elsewhere,[53] the ways in which disability is what is incompatible with capitalism have been acknowledged in disability studies. This has been the case despite the foreclosure exerted on the discussion by the social model of disability, to which both disability studies and the disabled people's movement are indebted. On the social model of disability the demands for the right of access to work and for accommodation in the workplace are necessary because 'to be constantly and consistently denied the opportunity to work, to

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[52] Kittens, 'What is wrong with free money?' on *Antinational.org* (28 July 2015) https://antinational.org/en/what-wrong-free-money/
[53] Arianna Introna, 'Disability, Anti-Work Politics and Coalition Work in the Contemporary Welfare Action Movement: Notes Towards an Autonomist Disability Perspective' in *Fitter. Happier. More Productive*, ed. by David Frayne (PCCS, 2018)

make a material contribution to the wellbeing of society… is the root cause of us being labelled as "other" or "useless"'.[54] However, as Paul Abberley crucially noted long ago, 'the abolition of an individual's disablement is ultimately dependent upon and subordinate to the logic of productivity',[55] but in the face of 'attempts to integrate impaired people into the world of work some will not be capable of producing goods or services of social value' (Abberley, 1987, p.89). In particular, 'whilst children as potential workers, and elderly people, as former workers, may be seen as able to assume status in a paradise of labour, it is hard to see how, despite all efforts by a benign social structure, an admittedly small group of impaired people could achieve social integration'.[56] Abberley therefore sees the need for an alternative vision that 'rejects work as crucially definitional of social membership'.[57] Such an alternative conceptualisation of the relationship between work and disability has been pursued in manifold directions in disability studies as a way of not othering those disabled people who are unable to work.[58]

Disability's marginalisation within the welfare state regime can thus be seen as rooted in its belonging within the Marcusean category of the excluded that

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[54] Mike Oliver, 'Disabled people and the inclusive society: or the times they really are changing' on IndependentLiving.Org (Public lecture on behalf of Strathclyde Centre for disability research and Glasgow City Council, 1999) http://www.independentliving.org/docs4/oliver.html
[55] Paul Abberley, 'The Concept of Oppression and the Development of a Social Theory of Disability' in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, Vol.2, No.1 (1987), p.92
[56] Paul Abberley, 'Work, Utopia and Impairment' in *Disability & Society: Emerging Issues and Insights*, ed. by Len Barton (London and New York: Longman 1996), p.69
[57] Paul Abberley, 'The Concept of Oppression and the Development of a Social Theory of Disability' in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, Vol.2, No.1 (1987), p.89
[58] See Chris Grover and Linda Piggott, 'Disabled People, Work and Welfare' in *Disabled People, Work and Welfare: Is Employment Really the Answer?*, ed. by Chris Grover and Linda Piggott (Bristol: Policy Press, 2015); Alan Roulstone, 'Disability, Work and Welfare: The Disappearance of the Polymorphic Productive Landscape' in *Disabled People, Work and Welfare: Is Employment Really the Answer?*, ed. by Chris Grover and Linda Piggott (Bristol: Policy Press, 2015); Dan Goodley, Rebecca Lawthom& Katherine Runswick-Cole, 'Dis/ability and Austerity: Beyond Work and Slow Death' in *Disability & Society* (Published online: 06 Jun 2014)

have nothing to gain from capitalism, unlike the traditional labour movement.

Herbert Marcuse's theorisation of a world in revolt and of the possibilities for

revolution that exist started from the acknowledgement of the ways in which

capitalism is capable of integrating the working class. This was particularly

visible during the 'golden age' of industrial capitalism he was witnessing.

Marcuse wrote at a time when 'a comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic

unfreedom prevail[ed] in advanced industrial civilization'[59] and resulted in the

traditional working class 'lacking a critical dimension and a dimension of

potentialities that [could] transcend the existing society'.[60] As Andrew Lamas et al

suggest, faced with 'capital's alleged increasing ability to meet the basic needs of

society, Marcuse saw that Marx's revolutionary subject, the industrial proletariat,

had become integrated into a stabilized capitalist system within a one-dimensional

society'. He therefore located the catalyst for revolution 'in those sectors of

society that stood at society's margins, excluded from or discontented with the

relative affluence and deathly stillness of the 1960s'.[61] As Tiqqun note, what

Marcuse was registering was the fact that 'the revolutionary movement and the

workers' movement were no longer identical', with the former exceeding the

latter.[62] In particular, Marcuse placed his hopes for revolution in those subjects

whose needs and aims 'represent what is suppressed and cannot develop in the

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[59] Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon, 2001), p.1

[60] Douglas Kellner, 'Introduction to the Second Edition' in Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon, 2001), p.xxvii

[61] Andrew T. Lamas, Todd Wolfson, and Peter N. Funke, 'Bouazizi's Refusal and Ours: Critical Reflections on the Great Refusal and Contemporary Social Movements' in *The Great Refusal: Herbert Marcuse and Contemporary Social Movements*, ed. by Andrew T. Lamas, Todd Wolfson, and Peter N. Funke (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2017), p.9

[62] Tiqqun, *This is not a Program* (Los Angeles: Semiotexte, 2011), p.39

existing antagonistic whole', and can thus call for 'the formation and fulfilment of *new* needs stifled in the antagonistic society'.[63] The autonomist narratives of disability that will be the focus of this thesis foreground the exclusionary violence of the existing antagonistic whole and call for the satisfaction of new needs.

With Marcuse's insights in mind, disability's incompatibility with waged work and refusal of inadequate care provision cannot be conceptualised through the Marxism proper to the socialist labour movement, which subscribes to the myth of work with which disability clashes. Instead, it can be discussed through a combination of the anti-capitalist, anti-work ethos theorised by autonomist Marxism, which uniquely speaks to disability's anti-capitalist power. This thesis will draw on two strands of autonomist Marxism that focus on the struggles of the working class as exceeding the traditional labour movement. These two strands differ in that, as Andrej Grubacic explains, the former can be approached as 'positive autonomism' on the basis of its concern with determining positive subjects of anti-capitalist struggle as they change in relation to, and determining, the restructuring of capitalism; the latter, 'negative autonomism', is 'negative and creative, an interstitial movement that creates cracks in the texture of domination' without reaching a positive reconfiguration'.[64]

The critique that Scottish writing provides of welfare state nationalism can be ideally grasped through an autonomist disability perspective that marries autonomist Marxism to disability studies, yielding a lens through which to foreground the exclusion of disability under welfare state able-nationalism and to

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[63] Herbert Marcuse, 'The Concept of Negation in the Dialectic' in *Telos* (Summer, 1971), p.132
[64] Andrej Grubacic, 'Preface: Why Holloway?' in *In, Against, and Beyond Capitalism: The San Francisco Lectures* (Oakland: PM Press, 2016), p.10

valorise the grounds of this exclusion: disability's incompatibility with waged work and its denunciation of inadequate structures of care and welfare. This lens will make visible the ways in which autonomist narratives of disability depict the crip realities of oppression and resistance that develop under capitalism by bringing together the logic and presence of disability with a critique of waged work and welfare capitalism alike. Chapter one, 'Crip Traces of Equaliberty: Nationed Narratives of Disability in Scottish literature', will set out the disciplinary and cultural context specific to Scottish literature within which my investigation of autonomist narratives of disability in Scottish writing will be situated. It will do so by mapping out the 'nationed narratives of disability', or those narratives which deploy disability as a metaphor for the nation or for an aspect of it, that both define Scottish studies and feature in Scottish writing (Craig Smith's *The Mile*, Andrew O'Hagan's *Our Fathers*, Alasdair Gray's *Poor Things* and Violet Jacob's *Flemington*) at different historical times. My analysis will connect Balibar's theorisation of equaliberty to issues of social citizenship delivered in a national space, arguing that narratives of disability dramatise a trace of the former as inscribed into the latter. Like Chapter one my conclusion, 'Crip Militancies: Notes Towards A New Politics for Contextualism in Scottish Literature', will retain a nationed framework of analysis to conclude the cripping of Scottish literature that this thesis seeks to perform. It will do so by relating the logic and presence of disability in Scottish writing that my thesis is going to establish to the differential visibility assigned, in the field of Scottish literature, to political contexts as relevant to Scottish writing.

Chapters two and three will draw on two antithetical currents of autonomist Marxism, belonging to the positivist and negative strands of autonomism respectively: post-operaism and Open Marxism. Focusing on John Burnside's *Glister* (2008), James Kelman's *Mo Said She Was Quirky* (2012), Ali Smith's *Hotel World* (2001), A.L. Kennedy's *Paradise* (2004) and Jenni Fagan's *The Panopticon* (2012) chapter two, 'Crip Precarities: Immaterial Labour and Disability in Post-Devolutionary Scottish Writing', will explore the ways in which autonomist narratives of disability in Scottish writing produced in the first decade of the twenty-first century portray class and disability as intersecting categories of oppression whose exploitation is intensified through the phenomena of precarious and immaterial labour. My exploration will argue that disability is represented as part of what positive autonomists, and post-operaists, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri call the 'multitude', 'a broad category that includes all those whose labor is directly or indirectly exploited by and subjected to capitalist norms of production and reproduction'.[65] Chapter three, 'Crip Dignities: Antagonism and Disability in Devolutionary Scottish Writing', will explore the representation of disabled characters' struggles against the violence of waged work and the benefit system in Jeff Torrington's *The Devil's Carousel* and James Kelman's *How Late It Was, How Late* (1994), and of care institutions in Agnes Owens' *For the Love of Willie* (1998), Jessie Kesson's 'The Gowk', 'Good Friday' and 'Dear Edith…' (1985), and A.L. Kennedy's *Looking for the Possible Dance* (1993). Drawing on negative autonomism in the form of Open Marxism, my analysis will argue that these

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[65] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2001), p.52

novels dramatise a 'restlessness of struggle' against the negation of dignity characterised by forms which 'do not stand still, which cannot be pinned down and defined'.[66]

My thesis will continue in the spirit of Holloway's negative autonomism and take up his suggestion that there exists a privileged connection between autonomism and critical theory in chapters four and five. Chapter four, entitled 'Crip Negativities: Disability and Refusals of Care and Work in Post-War Scottish Writing', will address the ways in which narratives of disability carry, in Robin Jenkins' *The Cone-Gatherers* (1955), Naomi Mitchison's *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* (1962), Muriel Spark's *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* (1963) and Alasdair Gray's *Lanark* (1981), a powerful critique of post-war settlement and post-war compromise alike. In order to do so, it will draw on operaist Mario Tronti's and Frankfurt School critic Theodor Adorno's insights to theorise the ways in which representations of disability in Scottish writing intensify the critique of work and welfare that informs the Scottish fiction written in the golden age of the welfare state. Chapter five, 'Crip Trash: Dysgenic Logics and Disability in Scottish Writing from the First Half of the Twentieth-Century', will consider, through the lenses of Werner Bonefeld's Open Marxism, Walter Benjamin's theory of trash in relation to disability's anti-capitalist resistance as represented in Scottish writing produced in the first half of the twentieth century. It will focus on Edwin Muir's *Poor Tom* (1932), James Barke's *A Major Operation* (1936), Lorna Moon's *Dark Star* (1929) and John Buchan's *Sick Heart River* (1941), arguing

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[66] John Holloway, 'Going in the Wrong Direction: Or, Mephistopheles: Not Saint Francis of Assisi' (2011) http://www.johnholloway.com.mx/2011/07/30/going-in-the-wrong-direction/

that these novels portray disability as powering dysgenic processes and as belonging within the trash of capitalism in ways that confirm Grubacic's insight that 'in a world that dehumanises us, the only way in which we can exist as humans is negatively, by struggling against our dehumanisation' (Grubacic, p.xiv).

**Chapter One**

**Crip Traces of Equaliberty**

**Nationed Narratives of Disability in Scottish literature**

This chapter will explore 'nationed' narratives of disability in Scottish literature, arguing that they trace the essentialising movement of 'internal exclusion' that identifies disability as other in the midst of the national community.[1] I will consider Scottish literature both as a discipline and as a literary tradition, and my concern will be to foreground the common ground that nationed narratives of disability in the two dimensions share in different historical conjunctures. The 'nationed' representations of disability that will be the focus of this chapter are simultaneously concerned with disability and 'articulated around the signifier of the nation',[2] portraying the former as a metaphor for the latter, or for a specific aspect of Scottish history, culture or society. Considering texts that consciously deploy narratives of disability in intersection with narratives of the nation, I will trace the changing tropes that mark the process of devaluation of disability in the specific context of Scottish culture. Because in the run-up to the 2014 referendum nationed metaphors of disability brought together discourses on cultural confidence, defeatism (repackaged as miserablism) and underdevelopment specific to different periods of twentieth- and twenty-first century Scottish culture, this chapter will examine the evolving association of disability with the nation

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[1] Étienne Balibar, 'What Are the Excluded Excluded From' in *Equaliberty: Political Essays*, trans. by James Ingram (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), p.201

[2] David Featherstone and Lazaros Karaliotas, 'Challenging the Spatial Politics of the European Crisis: Nationed Narratives and Trans-local Solidarities in the Post-crisis Conjuncture' in *Cultural Studies* (Published online: 07 Aug 2017), note1

following an inverse chronological order. On the one hand, as suggested in the introduction, a post-indyref perspective is calculated to tie indyref metaphors and discourses back to their predecessors, highlighting their persistence, and pinpointing their influence on the discursive, nationed marginalisation that attends disability in a Scottish context. On the other hand, the reverse chronology I will follow is calculated to reflect the process of pursuing contemporary metaphors and discourses back to their origins. This will foreground the historicity of the nationed narratives of disability that have come to define the undesirability of disability as a category of analysis in Scottish literature.

Thus, the focus of this chapter will be different from that which will inform the rest of the chapters in this thesis. The latter can be read as belonging within a tradition of recuperation and re-evaluation of narratives of gender, race, cosmopolitanism and religion, reaching beyond a national focus, that has been present in Scottish literary studies since the flourishing of the field in the 1980s. Reacting against a context where 'impulses toward national legitimization [tended] to dominate in all spheres and forms of cultural realization',[3] the feminist approaches underpinning landmark publications such as Aileen Christianson and Alison Lumsden's *Contemporary Scottish Women Writers*[4] rescued from oblivion the work of neglected Scottish women writers by making visible and by challenging the 'double marginalization' that derived from their being 'both Scots

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[3] M. Reizbaum, 'Canonical Double Cross: Scottish and Irish Women's Writing' in *Decolonizing Tradition: New Views of Twentieth-Century 'British' Literary Canon*s, ed. by K.R. Lawrence (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), p.171

[4] Aileen Christianson and Alison Lumsden, *Contemporary Scottish Women Writers* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000)

and women'.[5] As part of the same attempt to 'liberate Scottish literature from […]

the intellectual straitjacket of cultural nationalism',[6] for Berthold Schoene the aim

of contemporary Scottish literature should be 'to emphasize individuality and

intracommunal difference rather than to construct dubious all-in-one myths of a

nationalist quality'. [7] We should be concerned not with 'essential Scottishness but

rather the differences and the similarities between different kinds and ways of

Scottishness' (Schoene 1995, p.119). *The Edinburgh Companion to*

*Contemporary Scottish Literature*, edited by Schoene himself, was testament to

the variety of identity politics which drove the critics committed to such an aim.

More recently, taking the pluralist expansion of Scottish literary studies further,

the development of queer studies has afforded increased visibility to writing that

discusses gender beyond any binary identification,[8] enabling what Kate Turner

has called the 'queer moment' in Scottish literature.[9] As for religious identity,

Linden Bicket has illuminated the marginalisation in Scottish studies of religious

imaginaries other than those fitting the cast of Calvinism. [10]

   A disability studies perspective may be productively put into conversations

with these approaches because, as Nirmala Erevelles points out, 'the inclusion of

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[5] Susanne Hagemann, 'From Carswell to Kay: Aspects of Gender, the Novel and the Drama' in *Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature*, Vol.3, ed. by Ian Brown, Tom Clancy, Susan Manning and Murray Pittock (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p.215

[6] Matt McGuire, *Contemporary Scottish Literature: A Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p.128

[7] B. Schoene, 'A Passage to Scotland: Scottish Literature and the British Postcolonial Condition' in *Scotlands*, Vol.2, No.1 (1995), p.121

[8] See for example Zoe Strachan (ed), *Out There: An Anthology of Scottish LGBT Writing* (Freight Books, 2014)

[9] Kate Turner, 'The Queer Moment: Post-Devolution Scottish Literature', unpublished PhD thesis (2017)

[10] Linden Bicket, *George Mackay Brown and the Scottish Catholic Imagination* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017)

disability identity in discussions of intersectionality offers a more complex understanding' of how these play out.[11] In particular, in the specific nationed framework of Scottish studies, such an encounter would enable connections to be established that run counter to the nationalist, or nation-centred, branch of the field. Nonetheless, any such challenge would not operate outwith said nationed framework, unless we situate it in the supposedly nation-blind field of English literary studies. Thus, what is of interest here is whether, within the nationed framework of Scottish studies, a disability studies approach can unproblematically participate in the pluralist expansion of the discipline.

This chapter will demonstrate why it cannot and why its relationship to the nationed framework of the field is inevitably different from that of other critical movements committed to recuperating texts that feature other minority or oppressed constituencies of the nation. While the latter can contribute to the transformation of the framework of the field into a pluralist, self-consciously non-nationalist, nationed container, the contribution of disability studies can be only be one of critique. This is the case because a disability studies perspective cannot but draw attention not only to the presence of narratives of disability in Scottish writing, but also to the ways in which in Scottish cultural and critical discourse disability functions as the other against which the whole of Scottish culture has been defined. This chapter will be devoted precisely to highlighting the discourses and dynamics which have entrenched this othering.

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[11] Nirmala Erevelles, *Disability and Difference in Global Contexts: Enabling a Transformative Body Politic* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.97

In particular, it will delineate how metaphors of disability are deployed to associate cultural confidence, miserablism / defeatism and underdevelopment with the nation in Scottish studies and writing from the last decades of the twentieth century to the present, as Craig Smith's *The Mile* (2014),[12] Andrew O'Hagan's *Our Fathers* (1999),[13] and Alasdair Gray's *Poor Things* (1992)[14] respectively show. They fulfil a much more positive function at the start of the century, when they embody the concept of the Scottish Antysyzygy, which anticipates a postmodern ethos. Violet Jacob's *Flemington* (1911)[15] powerfully captures this spirit. The lack of nationed metaphors of disability in the central decades of the twentieth century maps onto the waning fortunes of Scottish nationalism, which I will discuss in chapter four. As Scottish studies and Scottish writing, in different historical periods, are hinged to the same nationed narratives of disability, these can be seen to operate as a form of what Michel Foucault calls 'commentary' in the former, and of what Fredric Jameson calls 'national allegory' in the latter.

On the one hand, Foucault contends that 'in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures'.[16] One of these is that of 'commentary', whereby in a given context there exist major narratives 'which are recounted, repeated, and varied', originating 'new speech-acts which take them up, transform them or speak of them', so that they 'are said indefinitely, remain said, and are to be said

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[12] Craig A. Smith, *The Mile* (Edinburgh: Pilrig Press, 2013)
[13] Andrew O'Hagan, *Our Fathers* (London: Faber and Faber, 1999)
[14] Alasdair Gray, *Poor Things* (London: Bloomsbury, 1992)
[15] Violet Jacob, *Flemington* (1911) in *Flemington and Tales From Angus*, ed. by Carol Anderson (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1998)
[16] Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse' in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. By Robert Young (Boston, London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p.52

again' (Foucault, p.57). Narratives of disability constitute a form of commentary in Scottish studies which establishes the exteriority of disability to Scottish culture in proportion as they register its undesirable associations, so that in the field disability is a recurrent concern yet remains unthought on its own terms. On the other hand, Jameson introduces the term 'national allegory' to capture the ways in which all texts from the so-called third world are national allegories. or texts which, even when 'seemingly private [...] project a political dimension' whereby 'the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society'.[17] The nation-ness of the narratives of disability I will consider crucially positions the private stories recounted in Scottish writing as allegories for the history of Scotland.

Both the commentary and the national allegories my analysis will address rely on nationed images of disability that can be approached as what Dipankar Gupta calls 'root metaphors'. For Gupta, 'it is only by grasping the cultural and sentimental dimensions of individual nation-states that we can enter into an informed debate on their respective structures of governance and politics'.[18] It is within this culturalist framework that Gupta introduces the idea of 'root metaphors' to theorise metaphors that are key to generating the sentiment that binds a national community together. Root metaphors 'are concerned with the establishment of a moral social order and with notions of what is a good life. This in turn helps them to evoke affectivity and generate strong partisanship and

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[17] Fredric Jameson, 'Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism' in *Social Text*, No. 15 (Autumn, 1986), pp. 65-88, p.69
[18] Dipankar Gupta, *Culture, Space and the Nation-State: From Sentiment to Structure* (New Delhi and London: Sage, 2000), p.6

intense loyalty'.[19] In a Scottish context, the use of derogatory nationed root metaphors of disability functions to weld together Scottish culture and the society it represents around a drive to overcome disability as the presence which haunts the space of the nation as simultaneously essential and exterior to it. It is this that is responsible for making disability as a sociopolitical, economic and cultural phenomenon unthinkable as a rightful part of Scottish culture, society and, therefore, literature.

Central to these discourses is the relationship they establish between cultural confidence and the sociopolitical, historical and psychological profile of the nation. While the subsequent sections of this chapter will be concerned with its variants, I will now lay out the ways in which the cultural confidence agenda in Scottish culture is perfectly instantiated in Carol Craig's *The Scots' Crisis of Confidence*.[20] The remaining part of this introduction will be devoted to examining its defining features. Craig's model posits a relationship between Scottish society, culture and a specific negative mindset. She terms this mindset 'defeatist', drawing on discourses that are derived from a nationed framework of analysis and informed by neoliberal logics. How Craig's theorisation of defeatism is carried by a nationed discourse is intimated by her conviction that 'A great deal of the Scots' negativity about Scotland, and lack of confidence [...] arise from a particularly *Scottish* way of looking at the world' (Craig 2003, p.32). It is also denounced by A.P. Cohen, who critiques Craig for seeing 'Scottish society as generalizable into a collective psyche to which she applies terms drawn from

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[19] N. Jayaram, review of Dipankar Gupta's *Culture, Space and the Nation-State* in *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (2003), p.527
[20] Carol Craig, *The Scots' Crisis of Confidence* (Edinburgh: Big Thinking, 2003)

Jungian analysis, and from which she derives a deterministic culture which explains pretty well everything'.[21]

Craig's concern is to dissect the national psyche that characterises Scottish society within a framework in which culture is held responsible for its damaged condition. For Craig the Scottish defeatist mindset is perpetuated by cultural writing on Scotland, which she perceives as presenting Scotland in a way not conducive to national confidence, not least through the use of metaphors of disability: she explains, 'When I began to read many of the books around on Scotland I felt shocked at how negative many of these are', and adds 'the negative images and analyses in many of these books are, to my mind, completely out of proportion. I simply do not recognize the descriptions of the "schizophrenic", pathological Scot many of them peddle' (Craig 2003, p.xii). These images are problematic because they underpin what Craig calls 'the Scottish cringe', or 'a cast of mind based on the belief that anything Scottish must be second-rate' (Craig 2003, p.2). Here Craig is concerned to simultaneously deny the validity of metaphors of disability used to describe the nation and the nationed framework of her own discourse. She notes 'the notion of the Scots as a "schizophrenic", pathologically divided people is a rather tired and inadequate analysis hammered home by many of our literati because they do not have alternative ways to diagnose or describe some of the problems they perceive' but what they present as 'supposedly *Scottish* problems' are not even 'particularly Scottish' problems (Craig 2003, p.17). Craig singles out the anti-inferiorist argument put forward by

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[21] A.P. Cohen, Review of *The Scots' Crisis of Confidence* by Carol Craig (2003) in *Scottish Affairs*, No.49 (Autumn 2004), p.121

Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull, which she reads as inferiorist and which I will discuss later in this chapter, that Scots have a colonial mindset. Craig is worried about the impact such an argument could have on the Scottish psyche by not helping 'us to start building Scottish self-confidence' (Craig 2003, p.31).

The extent to which Craig's position is not only nationed, but neoliberal, is suggested by the reason why she resents the defeatist mentality she associates with Scottish culture and society and by the solution she provides to its persistence. Neoliberalism can be approached as a governing rationality which 'casts people as human capital who must constantly tend to their own present and future value'[22] and creates a neoliberal self which combines the features of 'The *successful entrepreneur*, *sovereign consumer* and *hard-working taxpayer*'.[23] On Craig's account, the wrong mentality 'is not just an issue facing the Scots as a nation, it is an issue confronting many individual Scots' (Craig 2003, p.4), who inevitably fail to develop a successful neoliberal self. On the one hand, for Craig the Scottish negative mindset is responsible for unsatisfactory economic performance: 'This deficit in self-confidence, self-belief… has wide economic repercussions' in that it prevents Scotland 'from trumpeting what [it] has to offer' (Craig 2003, p.1) while many Scots 'individually, are deficient in self-confidence at a time when that very quality is soaring in importance' for many employers (Craig 2003, p.6). The Scottish negative mindset is also responsible for health inequalities specific to Scotland, and Craig substantiates her claim by quoting

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[22] Wendy Brown, interviewed by Timothy Shenk, 'Booked #3: What Exactly Is Neoliberalism?' in *Dissent* (2 April 2015) https://www.dissentmagazine.org/blog/booked-3-what-exactly-is-neoliberalism-wendy-brown-undoing-the-demos

[23] Jim McGuigan, 'The Neoliberal Self' in *Culture Unbound*, Volume 6 (2014), p.225

'Health education professionals [who] believe that lack of self-esteem lies behind many of Scotland's appalling health statistics' (Craig 2003, p.5). On the other hand, for Craig in order to fix all the problems that bedevil Scottish society and the national psyche we must focus on the latter, rather than on sociopolitical conditions. It is the Scottish negative mindset that must be changed in order to reach a better society, not the other way roung. As Craig puts it, 'to build a healthier, wealthier and wiser Scotland we need to change some of our mindset' (Craig 2003, p.viii). Disability is erased out of the picture by the psychologising logic of Craig's attack on defeatism, which empties social inequalities and bodily and mental difference of materiality by locating their origins in a specific mindset.

Most importantly, disability as a socioeconomic phenomenon is the other implied by Craig's attack on defeatism because it clashes with the neoliberal logics by which the latter is undergirded. It troubles Craig's anti-defeatism on three grounds. First, if 'the category of disability is permeable – anyone can become disabled'[24] and 'able-bodiedness is a temporary identity at best',[25] disability functions as a threat to the pursuit of a healthy body politics that Craig's discourse advocates. Second, a disability perspective insists 'on the pertinence of disability to the human condition, on the value of disability as a form of diversity' (Siebers 2008, p.3) in ways that clash with the neoliberal search for a cure underpinning Craig's position. Third, disability is othered by Scottish anti-defeatism on the basis of its incompatibility with both capitalism and neoliberalism. As far as capitalism is concerned, Robert McRuer connects 'the

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[24] Lennard J. Davis, *Bending Over Backwards: Disability, Dismodernism & Other Difficult Positions* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2002). È-36
[25] Tobin Siebers, *Disability Theory* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008), p.5

compulsory nature of able-bodiedness' to 'the emergent industrial capitalist system, free to sell one's labor but not free to do anything else effectively meant fee to have an able body but not particularly free to have anything else'.[26] As for neoliberalism, disability has been defined as a socioeconomic phenomenon resistant to neoliberal inclusivism; neoliberalism embraces those 'identities that maintain the neoliberal tenets of free choice but is less able to absorb those that do not',[27] and disability falls into the latter grouping.

While this troubling potential is carried by the narratives of disability that I will consider in chapters two, three, four and five, those that will be the focus of the current chapter illuminate its repercussions for the specifically national and nationed spaces in which disability appears.

In order to explore the dynamics that inform the relationship between disability and exclusion in a national context, I will draw on Étienne Balibar's work, which examines the delivery of social citizenship by the social national state with sensitiveness to its imbrication with exclusionary mechanisms and the resistance to these. Balibar is interested in the antinomical relationship that connects democracy and citizenship, freedom and equality and in how the simultaneous demand for both is what constitutes 'the engine of the transformations of the political institution'.[28] He explores these dynamics through the concept of equaliberty, arguing that 'equality and freedom are contradicted in

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[26] Robert McRuer, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York and London: New York University press, 2006), p.8
[27] Lennard J. Davis, *The End of Normal: Identity in a Biocultural Era* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2013), p.11
[28] Étienne Balibar, 'Introduction: The Antinomy of Citizenship' in *Equaliberty: Political Essays*, trans. by James Ingram (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), p.2

exactly the same conditions'.[29] As we will see, nationed narratives of disability in Scottish writing speak to Balibar's idea of equaliberty by exposing the exclusionary nature of the space of social citizenship and the Scottish nation, in which disability is represented as enjoying neither freedom nor equality but as animating a continual demand for both. Nationed narratives of disability, thus, dramatise what Balibar calls the 'trace of equaliberty', or the simultaneous demand for equality and freedom that 'reiterates the enunciation that is at the origin of modern universal citizenship'.[30] The trace of equaliberty these narratives inscribe has three dimensions, although the visibility of these varies: it is concerned with the problem of social justice, with the welfare state tasked to deliver it, and it is defined in a national space.

**Spirits of Independence in Scottish Culture and Craig Smith's _The Mile_: Nationed Root Metaphors of Disability and The Intensive Universalism of the Indyref**

In the run-up to the 2014 independence referendum, there unfolded a commitment among cultural practitioners and political commentators to develop visions of Scottish society and culture conducive to national confidence. This was deemed to be the key ingredient that would deliver a Yes vote and also the common ground that participants in a progressive and pluralist pro-independence movement were

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[29] Étienne Balibar, 'The Proposition of Equaliberty' in _Equaliberty: Political Essays_, trans. by James Ingram (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), p.49
[30] Étienne Balibar, 'Introduction: The Antinomy of Citizenship' in _Equaliberty: Political Essays_, trans. by James Ingram (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), p.4

expected to share. This section will relate the ways in which cultural and literary critics not only got behind this effort, but had for years anticipated it, to its dramatisation in Smith's 2014 novel *The Mile. The Mile* can be read as a national allegory of the pursuit of cultural confidence as the route to overcoming an undesirable state of being. The central character, Jock, an elderly disabled man, is explicitly depicted as a metaphor for Scotland's underdeveloped state and for its potential to graduate, through a rejection of physical limitations, to an independent nation. A trace of equaliberty is ultimately inscribed by Jock's death as a result of a night of revelling. This both materialises, and functions as a critique of, the active negation of anthropological differences imbricated with what Balibar theorises as the intensive universality that defines the nation-state.[31]

As I have written elsewhere, in the run-up to the 2014 independence referendum, the rhetoric of progressiveness that defined the pro-independence movement was traversed by exclusionary logics rooted in the very essentialist assumptions and disablist discourses that circulate in Scottish studies.[32] Unsurprisingly, it never extended to include disability. On the contrary, pro-independence arguments became imbricated with a debate that revolved around an undesirable Scottish essence, defined by lack of confidence and rendered through nationed root metaphors of disability, and the quest for a new one, simultaneously confident and healthy. Lesley Riddoch opened her book *Blossom* with the

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[31] Étienne Balibar, 'New Reflections on Equaliberty: Two Lessons' in *Equaliberty: Political Essays*, trans. by James Ingram (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), p.106
[32] See my 'Progressive Universalities? A Comparative Analysis of the Scottish and the Venetist Independence Movements' in *The Drouth*, No.49 (2014); 'Nationalist and Institutionalist Horizons in (Post-)Referendum Scottish Politics' in *Renewal*, Vol.23.1-2 (2015); 'Reveries of a Progressive Past: The Missing Scotland as Indyref Heritage' in *Journal of Scottish Thought*, Vol.8: If Scotland ...Conjecturing 2014, ed. by Scott Hames and Adrian Hunter (2016)

question 'identity or baggage? Scotland is currently on a quest for one, weighted down by the other'.[33] Echoing Craig's anti-defeatist arguments, Riddoch identifies a 'much discussed "lack of confidence"' specific to Scottish society (Riddoch, p.29). This generates an 'inbuilt tendency towards bad health and self-harming' which needs curing (Riddoch, p.60). Departing from Craig, Riddoch repeats Beveridge and Turnbull's argument, which I will discuss later in this chapter, that the Scottish cringe at the cultural level derives from self-esteem been eroded as Scottish culture is 'forced into the increasingly ill-fitting shoe of Britishness' (Riddoch 2013, p.297). However, unlike both Craig and Beveridge and Turnbull, she locates the origins of the Scottish lack of confidence not so much in culture as in the disempowerment which 'arises from several centuries of "get out" and "keep off" signs – many erected by fellow Scots' (Riddoch, p.29). Thus, for Riddoch, 'Empowerment of all Scots is the only solution to the Scottish Effect, the Scottish Cringe, the Sick Man of Europe, No Mean City and the Empty Glen' (Riddoch 2013, p.312). Hassan's *Caledonian Dreaming* acknowledges its debt to both Riddoch's and Craig's books and too takes on 'Scottish inadequacy and lack of confidence' for theorisation, maintaining that these constitute a 'collective mindset which has strengthened political and cultural miserablism, and reinforced a sense of powerlessness and fatalism, both collectively and individually'.[34] The nationed discourse on lack of confidence that graduated to the indyref discourse on miserablism both reproduces narratives proper to cultural nationalism which, 'as a collective salvation drama… specifies what shall count towards collective

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[33] Lesley Riddoch, *Blossom: What Scotland Needs to Flourish* (Edinburgh: Luath, 2013), p.1
[34] Gerry Hassan, *Caledonian Dreaming: The Quest for a Different Scotland* (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2014), p.39

purification and regeneration',[35] and indicates a self-reflexive form of what Balibar calls 'differentialist racism', which produces the belief that the 'behavior of individuals and their "aptitudes" cannot be explained in terms of their blood or even their genes, but are the result of their belonging to historical "cultures"'.[36]

In this spirit, the cultural dimension of the Yes Campaign consisted in encouraging optimism about the possibility to leave behind attitudes of negativity and lack of confidence perceived to characterise Scottish culture and society. Mike Small emphasised the necessity for 'bold new thinking' in imagining how to create a better nation,[37] but his focus was equally on the need to overcome defeatism as a specifically Scottish attitude. He declared 'we need to re-occupy our own country… This is a psychological as much as a cultural process. It's about a shedding a deep-seated in-built attitude of do-nothing/risk-nothing'.[38] The contribution the arts were expected to make was enshrined in the activity of National Collective, which championed the potential for art 'to imagine a better, and new, Scotland, in ways that politics cannot do'.[39] That it was within this framework of managed imagination that the contribution of writers was most welcome is intimated by the 'inspiring slogans' written by Alan Bisset, Liz Lochhead, Louise Welsh and James Robertson for The Common Weal project.[40] In relation to the role played by writers in the run-up to devolution, Hames

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[35] Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000)
[36] Étienne Balibar, 'Is There a "Neo-Racism"?' in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London: Verso, 1991), p.21
[37] Mike Small, Editorial in *Closer* (2013), p.3
[38] Mike Small, 'Altered State' in *Closer* (2013), p.8
[39] National Collective, 'Manifesto: Imagine A Better Scotland' (7 July 2013) http://nationalcollective.com/2013/07/07/manifesto-imagine-a-better-scotland/#sthash.rUEzy5uD.dpuf
[40] Robin McAlpine, 'Scotland needs popular politics' (5 December 2013) http://reidfoundation.org/2013/12/scotland-needs-popular-politics/

delineates an opposition between the national imagination as embodied in literature and the authorised practices into which this is co-opted at a political level, suggesting that the role of critical revisionism is that of highlighting the gap between the two.[41] Hames' warning applies not only in relation to authorised public practices, but also in connection with the compulsory optimism demanded in all areas of Scottish culture.

Speaking to these cultural and political contexts, in reviewing Hames' *Unstated* Alex Thomson perceived Hames' contributors to be divided between those who saw the 'cultural confidence' of the nation as the determining factor for the future of Scotland, and those more 'politically-minded'. The first group were perpetuating an 'infuriating elision of the figure of the national psyche with that of the individual' in ways that were distracting them from the practice of 'critical and conjectural analysis', which Thomson saw as the 'task of the writer of truly independent mind'.[42] The relevance of Thomson's contestation of 'cultural confidence' as the goal Scottish writers should be committed to is relevant to (post-)referendum Scottish culture as much as to the disciplinary tradition of Scottish cultural and literary studies in which Scottish writing and criticism that are perceived to convey images of Scottish society detrimental to national confidence are approached as problematic.

As this chapter will trace, Scottish literature has been traditionally invested with a potential to exert an impact in the political sphere via the cultural

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[41] Scott Hames, 'Culture, Nation, and the New Scottish Parliament (review)' in *Victorian Studies*, Vol.50, No.3 (Spring 2008)

[42] Alex Thomson, 'Review Essay: Writers on Scottish Independence' in *Scottish Literary Review*, Vol.5, No.1 (Spring/Summer 2013), pp.133-4

confidence it communicates. *The Mile* enacts an attempt to generate such cultural and psychological confidence by thematising it, through the metaphorical deployment and overcoming of disability, as a precondition for the achievement of political independence.

     *The Mile* is firmly set in the context of the run-up to the referendum, in the Royal Mile. The Mile, stretching from Castle to Parliament, can be approached both as a setting for the characters' journey and as a metaphor for Scotland's. This is fitting as Smith explicitly presented his novel as a contribution to the referendum debate.[43] The plot brings together a nationalist, a unionist and an undecided voter, but also Jock, a 95-year-old man. In the first pub Ian, Euan and Stuart visit a newspaper bears the headline '"ON A KNIFE-EDGE" – referring to the most recent poll on the referendum', so that Ian informs us that 'It was going to be close. There was nothing between the Yes and No camps now, and just a dwindling number of undecided' (*Mile*, p.23). *The Mile* is organised by the moment of the referendum also in terms of the political sympathies of the three main characters which crucially turn on ideas of independence expressed via narratives of self-confidence. The pro-Yes position is occupied by Ian: we soon learn that he has 'been on a mission lately – arguing in pubs, and at work, with anyone who'd [trot] out the usual reasons for maintaining the status quo'. Aptly, Ian provides a list of Better Together arguments: 'we couldn't manage on our own; we'd lose our standing in Europe; we can't afford it'. Reflecting on how 'Every word uttered by the unionists [is]based on fear and what-ifs', Ian sums up

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[43] Craig Smith, '*The Mile* by Craig Smith – an author interview', http://rhunt4.wordpress.com/2013/11/01/the-mile-by-craig-smith-an-author-interview/

the differences between pro- and anti-independence arguments as hinging on the oppositions 'Negativity vs positivity. Bitterness vs hope' (*Mile*, p.11). The undecided position is assigned to Stuart, soon to move to France, and consequently depicted as not entirely belonging within the debate (*Mile*, p.26). The No-position is adopted by Euan, whose arguments are rendered as consistently weak, in the spirit of 'You still think we could survive on our own?' (*Mile*, p.26).

As for Jock, as Smith notes, he 'can be taken in two ways – he's either a cantankerous old, foul-mouthed drunk, with some good stories to tell, or he's Scotland personified' (Smith). On the one hand, Jock is an escapee from a care home in urgent need of medication. On the other hand, he is a figure embodying and enacting the spirit of Scotland's past. As the evening progresses, Jock buys himself more whisky, leading Ian to reflect: 'must be indestructible' (*Mile*, p.51). Later on, he looks 'in total admiration at this ninety-five-year-old wonder' thinking 'what a life he'd had. What a life he was having. What a speaker. What a drinker. What a charmer' (*Mile*, p.80). Jock's central involvement in, and driving forward of, the crawl traces the development of a national allegory which indexes, through the foregrounding and denial of bodily vulnerability, the emancipatory development perceived to be possible for a disabled nation to embrace, driven by the very confidence Ian reads into Jock.

*The Mile* is indeed explicitly framed in national terms by the narrative that revolves around Jock, who can be taken to stand for Scotland's history and traditions and for their relevance to contemporary Scotland but, most importantly,

also for its failure to develop into an independent nation. When Jock disappears from the care home Rosie, his carer, examines his belongings and discovers an old box which prompts the thought 'My God, this thing's ancient' (*Mile*, p.21). Euan registers a similar impression when he encounters the old man: he thinks 'Christ he was fucking ancient' (*Mile*, p.28). Jock's connection to Scotland is further intimated as he peppers the account of his life with references to Scottish history: talking about gambling, he remembers getting his tips from 'a parcel o' rogues' and describes the horse on which he lost everything as 'a useless bag o' glue called Caledonia' (*Mile*, p.35). Crucially, as soon as Rosie discovers Jock's absence from the care home, we learn that 'There's nobody. There was a one-off payment in 1999 [...] he moved in here after his wife died. They didn't have any children' (*Mile*, p.17). While the date of the establishment of the Scottish parliament calls for a symbolic reading of Jock's 'one-off payment' as suggesting the inevitability for Scotland to enter a new phase of its history.

The elevation of disabled Jock as a metaphor for Scotland might make us hopeful that the intensive universalism of the nation is actually achieving the establishment of equality in difference, if only at a metaphorical level, through 'the incorporation of differences and singularities into the very construction of the universal' (Balibar, 'New Reflections', p.131). However, if anthropological difference combines 'a biological aspect with a historical aspect, a double articulation of individuality with the body and with language, a real aspect an and imaginary aspect' (Balibar, 'The Proposition of Equaliberty', p.58), Smith's portrayal of Jock's disability enshrines a tension between the metaphorical

dimension and the biological one: the latter constantly struggles to emerge, and

Jock's centrality to the plot is grounded on its failure to do so. The materiality of

Jock's vulnerability is foregrounded by Rosie's insistence on his not having his

medication with him, and on his need for it. In looking for Jock, Rosie underlines

his vulnerability through the repetition of phrases such as 'I'm his carer, and I

really need to get his medication to him' (*Mile*, p.63), or 'Look, he's very

vulnerable. He needs medication. I need to find him' (*Mile*, p.85). Her concern

clashes with her director's refusal to call the police for fear of compromising the

care home's reputation. We also become aware of Jock's bodily impairment and

vulnerability, towards the very end, through Jock's own eyes. He looks at his

image reflected in the mirror and wonders at the 'wrinkled, stooped figure looking

back at him… The cheeks red with burst blood vessels, and the mess of white hair

hanging down the sides – every last piece of pigment gone' (*Mile*, p.131).

Thus, while at a symbolic level Jock embodies Scottish history and

independence, in civic terms he remains excluded from citizenship as a vulnerable

person whose vulnerability must be denied in order for him to be part of society.

This crucially speaks to how the intensive universalism of the nation 'presents

itself as the refutation or negation of differences' (Balibar, 'New Reflections',

p.106) and re-establishes normality as the ground for inclusion. Indeed, Jock's

marginalisation unfolds in proportion as his vulnerability becomes apparent.

Towards the end of the crawl, the men notice that Jock has become quiet and is

'gripping the edge of the bar with one hand as he [downs] his second whisky with

the other' (*Mile*, p.53). When 'the twinkle in his eyes [dulls] for a moment' (*Mile*,

p.100), Ian realises they must take Jock home. However, at the thought that Jock had planned this pub crawl carefully, as 'it was no coincidence they'd end up outside the Scottish Parliament at the foot of the Royal Mile. He'd hoped the route would have helped persuade Euan to change his voting intentions' (*Mile*, p.130), Ian decides to continue the crawl. This proves to be a fatal decision as soon Jock collapses and passes away. In the end, Jock is involved in the historic vote on Scottish independence, but *in absentia*: the combination for the padlock on the box Rosie has found significantly turns out to be 2014 - 'the year of the referendum. The year of Scotland's rebirth'. Pointedly, the box contains a ballot paper on which Ian marks an X against 'YES', after Jock's death, reflecting that it is only 'one vote, but it could make all the difference' (*Mile*, p.158).

*The Mile* leaves a trace of equaliberty by simultaneously foregrounding the impossibility of overcoming the materiality of anthropological differences and suggesting their centrality at a symbolic level that dramatises their overcoming through self-confidence. If, for Balibar, anthropological differences such as disability's 'announce the reality of the imaginary in human experience, and in this respect pose the question of the internal limits of politics, or of a transformation of politics that includes not only man the citizen, but man the subject of fantasies and desires' (Balibar, 'The Proposition of Equaliberty', p.58), *The Mile* forces us to reflect on how material inequalities are rooted in a profoundly symbolic dimension. By stage-managing the pub crawl, Jock may seem to fulfil the logic of equaliberty which implies 'the utilization of anthropological differences not as so many internal obstacles to the

universalization of the rights of the citizen and the becoming-subject of the subject, but as a pressure point for the becoming-subject of the citizen in the active sense of the term' (Balibar, 'New Reflections', p.130). However, through Jock's failure to cast his vote, the ending of *The Mile* re-establishes a framework in which anthropological differences 'do not enter into the process of reproducing the citizen… But they illustrate and demonstrate, like so many vanishing points, the dissociation or cleavage that prevents this reproduction from achieving its goals uniformly and universally (especially when it comes to education)' (Balibar, 'New Reflections', p.128). Jock simultaneously symbolises Scotland and is presented as outside the political community that determines its historical destiny.

## Spectres of Defeatism in Scottish Studies and Andrew O'Hagan's *Our Fathers*: The Exclusions of the Social National State

Alan Bissett identifies devolution as Scotland's attempt at creating a new story for itself which clashes with the stories of the past: as Scotland 'blinks in the glare of the early years of its parliament, there is every reason to deny history'. However, 'the dead have voices', and these voices thwart processes of 'self-mythologizing' that seek to imagine 'a powerful and alternative nation in the collective imagination'.[44] Andrew O'Hagan's *Our Fathers* focuses this tension by telling the story of how James Bawn develops from childhood to maturity, haunted by the past represented by his father and his grandfather, respectively an alcoholic and a

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[44] Alan Bissett, '"The Dead Can Sing": An Introduction' in *Damage Land: New Scottish Gothic*, ed. by Alan Bissett (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2001), p.1

housing magnate in the golden era of the welfare state. The predecessor of the indyref discourse on national confidence and miserablism was the critique of defeatism as a trait specific to Scottish society and culture to be overcome, as was perceived would befit a nation progressing towards political emancipation with the establishment of the Scottish parliament. *Our Fathers* lends itself to being read as a national allegory of precisely this movement. It does so by reframing the condition of the protagonist's father, portrayed as seriously affecting his mental and physical health, as well his family's, as rooted in a defeatist psyche that metaphorically represents the section of Scottish society and history that needs to be left behind. It thus participates in the move in Scottish literary studies to substitute the discourse on defeatism for a disability perspective. While doing so, *Our Fathers* explicitly engages with narratives of social citizenship and the welfare state suggesting those guilty of defeatism are a group for whom the welfare state should not provide. In this way, narratives of refusals of care inscribe a trace of equaliberty into the discourse on defeatism, dramatised in *Our Fathers* by the exclusionary nature of the social national state and the national imagination that shores it up.

The previous section examined the imbrication of discourses of national confidence with nationed root metaphors of disability and their role of delegitimising undesirable traits of Scottish culture. A similar commitment to foreground a positive vision of Scottish culture underpins critical approaches to the themes perceived to (mis)represent it in Scottish writing. The bleakest visions are registered only to be condemned as inaccurate representations and to be

'cured' through erasure of their 'defeatist' aspects. While disability is not explicitly mentioned, its presence repeatedly surfaces both as a foreclosed object of analysis and as a metaphor employed to conceptualise a problematic trend of defeatist literary works in Scottish writing. The extent to which these critical tendencies are rooted in the essentialism that underpins the discipline of Scottish literature, in its commitment to generate cultural confidence and in the anxiety of representation this entails is suggested by Cairns Craig. He reflects on the ways in which by the 1980s 'defeatist' working-class writing concerned with the consequences of industrial decline had come to represent Scottish culture: he warns, 'if we make the victims of that decline the carriers of our essential identity, we merely perpetuate the cultural alienation in which we negate the ongoing struggle of our experience by freezing its real meaning in a particular defeat'.[45]

By the early 1990s, Robert Crawford's suggestion that small or vulnerable cultural groups often need 'a construction or reconstruction of a 'usable' past… which will allow them to preserve or develop a sense of their own distinctive identity'[46] had been taken up by literary critics through their preoccupation with the unsuitable aspects that a distinctive Scottish culture might feature. It is within this critical framework that Gavin Wallace's condemnation of how Scottish fiction seemed to keep building on a 'spectacular tradition of despair' should be situated.[47] The tensions which run through Wallace's investigation of a 'Scottish malaise' as the representative feature of Scottish writing since the 1970s

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[45] Cairns Craig, 'Visitors From the Stars: Scottish Film Culture' in *Cencrastus*, No.11 (1983), p.9
[46] Robert Crawford, *Devolving English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p.5
[47] Gavin Wallace, 'Voices in Empty Houses: The Novel of Damaged Identity' in *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies*, ed. by Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), p.216

exemplify the ways in which association with disability troubles analyses conducted under the rubric of cultural nationalism. Wallace's metaphorical malaise refers to the representation of socially, psychologically and physically impaired conditions in literature and to the 'oppressive mood of disenchantment' this generates.  On the one hand, Wallace is not concerned with disability as it is deployed in the text, and disabilities can hardly be grasped from Wallace's 'catalogue of Kelman's "horror" in its range of constituent complaints', including 'inarticulacy and alienation escaped through alcoholism; destructive mental instability; the paralyzing hyper-awareness of class and cultural differentiation; crippling incapacities to give love, or to receive it' (Wallace, p.216). Therefore, while disability imagery is employed to convey the undesirability of 'defeatist' representations, its presence in the text is simultaneously registered and dismissed by shifting the discussion onto a metaphorical plane.

On the other hand, how Wallace points out that 'Scottishness' remains 'the logically acceptable criterion for assessing Scottish literature' because of the lack of 'stable critical parameters' to define Scottish culture suggests that uneasiness is first of all related to the essentialist framework which translates the malaise he examines into one representative both of Scottish writing in general and of the society and identity it refracts (Wallace, p.220). Wallace notes that critics are 'faced with a corpus of texts which must often be seen to comprise an extended series of psychiatric case-notes rather than a thriving literary tradition' (Wallace, p.218). Cultural anxiety over the extent to which this could yield the impression of an inferior tradition is intimated by Wallace's comparison between a Scottish

writing in which the perspective of disability occupies centre stage and an English tradition in which it does not: he notes 'in English novels, the deranged, the desperate, the neurotic and the variously addicted provide the odd deviant diversion to emphasise the reassuring normality of everything else. In Scottish novels, they are narrators and protagonists' (Wallace, p.218). Wallace fears that this 'understandable "bitterness" with peculiarly Scottish woes' might be 'dangerously appealing' to the 'purveyors of cultural defeatism and perpetrators of the "inferiorist" reflex' (Wallace, p.220), which indicates an unfair conception of Scottish culture as inferior or unsatisfactory, as we will see. For Wallace 'the way out of such an impasse lies not in how novelists write in Scotland, but how critics in Scotland write about writers'; he suggests that critics should focus on the intrinsic aspects of the text (form, structure, narrative) in order to eschew 'a culturally orientated method of interpretation' which would read bleak representations as 'symptoms of a wider "identity problem"' (Wallace, p.220). What Wallace's narrative encapsulates is the extent to which hostility to 'defeatism' in literature discourages a disability studies perspective on Scottish writing.

Wallace's investigation evinces a commitment to provide a vision of literature conducive to cultural confidence. This commitment is intensified when critics incorporate analogous imperatives in plotting narratives of progress away from 'defeatism' on a larger scale, as exemplified by Wallace and Randall Stevenson's seminal contention that writers from the late 1970s and 1980s were reacting against 'the stultifying restriction of a defeatist realism' of the preceding

decades.[48] Considering the whole span of modern and contemporary Scottish fiction, Douglas Gifford purveys a story of normalisation from a pessimistic to an optimistic Scottish literature meant to set hope communicated in writing against contemporary negative political and social circumstances. Gifford measures cultural vitality not only on the basis of formal experimentation, but also in relation to positive representations of Scottish society. It is here that his assertion of positivity clashes with the examples he provides. These present socially impaired conditions as well as disabilities, which Gifford's symbolic reading proposes to 'cure', thus actually performing his argument that by the 1980s Scottish writing is represented by 'a theme of emergence from trauma'. He identifies a pattern focused on a central protagonist 'introduced in a state of virtual breakdown, often hospitalized, always suffering from solipsistic introspection, with attendant feelings of guilt and withdrawal from self and society' and suggests that a 'new spirit' in Scottish fiction is indexed by 'the way in which both the events and the symbolic implications of the fiction allow the protagonist to break free and speak for new and affirmative possibilities'.[49] For Isobel Murray and Bob Tait too 'an ongoing Scottish renaissance in fiction'[50] in the 1980s is defined by a 'sense of comedy and irony in the bleakest of circumstances' which allows the critic to redeem the 'grim old world' (Murray and Tait, p.7) they encounter in the text. The commitment to deny 'defeatism' as

[48] Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson, 'Introduction' in *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies*, ed. by Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), p.3
[49] Douglas Gifford, 'Re-mapping Renaissance in Modern Scottish literature' in *Beyond Scotland: New Contexts for Twentieth-century Scottish literature*, ed. by Gerard Carruthers, David Goldie and Alasdair Renfrew (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2004), p.246
[50] Isobel Murray and Bob Tait, 'Introduction' in *Ten Modern Scottish Novels* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1984), p.9

the essence of a national literature thus originates within the framework of a cultural nationalism alive to its own involvement with essentialism.

A departure from this commitment was advocated by Keith Dixon. Dixon recognises, and critiques, the pursuit of cultural confidence within the framework of cultural nationalism as analogous to that promoted by political nationalism: he considers 'the images of Scotland which are emerging from these novels may be bad news for the Scottish Tourist Board, or for those who think that other, more self-confident and inspiring voices should be speaking up (not the victims but the victors of the process of decline)'.[51] Against this position, Dixon suggests that representations of socially, physically and psychologically impaired conditions would act as suitable representatives of Scottish writing as they both speak to its democratic, inclusionary rationale, and position it as fulfilling a valuable and a precursory role in relation to European literature by engaging with these issues. On the one hand, he sets this analysis within the context of the collapse of totalising narratives of nationalism and of a broadening of the social experience worth recording. He notes that in the 1980s, 'making sense of the contemporary Scottish experience' signified 'focusing on those others who until now have occupied so little place in the Scottish novel', from 'the inhabitants of the big housing schemes, the unhappy/angry unemployed, the socially disabled, the psychologically unprotected' (Dixon, p.364). On the other, in comparing this fiction to European literature, devoid of such bleak representations, he suggests seeing 'this Scottish work as a vital part of the European mosaic. Vital and

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[51] Keith Dixon, 'Making Sense of Ourselves: Nation and Community in Modern Scottish Writing' in *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, Vol.xxix, No.4 (1993), p.366

perhaps also precursory' (Dixon, p.366). Dixon's critique of the politics of belonging which sustains cultural nationalism and its commitment to promoting cultural confidence at the expense of the concern with marginalisation common to much Scottish writing can be equally applied to pluralist essentialism.

Critical positions informed by pluralist politics attempted to distance themselves from cultural nationalism but retained its critical commitment to refuse belonging within Scottish culture to the defeatist themes that recur in Scottish writing. On, and in the run-up to, devolution, Scottish literary studies underwent enlargement to address issues other than national ones. This moment is exemplified by James McGonigal and Kirsten Stirling's collection of essays, which aimed to attend to the representation of communities which 'need not necessarily be the nation' in Scottish writing and therefore to Scotland's 'sheer diversity'.[52] However, the need to police negative representations of society in order to affirm the vibrancy of culture was a concern shared by critical perspectives unconstrained by cultural nationalism and pervaded such enlargement of critical approaches to accommodate Scotland's pluralism. Berthold Schoene notes the importance of redeeming 'defeatist' post-'79 literature by approaching it optimistically and as culturally vibrant. He contends 'albeit thematically often bleak and pessimistic, in terms of quality and sheer volume post-1979 literature rapidly developed into a vibrant and characteristically unruly

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[52] James McGonigal and Kirsten Stirling, 'Introduction' in *Ethically Speaking: Voice and Values in Modern Scottish Writing*, ed. by James McGonigal and Kirsten Stirling (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006), p.10

vehicle for Scottish self-representation'.[53] Schoene also recommends a process of critical development from inferiorist to optimistic outlooks on Scottish writing which actually performs that called for by Wallace, though it proposes to revisit Wallace's own 'rather defeatist characterisation of Scottish literary culture from a post-devolution perspective'.[54] This indicates the extent to which the imperative to reject 'defeatism' and Inferiorism in texts and criticism alike operates as a major logic through which Scottish literary studies constitutes itself as a field committed to generate cultural confidence.

A pluralist politics of belonging, however, is ideally placed to compound the attack on defeatism with one on essentialism; its critique therefore unfolds as condemnation of 'defeatist' narratives as essentialist and therefore reductive representations of the variety of identities proper to Scottish society. Disability plays an important role in this argument as the negative depictions proffered as examples are often explicitly concerned with disability. Reflecting on Joy Hendry's 1983 contribution to an issue of *Chapman* on 'The Predicament of the Scottish Writer', Bell argues that in that context cultural 'pessimism and introversion' on the part of writers and critics was justified by the 'insecure' political circumstances it commented on, and by cultural anxiety leading to essentialist self-definition in negative terms. For Bell, however, these attitudes do not belong within post-devolutionary Scottish culture, culturally confident and

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[53] Berthold Schoene, 'Going Cosmopolitan: Reconstituting 'Scottishness' in Post-devolution Criticism' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish literature*, ed. by Berthold Schoene (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p.7

[54] Berthold Schoene, 'Introduction: Post-devolution Scottish Writing' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish literature*, ed. by Berthold Schoene (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p.1

unconcerned with essentialist notions of the nation. Therefore, she criticises them as reductive and as compounding inaccurate representation with the potential to undermine cultural confidence. First, she discusses Alan Bold's reduction of the essence of Scotland to that offered by defeatist urban fiction: her contention is that if the 'notion of "the average Scot" as inferior has often been accepted by Scottish critics, yet the repetition of such recurrent themes does not make them unquestionable or unproblematic' because 'such stereotypes actually encourage and perpetuate the status of Scotland as inferior, backward looking and pessimistic'. The connection between disability and negative representations is overtly stated in her second critique, which takes on Dan Coxon's conception of 'the realities of Glasgow's drink problem'. On the one hand, Bell's condemnation is directed against essentialism: for her 'What seems problematic here is the equation of this mentality to Scotland as a whole'. On the other, it focuses on the 'undesirable and perhaps untruthful conclusions' reached by reductive stereotypes. Crucially, Bell justifies her position by appealing to pluralist sensibilities according to which visions of Scottish society and culture should 'encourage a proliferation and variety of voices' which essentialism silences.[55] Therefore, pluralism too works to exclude disability-related themes from belonging within Scottish literature.

However, disability's exclusion is not only rooted in the identifying logic of internal exclusion, driven by the need to marginalise identities inimical to the overcoming of defeatism in constructing the new essence of Scotland's diversity.

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[55] Eleanor Bell, 'Who Sings for Scotland? – Reflections form Inside a Predicament' in *Cencrastus*, Vol.63 (1998), p.3

It is also rooted in the reifying logic of a capitalist system that cannot make use of disability, and of welfare state able-nationalism which, despite diversity's call, can accept it neither symbolically nor materially. Doubts as to whether the pluralist nationalism of the new Scotland can be taken to be oriented in any anti-capitalist direction have indeed been voiced as part of critiques that address the lack of scrutiny of the imbrication between the Scottish establishment and capitalism in its neoliberal variant.  Gerry Mooney and Gill Scott have isolated for scrutiny claims 'that social justice is an essential part of Scottish life, and that this could be pursued far more effectively by a devolved government'.[56] They have asserted the need, in order for this scrutiny to be conducted, to contest dynamics whereby Scotland is thought of as a country 'in which the apparent contradiction between enterprise and welfare, competitiveness and cohesion has been resolved'.[57] The extent to which disability has no place in the new Scotland can be explained by reference to Lennard Davis' contention that while the concept of normal is being 'decommissioned as a discursive organiser', and replaced by 'the term *diverse*', so that '*diversity* is the new *normality*',[58] disability is not included in the new diversity discourse because it is located outside of the neoliberal ethic of choice and thus it 'is an atavism representing the remainder of normal at the end of normal' (Davis, p.14).

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[56] Gerry Mooney and Gill Scott, 'Devolution, Social Justice and Social Policy: the Scottish Context' in *Social Justice and Social Policy in Scotland*, ed. by Gerry Mooney and Gill Scott (Bristol: Policy Press, 2012), p.1

[57] Gerry Mooney and Gill Scott, 'Introduction: Themes and Questions' in *Exploring Social Justice in the 'New' Scotland*, ed. by Gerry Mooney and Gill Scott (Bristol: Policy Press, 2005), p.2

[58] Lennard J. Davis, *The End of Normal: Identity in a Biocultural Era* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2013), p.1

*Our Fathers* is organised by the tension between two Scotlands of the past, each predicating a different Scotland of the future, and defining the limits of inclusion within social citizenship. Balibar suggests that 'we cannot discuss degrees of exclusion without at the same time posing the question of the model of belonging they cover' (Balibar, 'What Are the Excluded', p.200). O'Hagan's model of belonging, which refracts the essence of neoliberal, diverse, post-devolutionary Scotland, is structured on the opposition between the two lineages of Jamie's fathers. On the one hand is the generation of Jamie's 'fathers' represented by his grandfather Hugh and his pursuit of progress in Glasgow: here 'you could believe the heart of progress was hereabouts' as 'the place was losing the look of old photographs. Reinforced concrete was gaining the light' (*Fathers*, p.18). On the other hand, Jamie's father Robert stands for the opposite lineage of Jamie's ancestry, one marred by addiction and violence conducive to decline rather than progress. Jamie tells us 'my father was an alcoholic. The kind that rages and mourns. He never meant well, and he never did well… There was no feeling sorry: he too down too many days of easeful sorrow; he glutted on ruin' (*Fathers*, p.6). In this way, disability becomes associated both metaphorically and as a socio-political reality with defeatism as *the* negative aspect of Scotland's past to be overcome. On the contrary, the generation of Jamie's 'fathers' associated with the pursuit of progress and a benevolent form of capitalism is presented as one Jamie and the nation should look up to. This is suggested by Jamie's teacher, nationalist Mr Buie, in his lecture 'on the meaning of Utopia'. Mr Buie relates how utopia is 'a word that meant everything in Scotland', adding 'our fathers

wore themselves away to make this true… The work of our fathers might give us hope' (*Fathers*, p.31). Significantly, Jamie is described as belonging within his grandfather's tradition, as encapsulated in his grandmother's words 'I bet you'll end up planning houses like your granda. Your father was never good for anything' (*Fathers*, p.12), and disowns the Scotland of grief symbolised by his father, as enshrined in his reflection 'our fathers were made for grief… Those Scottish fathers. Not for nothing their wives cried, not for nothing their kids… And where were our fathers? We had run from them' (*Fathers*, p.53).

Jamie will literally run from his parents and his duty of care. If it is the recognition of social rights' that 'forms a veritable system of social citizenship', reinforcing 'the modern equation of citizenship and nationality' (Balibar, 'New Reflections', p.114), the narrative of Jamie's refusal of care symbolically excludes his parents from social citizenship, and membership of the new Scottish nation. On the one hand, Jamie's refusal of care is prescribed by the very logic of progress that rejects disability as detrimental to the smooth reproduction of capitalism. This is intimated by Hugh's own attitude towards Robert: as Jamie tells us 'The train took me first to Glasgow, and my grandfather Hugh, who made a point of never asking about my ailing father' (*Fathers*, p.5). It is also suggested by a vision which privileges the possibilities for the individual to progress over the responsibilities of care,with the latter having to be withheld whenever they involve disabling labour that may compromise the former. While Jamie's mother 'believed what she said when she said she would love [his father] in sickness and in health' (*Fathers*, p.13),  Jamie escapes the labour of care by fleeing to his

grandparents' place. He recounts 'I woke in my bed one day with sore legs, just a kid with sore legs, and I told the parents I couldn't walk… There was nothing wrong with the legs… I couldn't live our life anymore'. In doing so, Jamie is aware of choosing Hugh and progress, as expressed by his justification 'I like history and flowers… And buildings with windows going all the way up' (*Fathers*, p.55).

The story of Jamie's refusal of care is accompanied by narratives of cure that complete the erasure of disability from the plot and confirm Balibar's contention that there can be no progress in the development of social citizenship as social citizenship is inevitably defined by exclusions: 'The ethical problem politics poses is not that of choosing between inclusion and exclusion in an absolute way, without remainder; it is rather knowing who is excluded, why, form what, by what mechanisms' (Balibar, 'New Reflections', p.124). The decline of Jamie's grandfather, that reproduces that of a benevolent variant of capitalism, is redeemed through his contribution to the progress of the nation in the form of the mentoring of his successor, Jamie: 'his years as the housing supremo were waning. His years as my godsend took over instead', Jamie tells us (*Fathers*, p.31). On the contrary, Robert's cure is crucially portrayed as happening within a framework different from that of the philanthropic capitalism of his father. He is described as having found 'Utopia in a community of reformed boozers' (*Fathers*, p.278) who 'believed in a unity of needs; they had made a nationhood of self-rescue' (*Fathers*, p.277). Jamie is thus able to declare 'our fathers were dead and gone: here were the living, and… every breath of the past came in whispers to

make them new, and here they were, a gloaming of faces in a tartan séance'

(*Fathers*, p.277).

Reflecting on the relationship between nation, disability and capitalism as

it emerges through narratives of care and cure in O'Hagan's novel, it can be

argued that, through the use of nationed root metaphors of disability to

conceptualise Scottish society, O'Hagan's dramatisation of the demise of a UK

welfare state is transformed into a reflection on the past, present, and future of

social citizenship, re-defined within the framework of the Scottish nation, and

prefiguring an independent welfare system. In this way, O'Hagan recreates the

bond 'that formed between two attributes of the state (the national and the social),

and led each to become the presupposition of the other' (Balibar, 'The Antinomy

of Citizenship', p.18). On the one hand, if exclusion is both 'directed at "real"

groups, institutionally deprived of rights or confined to segregated spaces' and 'at

*idealities* such as cultures cut off from the progress of "civilization"' (Balibar,

'What are the Excluded', p.201), it is through a depiction of the former, informed

by the discourse of defeatism, that *Our Fathers* renders null their perspective of

struggle and sociological reality. On the other hand, in the same way as 'the

institution of social citizenship… takes advantage of the nation-state's need to

create a common national belonging beyond class differences – without, for all

that, abolishing them' ('New Reflections', p.113), the power and socio-economic

reality of struggle is absent from *Our Fathers*. This is in line with how disability

as a socio-political and cultural phenomenon, class as a category of struggle, and

the relationship between the two have been neglected within the framework of

Scottish literature as a result of the resilience of nationalist schemas and the emergence of neoliberal pluralist logics.

O'Hagan's *Our Fathers* can be read as distilling the rationale of both the identifying and the reifying logics of internal exclusion, from a pluralist and supposedly anti-essentialist perspective reliant on the discourse on defeatism and the foreclosure of a disability perspective. *Our Fathers* portrays a Scottish society made 'new' through the overcoming both of its traditional fixation on the nation and of socially, physically and psychologically impaired conditions. By rendering attempts to overcome the former as inseparable from cure of the latter, *Our Fathers* entrenches the desirability of normalcy as necessary for the reproduction of capitalism and the viability of a competitive nation-state under neoliberalism. In doing so, O'Hagan takes a stance opposite to Alex Law's argument that it is necessary to debunk the assumption that 'a radically different state architecture will improve the prospects for collective solidarity and territorial justice',[59] against the background of how 'the much vaunted commitment to welfare nationalism in Scotland has been in constant tension with neoliberal forms of competitive nationalism' (Law, p.38). Only contestation of the 'assumption of an undifferentiated Scotland with a shared set of interests and priorities'[60]can render the notion of 'class, as a "collective agency"' thinkable'.[61]

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[59] Alex Law, 'Between Autonomy and Dependency: State and Nation in Devolved Scotland' in *Social Justice and Social Policy in Scotland*, ed. by Gerry Mooney and Gill Scott (Bristol: Policy Press, 2012), p.26
[60] Lynne Poole and Gerry Mooney, 'Governance and Social Policy in the Devolved Scotland' in *Exploring Social Justice in the 'New' Scotland*, ed. by Gerry Mooney and Gill Scott (Bristol: Policy Press, 2005), p.46
[61] Michael Lavalette and Gerry Mooney, 'Introduction: Class Struggle and Social Policy' in *Class Struggle and Social Welfare*, ed. by Michael Lavalette and Gerry Mooney (London: Routledge, 2000), p.3

The intersection between narratives of refusal of care, of cure and of disability as a signifier for the nation in *Our Fathers* confirms Sharon Snyder and David Mitchell's contention that disability plays a critical role in 'aesthetic efforts to represent the nation as synonymous with a narrow array of acceptable body types'[62] and that, under neoliberalism, new forms of ablenationalism have emerged whereby 'open rhetorical claims of a new era of inclusion for people with disabilities' exist alongside the exclusion of 'other non-normative, less easy to accommodate differences' (Snyder and Mitchell, p.119). Unlike Clare Barker's postcolonial texts, which 'maintain a commitment to the accommodation, validation and – perhaps eventually – the real celebration of difference as a valuable aspect of a nation's diversity',[63] *Our Fathers* reaffirms the cultural undesirability of disability within the nation as inassimilable within the capitalist normalcy of neoliberalism. This suggests how narratives of illness or disability produced within contexts of nation-building may intensify the mechanism described by Alison Kafer whereby 'How one understands disability in the present determines how one imagines disability in the future', and desire for the absence of disability from the latter increases in proportion as disability is imagined as a tragedy.[64]

**Spectres of Defect and Underdevelopment in Scottish studies and Alasdair Gray's *Poor Things*: Anthropological Differences, Equaliberty, and the**

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[62] Sharon L. Snyder and David T. Mitchell, 'Introduction: Ablenationalism and the Geo-Politics of Disability' in *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies*, Vol.4, No.2 (2010), p.115
[63] Clare Barker, *Postcolonial Fiction and Disability: Exceptional Children, Metaphor and Materiality* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.189
[64] Alison Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), p.2

**Nation**

Devolutionary 'nationed' narratives of disability in Scottish cultural and literary studies and in Scottish writing shared an obsession with the underdeveloped state of Scotland as a nation and of Scottish culture and literature, alongside a concern with the impact that self-consciousness about it, dubbed 'Inferiorism', could exert on national confidence in ways that could be detrimental to the national journey toward political emancipation. Both Scottish studies and Alasdair Gray's *Poor Things* rely on root metaphors of disability to render such perceived underdevelopment and the consciousness of it. *Poor Things* tells the story of how Bella Baxter, a Frankenstein-like figure created by Victorian surgeon Baxter Baxter through the insertion of a child's brain inside the body of a mature woman, develops into a 'normal' individual through contact with the social inequalities and ideologies that defined the Victorian era. Bella's portrait shows Bella's figure against a background consisting of a diversity of Scottish landmarks, which 'serves to introduce a metaphorical model of a woman as symbolic of a nation'.[65] This section will argue that *Poor Things* combines its metaphorical dramatisation of the nation as defective and underdeveloped with a concern with the quest for equaliberty that runs parallel to the achievement of political emancipation and of normalcy in the form of the normal stage of development with which both are imbricated. Within this framework, disability narratives function as traces of equaliberty in their denunciation of the exclusion of disability from equaliberty

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[65] Neil Rhind, 'A Portrait of Bella Caledonia: Reading National Allegory in Alasdair Gray's *Poor Things*' in *International Journal of Scottish literature*, Vol.8 (Autumn/Winter 2011) http://www.ijsl.stir.ac.uk/issue8/rhind.pdf, p.2

and the nation alike on the basis of the anthropological difference by which disability is defined.

The essentialism that permeates attempts to determine the specificity of Scottish literature in opposition to English literature within the framework of cultural nationalism was inseparable, in the 1980s, from critical interpretations which challenged the ways in which its essence had been perceived as inferior. Most notably, Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull coined the term 'inferiorism' to describe 'the adoption of discourses which portray Scotland as a dark and backward corner of the land', showing a 'severe distrust of Scottish traditions' and servicing cultural oppression.[66] Beveridge and Turnbull's was a quest to challenge the systematic undervaluation of Scottish writing and Scottish culture by arguing and demonstrating that these were not deficient but valuable when considered on their own terms.  As a materialist analysis of the Scots' crisis of confidence and its roots in Scottish culture, Beveridge and Turnbull's ideas resulted in a rejection of inferiorism that was different from the instrumental prescription of national confidence advanced, as already examined, by Carol Craig as well as by both literary critics and commentators within the pro-independence movement.

Borrowing the concept from Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and explicitly acknowledging their debt to him, Beveridge and Turnbull discuss Scottish culture in relation to inferiorisation as a strategy which has material effects. They argue that if 'constant disparagement of the local culture creates

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[66] Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull, *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture: Inferiorism and the Intellectuals* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1989), p.15

self-doubt, saps the native's self-respect and so weakens resistance to foreign rule', inferiorisation is 'fully successful when the native internalizes the estimation of local culture which is propagated by the colonizer, acknowledging the superiority of metropolitan ways' (Beveridge and Turnbull 1989, p.1). Crucially, while for Fanon the material effects of inferiorisation compounded other forms of colonial violence to generate psychiatric disorders, in Scottish culture illness and disability feature symbolically as metaphors through which to render the impact inferiorisation has at the cultural level. Thus, while Scotland's claim to colonial or post-colonial status has been both debated[67] and invalidated on the basis of its participation in the imperial venture[68] by Scottish writers and critics alike, the negative disability imagery deployed in Scottish studies and Scottish culture to render the impact exerted by imperialist dynamics assumes such a status. This proves Neil Davidson's point that although he colonized status of Scotland has been discredited, 'It is through the domain of culture that analogies with classical imperialism, impossible to sustain frontally, are readmitted through the back door'.[69]

As far as this negative disability imagery is concerned, central to both Fanon's and Beveridge and Turnbull's thinking are the ideas of failure, defect, and their overcoming. For Fanon, 'every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality –

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[67] For example, see Janice Galloway, 'Tongue in my Ear: on writing and not writing Foreign Parts' in *The Review of Contemporary Fiction* (Chicago: Dalkey Archive Press, 1995); Michael Gardiner, 'Democracy and Scotland's Postcoloniality' in *Scotland*s, Vol.3, No.2 (1996), p.26; McGuire, p.123

[68] Andrew O'Hagan, 'Scotland's fine mess' in *The Guardian* (23 July 1994), p.24

[69] Neil Davidson, *The Origins of Scottish Nationhood* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), p.97

finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country'.[70] This cannot be extricated from the phenomenon of failure. Fanon relates it to the logics of deviation and imitation of the metropolitan culture. The metropolitan culture places 'the black body into a schema of deviations and imitation. As deviation, it falls from a presumed original white body' but 'As imitation, what is lacked is the original advantage of the self as standard'.[71] In a Scottish context these dynamics translate as the failure of Scottish 'intellectuals to respond to Scottish traditions which cannot be assimilated to the paradigms of metropolitan culture' (Beveridge and Turnbull 1989, p.15), originating a situation in which national 'cultural endeavour and achievement are largely ignored […] marginalized and sidelined'.[72] Along similar lines, Gerard Carruthers notes that 'many of the literary commentators who did much to establish Scottish literature as one for distinctive scholarly investigation tended to see it, at best, as representing a broken and compromised cultural tradition' in comparison to other national literatures 'supposedly more organically full or completely developed'.[73] This was exemplified by Cairns Craig who, in his earlier writing, delineates a scenario in which the Scottish literary tradition is doomed to inferiority in relation to English literature through a brokenness deriving from lack of linguistic unity. For Craig, 'to talk about culture, society, history, literature, you have to talk about an English tradition whose wholeness

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[70] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks* (Pluto Press, 2008), p.9
[71] Lewis R. Gordon, *What Fanon Said: A Political Introduction to His Life and Thought* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), p.23
[72] Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull, *Scotland after Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1997), p.10
[73] Gerard Carruthers, *Scottish literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp.1-2

makes it incorporative of everything else',[74] but 'few cultures were less fitted to receive the accolade of being pronounced "organic" than Scotland' (Craig 1996, p.15).

Inseparable from the idea of failure is that of defect, which derives from the former and leads to real illness and disability in the colonial context but is only metaphorically related to these in Scottish culture. On Fanon's account 'failure' is a matter not only 'of missing the mark but also of the repercussions, which, inevitably, lead to therapy' (Gordon, p.24). While the plight of Fanon's black man consists in how he 'admitted the unarguable superiority of the white man, and all his efforts are aimed at achieving a white existence' (Fanon, p.179), in the same way as Scottish culture assumed the superiority of its metropolitan counterpart, it also 'lies in the fact that he was enslaved' (Fanon, p.180) and no similar situation can be identified in Anglo-Scottish relations. Instead, in a Scottish context defect becomes associated by anti-inferiorist discourses with the national culture, read as defined by 'the catastrophic influence of Calvinism, Scottish inarticulacy, the peculiarly deformed character' of its popular dimension (Beveridge and Turnbull 1989, p.14). It is in order to conceptualise the self-hatred and sense of inferiority rooted in the resulting perception of Scottish literature as parochial that Cairns Craig's narrative evokes images of illness and disability: Scottish culture is 'constantly threatened by the infection of the parochial' and has therefore 'cowered in the consciousness of its own inadequacy' (Craig 1996, p.10). This engenders 'a profound self-hatred' which is directed at the whole

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[74] Cairns Craig, *Out of History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and British Culture* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996), p.24

cultural field and creates a split personality: Craig considers that 'to escape the parochial we borrow the eyes of the dominant culture and through those eyes we see "the world"'. But we are also forced 'to see how close that parochial group-self stands to us – Hyde behind Jekyll – ready to claim again the self we have invented' (Craig 1996, p.11). Craig's reflections prefigured how critics would draw on a pathologised disability imagery so as to render a perceived deviance, inadequacy and inferiority of Scottish culture. Retrospectively, Craig comments on his own inferiorist attitude by admitting to the ways in which it compounded cultural oppression, reproducing what he describes as 'the "negative nationalism" of the Scottish Renaissance movement'. He notes 'many of us, in the 1970s and early'80s, were writing about a Scottish culture whose history we believed had somehow failed' and in doing so 'we contributed to the very failure of which we thought we were the victims'.[75]

In the same way as for Fanon before the colonized 'can adopt a positive voice, freedom requires and effort at disalienation' (Fanon, p.180) that unfolds at the epistemological level, for Beveridge and Turnbull reaction to cultural discourses which adversely affect the psychological and political outlook of the nation occurs through cultural change. Their aim is therefore 'to analyze cultural oppression in the Scottish context, and to offer different perspectives on Scottish traditions as a basis for cultural liberation' (Beveridge and Turnbull 1989, p.1). Scottish anti-inferiorism operates as a form of nationed emancipatory discourse just like Fanonism itself, which has been described as operating as a discourse of

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[75] Cairns Craig, 'Recovering History?' in *Culture, Nation, and the New Scottish Parliament*, ed. by Caroline McCracken-Flesher (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007), pp.31-2

restitution inseparable from a narrative of liberation.[76] While, as I previously contended, Beveridge and Turnbull's denunciation of inferiorism is different from the instrumental prescription of national confidence performed by Carol Craig and others, in Scottish studies and culture such a prescription does animate anti-inferiorism as a discourse of restitution defined by its denial of the symbolic association of defect with the national culture, psyche and identity. Indeed, during the referendum debate the importance to re-assert the value of the Scottish literary tradition was argued for by Alexander Moffat and Alan Riach, who postulated a distinctively Scottish art, characterised by a unique radical core tied to locality and cultural difference from England and ideally placed to communicate cultural confidence. For them, 'if more people understood how great the artists, composers and writers of Scotland are, what a difference that would make to their self-confidence'.[77]

A parallel to the images of illness and disability popular in anti-inferiorist discourse can be discerned in Tom Nairn's work who similarly deployed metaphors of disability to offer a material explanation for the undesirable state of Scottish culture and history. In his early book *The Break-up of Britain* Nairn adopts disability imagery to discuss Scotland's anomalous historical position. For him, the stage of development of Scottish civil society at the moment of union 'led to an interrelated series of developmental oddities'. This leads him to suggest that 'it is easiest to think of these as "malformations" (comparing them to

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[76] See David Marriott, *Wither Fanon? Studies in the Blackness of Being* (Stanford University Press, 2018)

[77] Alexander Moffat and Alan Riach, *Arts of Resistance: Poets, Portraits and Landscapes of Modern Scotland* (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2008), p.x

nationalist norms elsewhere)'.[78] The self-reflexivity colouring his use of disability

metaphors is repeatedly foregrounded. Considering how after the Union Scotland

appears as 'a highly-developed society… which, nevertheless, does not possess all

the standard fitments of development', he reflects 'it is hard to avoid metaphor in

describing the situation – "decapitation", "neurosis", or even "schizophrenia"'

(Nairn 1981, p.172). Nairn uses images of disability also to discuss the culture

developed out of these historical oddities. For him 'an anomalous historical

situation could not engender a "normal" culture' but only 'something like a

stunted, caricatural version of it'. He describes this as 'cultural sub-nationalism'

within a context in which nationalism could not be political and culture could not

be nationalist, and as forced to vent 'its national content in various crooked ways

– neurotically, so to speak, rather than directly' (Nairn 1981, p.156). Nairn draws

on disability narratives also to conceptualise Scottish identity. This identity is one

defined by neurosis, as a result of the loss of political independence at a moment

when there had already developed a strong sense of cultural identity. Nairn

concludes that a 'headless aberration' which is 'cramped, stagnant, backward-

looking, parochial' is the only identity available within a Scottish context,

pointing out that 'the epithets traditionally and rightly ascribed to modern

Scottishness, deformed as they are… constitute none the less a strong,

institutionally guaranteed identity' (Nairn 1981, p.131). It is worth acknowledging

that despite Nairn's shift in sympathy for nationalism in his more recent *After*

*Britain*, his reliance on derogatory metaphors of disability persists.

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[78] Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain* (London: Verso, 1981), p.170

In Nairn's more recent *After Britain* the use of disability imagery to denote both an abnormal historical development and an abnormal cultural formation is intensified. For Nairn, 'the underlying structure of the dismembered nation' and 'the mentality of division or incompletion which has always accompanied it' are strictly connected.[79] On the political level, the Act of Union caused a 'structural and now inescapable disablement' (Nairn 2000, p.98) by originating 'the inveterate state of a nation never destroyed but permitted half-life within relatively unalterable parameters' (Nairn 2000, p.101). However, this disablement engenders disability at the level of outlook because 'absence of self-confidence is only the neutral condition of a social formation whose collective or historical "self" has been partly lobotomized and partly placed in cold storage' (Nairn 2000, p.101). Self-hatred and lack of self-confidence are in turn debilitating, and Nairn renders this by deploying the image of a 'corrosive and disabling stream that has coursed through Scottish society' since the Union (Nairn 2000, p.101). For Nairn, lack of confidence underlies the much discussed 'split personality' and 'psychological quirks' of the Scot who, 'obliged to follow rather than lead… has been smartly servile on one hand but often, by a sort of compensation, wildly aggressive and chest-beating on the other' (Nairn 2000, p.102).

The treatment of disability in Gray's *Poor Things* turns on a tension between a dismodernist ethos and the dramatisation of the pursuit of normalcy through Bella's journey of self-development. This journey symbolically parallels

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[79] Tom Nairn, *After Britain: New Labour and the Return of Scotland* (London: Granta Books, 2000), p.101

the overcoming of both underdevelopment and inferiorist self-consciousness about it in Scottish culture, tellingly drawing on the very root metaphors of disability that are lodged at the heart of Scottish studies. On the one hand, Gray's novel may be taken to be informed by a dismodernist vision based on the idea that 'difference is what all of us have in common' (Davis, 2002, p.31) as both Bella and Baxter are defined by their bodily difference. This feeling is expressed by Baxter's friend and narrator Archibald McCandless' remark 'I suddenly felt that Baxter, his household, Miss Bell, yes and me, and Glasgow, and rural Galloway, and all Scotland were equally unlikely and absurd' (*Poor*, p.26). Bella is physically 'perfect but her mind is still forming' (*Poor*, p.27), while Baxter's physical abnormalities are presented in McCandless' narrative as a source of fright for whoever comes into contact with him. For example, McCandless tells us, 'when apart from Baxter my memory always reduced his monstrous bulk and shaggy boyish head to something more probable, so even after a week the unexpected sight of him was shocking' (*Poor*, p.47). However, the treatment of disability in the novel hinges on the differential exclusion Bella and Baxter face on the basis of their bodily difference, anticipated by McCandless' feeling that 'if she seemed a glorious dream Baxter loomed beside her like a nightmare' (*Poor*, p.47). Bella's progress towards self-realisation as a citizen independent and able to contribute to society through work has a counterpart in Baxter's participation in society from a position of marginalisation from employment. While for the former 'human engagement is the sine qua non of learning',[80] the latter can be read as a

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[80] Stephen Bernstein, *Alasdair Gray (*London: Associated University Press, 1999), p.120

paradigm of how Gray's protagonists 'are entrapped within systems and structures – be they political economic or emotional – which serve to limit their capacity for love and freedom and bring about their personal and societal dissolution'.[81]

Dramatisation of this differential exclusion generates a tension in *Poor Things* between its dismodernist framework and an espousal of normalcy, alongside the attendant assertion of the undesirability of disability**.** Within this framework, the intensive universality of equaliberty in social citizenship is haunted by normality as ground for inclusion, and exclusion is directed at 'individuals or groups who are perceived or declared strangers to the norm of humanity or its complete realisation' (Balibar, 'New Reflections', p.109). On the one hand, McCandless justifies his unwillingness to be seen with Baxter because of his friend's physical repulsiveness and registers his discomfort at Baxter's abnormal voice: 'I could not help wincing sometimes at the sound of his voice' (*Poor*, p.18). Baxter is later reported as providing cotton wool for his ears (*Poor*, p.31). Baxter's portrayal by McCandless fits the model of disability representation disability studies started denouncing in the 1980s and 1990s as a practice that 'dehumanises and objectifies its subject',[82] within a wider framework in which disability representation was 'in fact *impairment representation*'[83] by virtue of its focus on the body rather than on the body as caught up within socio-cultural and

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[81] Alison Lumsden, 'Innovation and reaction in the Fiction of Alasdair Gray' in *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies*, ed. by Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), p.115

[82] Paul Anthony Darke, 'The Elephant Man (David Lynch, EMI Films, 1980): An Analysis from a Disabled Perspective' in *Disability & Society*, Vol.9, No.3 (1994), p.327

[83] David Hevey, 'Tragedy', 'The Tragedy Principle: Strategies for Change in the Representation of Disabled People' in *Disabling Barriers – Enabling Environments*, ed. by John Swain, Vic Finkelstein, Sally French and Mike Oliver (London and New Delhi: Sage, 1993), p.116-7

political relations. On the other hand, the dismodernist vision in Gray's novel is sustained through surreptitious interventions by Baxter's perspective which continually foregrounds the ways in which 'the "problem" is not the person with disabilities; the problem is the way that normalcy is constructed to create the "problem" of the disabled person'.[84]

The tension between the two narratives of disability that unfold in Gray's novel issues in the differential legibility and validity assigned to Bella's and Baxter's perspectives, focused through two interrelated screams, one legible, one not, that organise Gray's novel. On the one hand is Baxter's, released on learning that Bella and McCandless are going to get married. McCandless tells us how 'The only part of Baxter which moved was his mouth. It slowly and silently opened into a round hole bigger than the original size of his head then grew larger still until his head vanished behind it', and 'when the scream came the whole sky seemed screaming' (*Poor*, p.52). On the other hand is Bella's scream. When on her cruise around the world she sees 'a thin little girl blind in one eye carrying a baby with a big head who was blind in both', in the midst of a crowd of beggars, and tries to bring the girl on board the ship with her. When her travelling companion Dr Hooker tells Bella that this will never be possible, bellowing 'YOU CAN DO NO GOOD', Bella recalls 'I tried to scream like you once screamed God since I wanted to make the whole world faint but Harry Astley clapped his hand over my mouth' (*Poor*, p.174). Crucially, Bella's reference to Baxter's scream in recounting her attempt at repeating it establishes a link between Bella's

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[84] Lennard J. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness and the Body* (London and New York: Verso, 1995), p.24

conscious rejection of the violence of inequality under capitalism and Baxter's inarticulate denunciation of his exclusion under normalcy. However, while Bella's expression of refusal marks the starting point of her development into a normal and independent citizen of the world committed to changing the world through work, the critique inherent in Baxter's scream remains inaudible and is dismissed as stemming from jealousy.

Bella's development occurs through an overcoming of her bodily difference which is portrayed as bound up with her refusal of the injustice that originates when capital and governments meet. Thus, Bella's development does not inscribe the trace of a 'a right to equality in difference' in the story. Erasing disability, it does not ground the imagination of a 'citizenship overdetermined by anthropological difference, explicitly directed toward its transformation' (Balibar, 'The Proposition of Equaliberty', p.59). Bella first becomes aware of the relationship between institutional and economic privilege through Baxter's warning that 'prosperous parents tell their children that nobody should lie, steal or kill' but 'then send them to schools where they… are taught to admire killers and stealers like Achilles and Ulysses' (*Poor*, p.155). On her tour this is discussed by her fellow traveller Mr Astley from a Malthusian perspective. He explains to Bella how 'the Anglo-Saxon race… have begun to control the world' as 'the cleverest and kindliest and most adventurous and most truly Christian and hardest working and most free and democratic people who have ever existed' (*Poor*, p.139). The extent to which Bella's privilege is based on the concealment of her abnormal development is suggested by Astley's own Malthusianism,

characterised by ruthlessness towards all forms of vulnerability: 'My faith offers no comfort to the poor, the sick, the cruelly used and those on the point of death' (*Poor*, p.133), he says. It also warrants Baxter's decision to send her around the world so as to not let her disability thwart her progress in society. When McCandless asks Baxter 'how do you explain her to *society*' (*Poor*, p.34), Baxter replies 'I will not let people treat her as an oddity. I will shortly take her on a carefully planned journey round the world' where 'she will see and learn many things by talking to folk who will not find her much queerer than most British travellers' (*Poor*, p.37).

Bella's progress towards normal embodiment and employment starts with her quest for independence. As disability theorist Mike Oliver suggested in 1993, 'the central idea underpinning the social construction of disability as a particular kind of social problem has been that of dependency', and Bella's aversion to the idea of dependency is foregrounded throughout *Poor Things*. Writing back to Baxter and McCandless while still on her travels, Bella muses 'How lovely, God, to waken all alone, and bath and dress alone, and eat alone. When we get married, Candle, we must spend some time apart to stop us going stale' (*Poor*, p.122). And, in thanking the people who have helped her develop into a 'normal' individual, she values especially those she has to thank the least: she writes 'Thank you for mending me, God, and giving me a hope that is not a prison. I will continue living here. And Candle, how good to have a man I need not thank at all' (*Poor*, p.232). Bella rejects dependency as 'the inability to do things for oneself and consequently the reliance upon others to carry out some or all of the tasks of

everyday life'.[85] The ideal of independence she embraces fits an ideology 'which stresses competitive individualism' under capitalism. However, 'no one in a modern industrial society is completely independent for we live in a state of mutual interdependence'. Therefore 'the dependence of disabled people… is not a feature which marks them out as different in kind from the rest of the population but as different in degree' (Oliver, p.50). This turns Bella into an unconvincing critic of inequality under capitalism, and an even less convincing herald of a fairer society.

Bella's emancipation unfolds precisely along the lines of increasing independence and, through this, access to employment. Thus, within a framework in which equality and freedom cannot be separated because they are 'contradicted in exactly the same conditions' (Balibar, 'The Proposition of Equaliberty', p.49), Bella's pursuit of equaliberty is conditional upon the overcoming of her underdevelopment, which is indexed through her success in the world of work. How independence is presented as inextricably linked to economic independence, to be earned through waged work, is suggested when Bella asks Baxter for advice as to how to learn to be independent: 'you must tell me how to do good and not be a parasite', she says (*Poor*, p.189). Baxter encourages her pursuit of independence by suggesting that in order for her children to learn to be independent she would have to learn 'to be independent [herself]' and adds 'independent of me and Candle too [...] Are you willing to work hard?'. To this Bella crucially replies with the declaration 'I will be a doctor' (*Poor*, p.197). On the one hand, we learn

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[85] Mike Oliver, 'Disability and Dependency: A Creation of Industrial Societies?' in *Disabling Barriers – Enabling Environments*, ed. by John Swain, Vic Finkelstein, Sally French and Mike Oliver (London and New Delhi: Sage, 1993), p.50

this through McCandless's narrative which culminates with Bella's success in the world of work: 'reader, she married me and I have little more to tell. Our family prospers happily. Our public work is useful and noticed as such' (*Poor*, p.240), he writes. Now, Bella's identity is that of a worker, and she concludes her own narrative with a scream of power:

> 'the labour and trade-union leaders in both countries have agreed that if their governments declare war they will immediately call a general strike. I almost hope our military and capitalistic leaders DO declare war! If the working classes immediately halt it by peaceful means then the moral and practical control of the great industrial nations will have passed form the owners to the makers of what we need, and the world YOU live in, dear child of the future, will be a saner and happier place. Bless you' (*Poor*, p.276)

If being normal is the requisite for Bella's participation in society, it is also the unmet condition that prevents Baxter from participating in the reproduction of capitalist normalcy through work, in a context where 'being normal' has always been a 'dominant criterion' which encourages 'the suppression of non-normal behaviour' under capitalism.[86] We learn of how, on the basis of his physical abnormalities, Baxter is barred from jobs because of the repugnance he inspires in people: 'he was a brilliant student apart from hospital work, where his strange

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[86] Vic Finkelstein, 'The Commonality of Disability' in *Disabling Barriers – Enabling Environments*, ed. by John Swain, Vic Finkelstein, Sally French and Mike Oliver (London and New Delhi: Sage, 1993), p.12

appearance and voice frightened patients and offended the staff, so he did not graduate but continued as a research assistant' (*Poor*, p.15). Baxter, however, pointedly denounces the inadequacy of exclusionary standards which take no account of his ability as a surgeon: 'the only patients I am allowed to touch are too poor or unconscious to have a choice in the matter', he says, adding 'Several well-known surgeons like my assistance when operating on celebrities whose deaths would damage their reputations, for my ugly digits and (to tell the truth) my ugly head are better than theirs in an emergency. But the patients never see me' (*Poor*, p.40).

Baxter's subtly contested marginalisation feeds a doubly subversive narrative which forces reflection on equaliberty in its reformulation as the problem of social justice. This is posed 'in terms of immanent obstacles that must be overcome politically' for all groups and classes to be enabled 'to realise their capacities as completely as possible' (Balibar, 'New Reflections', p.113). This involves a critique of capitalist normalcy and the medical establishment from which Baxter is excluded that exposes the latter's complicity with capital: according to Baxter, 'the public hospitals are places where doctors learn how to get money off the rich by practising on the poor. That is why poor people dread and hate them, and why those with a good income are operated upon privately' (*Poor*, p.17). This accusation is followed up with an even more stringent critique as Baxter asserts that 'if medical practitioners wanted to save lives… instead of making money out of them, they would unite to prevent diseases, not work separately to cure them' (*Poor*, p.24). On the other hand, marginalisation within

the sphere of employment grounds the impossibility for Baxter to reproduce capitalism as 'capital exists only in and through, labour'.[87] This allows labour the power to stop reproducing capitalism through the refusal of work. Baxter tells McCandless 'In a few years you will be an efficient house-surgeon… I will continue to seek affection by following a lonelier road' (*Poor*, p.24). This lonelier road is prefigured by his attempt at working to satisfy people's needs rather than for profit through the provision of 'unpaid help to a clinic attached to an east-end iron foundry', where he treats 'created scorched limbs and fractured spines' (*Poor*, p.15). However, Baxter is lucidly aware that he has not completely escaped subordination to capital: he tells McCandless 'until we lose our worldwide Market British medicine will be employed to keep a charitable mask on the face of a heartless plutocracy. I keep that mask in place by voluntary work in my east-end clinic' (*Poor*, p.24).

Bella's cure and emancipation are paralleled by Baxter's death in ways that can be read to resolve the disturbance that narratives of disability inject into *Poor Things*. Disability theorists David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder note that when the deployment of disability as a literary device is considered, 'the erasure of disability via a "quick fix" of an impaired physicality or intellect removes an audiences' need for concern or continuing vigilance'.[88] This position develops David Hevey's earlier contention that 'the fall of the tragic character into either a real (that is, narrated) death or a (again, narrated) living death' aids 'the

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[87]Werner Bonefeld, 'Capital as Subject and the Existence of Labour' in *Open Marxism*, Vol.3: Emancipating Marx (London: Pluto Press, 1995), p.189

[88] David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000), p.8

disavowal, the catharsis, of the non-disabled audiences'.[89] The resistance of the novel to allow Baxter's scream to be as legible as Bella's, however, draws attention to the limits of a society built on the values of capitalist normalcy but does not prevent Baxter from delineating a trace of equaliberty which asserts the right to freedom and equality regardless of bodily difference. Baxter's self-reflexive scream encourages reflection both on how 'we exist against-and in capital', even if 'our existence against capitalism is not a question of conscious choice' but 'the inevitable expression of our life in an oppressive, alienating society',[90] and on how the role a politicised disability perspective can play in performing and thinking simultaneous transcendence and integration with respect to capital.

**The Scottish Antisyzygy in Scottish literature and Violet Jacob's _Flemington_: Nationed Root Metaphors of Disability in the Age of the Scottish Literary Renaissance**

During the Scottish Literary Renaissance that developed from the early to the mid twentieth century two sets of discourses on the state of Scottish literature were pitted against each other: on the one hand, the field was perceived to be in an unsatisfactory state, incomplete and flawed by comparison with English literature; on the other hand, Scottish literature was praised as animated by a new energy and

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[89] David Hevey, 'Tragedy', 'The Tragedy Principle: Strategies for Change in the Representation of Disabled People' in _Disabling Barriers – Enabling Environments_, ed. by John Swain, Vic Finkelstein, Sally French and Mike Oliver (London and New Delhi: Sage, 1993), p.118
[90] John Holloway, 'From Scream of Refusal to Scream of Power: The Centrality of Work' in _Open Marxism_, Vol.3: Emancipating Marx (London: Pluto Press, 1995), p.178

as characterised by a unique meshing of contradictory principles and refusal to be constrained within straitjackets. The former position, exemplified by Edwin Muir's work, relied on root metaphors of disability to render the undesirability and the limits of Scottish literature. So did the postmodern theories in Scottish literary studies that, from the end of the twentieth century, sought to revalue Scottish literature by denying its limitations and asserting its health and normality. As for the qualities assigned to Scottish literature by the latter, their relationship with root metaphors of disability is established by Violet Jacob, who assigns those virtues to a disabled, central character in her most well-known novel *Flemington*. I will start by contrasting Muir's conceptualisation of Scottish culture as defective with Hugh MacDiarmid's positive reading of the very features Muir finds unsatisfactory and continue by relating the latter to the nationed representation of disability in *Flemington*. I am interested in how disabled piper Wattie inscribes a trace of equaliberty through his acting as a free and equal subject in contravention of social conventions and does so as an embodiment of MacDiarmid's Scottish Antisyzygy, which he anticipates. These early twentieth-century nationed root metaphors of disability relate in interesting ways to their postmodern counterparts that circulate in late twentieth-century and early twenty-first century Scottish studies.

For Muir, Scotland's constitutional status is one defined by defect, and is responsible for making the national culture similarly defective. Muir identifies a 'blemish' in the work of Walter Scott, caused by his having 'spent most of his days in a hiatus, in a country, that is to say, which was neither a nation nor a

province, and had, instead of a centre, a blank, an Edinburgh, in the middle of it'.[91] On the one hand, Scotland's defective constitutional status is for Muir impacting its literature through its failure to provide social and cultural material for it: 'Scott, in other words, lived in a community which was not a community, and set himself to carry on a tradition which was not a tradition' (Muir, pp.2-3). Scotland's defective literature is also accounted for by its lack of a homogeneous language (Muir, p.111), which leaves it without 'an organ for the expression of a whole and unambiguous nationality' (Muir, p.112). This contagious defectiveness cuts both ways though, as a literature achieved through a homogeneous language is deemed necessary for Scotland to preserve its identity as a nation' (Muir, p.113).

For MacDiarmid the essence of the Scottish spirit is the opposite to Muir's, who perceived it to be defined by a sense of lack. Roderick Watson includes the former within his list of counter-discourses to Muir's ideals of national 'autonomous identity, homogeneity and certainty'.[92] When asked 'to define the Scottish genius', MacDiarmid responded 'freedom – the free development of human consciousness' and a radical, 'incomparably chequered character' in constant struggle so as not to be forced 'into the mould of English constitutionalism'.[93] The essence of Scotland's national genius carries over into literature, as exemplified in contemporary developments in Scottish poetry which

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[91] Edwin Muir, *Scott and Scotland: The Predicament of the Scottish Writer* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1982), p.2
[92] Roderick Watson, 'The Modern Scottish Literary Renaissance' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-Century Scottish literature*, ed. Ian Brown and Alan Riach (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009)
[93] Hugh MacDiarmid, 'The Caledonian Antisyzygy and the Gaelic Idea' (1931-2) in *Selected Essays of Hugh MacDiarmid*, ed. by Duncan Glen (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969), p.57

MacDiarmid feels to be a 'revolt against a dreary rut of imitative versifying and a new freedom in vocabulary, in subject-matter, in angles of expression, in technical terms, in experimentation of all kinds' (MacDiarmid, p.63). In line with this, for MacDiarmid it is 'a renewed Scottish plea for diversity against uniformity in keeping with our essential national genius' that Scottish literature can contribute to the world (MacDiarmid, p.61).

These statements take as their starting point Gregory Smith's conviction that Scottish literature is not defined by cohesion but by a zig zag of contradictions, perceived to be a positive feature in a manner diametrically opposite to Muir's indictment of lack of homogeneity as the main defect of the Scottish literary tradition. For Smith, Scottish literature is 'remarkably varied' and becomes 'under the stress of foreign influence and native division and reaction, almost a zigzag of contradictions'.[94] It is defined by a sense of movement yielded by a combination of things unlike, of contraries blended into one another. For him, even if 'we neglect its more striking or astonishing extravagances, we have to account for that prevailing sense of movement, that energy and variety… that stirs even its most narrative mood' (G. Smith, p.35) because Scottish literature 'at all periods has shown a readiness not only to accept the contrary moods more or less on equal terms, but to make the on blend imperceptibly into the other' (G. Smith, p.37). This specific character of Scottish literature is seen to be rooted in the Scottish character as a 'combination of opposites'; Scottish literature reflects

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[94] G. Gregory Smith, *Scottish literature: Character and Influence* (London: Macmillan, 1919), p.4

'the contrasts which the Scot shows at every turn, in his political and ecclesiastical history, in his polemical restlessness, in his adaptability' (G. Smith, p.4).

In parallel, for MacDiarmid, valuing diversity, freedom, and the avoidance of narrow mentalities as defining characteristics of Scotland's national genius in literature is seen to be necessary for the development of Scotland the nation. MacDiarmid calls for a political movement guided by the rejection of fixed plans and opinions as such rejection is what characterises the Scottish genius. He professes to be opposed to 'any scheme to do anything at all, political, economic, commercial, or industrial – except to rouse a distinctive and dynamic spirit in Scotland again *and without any cut-and-dried scheme*' (MacDiarmid, p.73). Crucially, he draws on metaphors of illness precisely to characterise the impact that constraining of Scotland's free spirit may cause: for him, 'Scotland needs a great upwelling of the incalculable', and its 'worst disease is its appalling love for, and dependence, on, the calculable' (MacDiarmid, p.73). This necessitates, for MacDiarmid, the rejection of single-track mentalities proper to parties and movements that share 'a failure to entertain or recognise the antisyzygy' in their pursuit of 'overspecialization and single-track mentalities' (MacDiarmid, p.60).

*Flemington* directly speaks to MacDiarmid's hostility to 'all fixed opinions – all ideas that are not entertained just provisionally and experimentally' (MacDiarmid, p.68) through its main concern, a defining feature of Jacob's entire oeuvre,[95] with the violence involved with attempts to force individuals to entertain single-track mentalities and loyalties. Set against the background of the 1745

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[95] For more on this see my 'Local and Global Scales of Privilege and (Im)mobility in Scotland and Beyond: Violet Jacob's Critique of the Capital Relation' in *Empire and Revolutions*, ed. by Carla Sassi and Silke Stroh (ASLS, 2017)

Jacobite uprising, Jacob's novel tells the story of Archie, torn between allegiance

on the one hand to his Whig grandmother, Madame Flemington, who has moulded

his identity so that he can be 'a weapon fashioned to her hand' (*Flemington*,

p.369), serve the Whig cause and avenge her son, wronged by the Stuarts; and, on

the other hand, to Jacobite Captain James Logie who, like Madame Flemington,

invents Archie's identity by superimposing on him  the remembrance of his wife,

killed by treacherous enemies. James poignantly offers his friendship to Archie

with the words 'your eyes are so like Diane's – you might well be her'

(*Flemington*, p.344).

Archie cannot satisfy Madame Flemington's or James' demand of

exclusive loyalty in line with how he embodies MacDiarmid's antisyzygy and

Smith's 'zigzag of contradictions': there is 'the suggestion of stir and movement

that [goes] everywhere' with Archie (*Flemington*, p.403), and he rides 'every

quality in his character with a loose rein' (*Flemington*, p.313). When he informs

his grandmother that he will 'not go man-hunting after Logie', though his loyalty

to the government is not in question (*Flemington*, p.354), Madame bars him from

Ardguys, the family home, and from activity on the Whig side, declaring 'I will

have no half-measures as I have no half-sentiments' (*Flemington*, p.357).

Parallelly, James cannot forgive Archie for being a spy because men, for him, are

divided into 'those who [are] for the Stuarts and those who [are] not' (*Flemington*,

p.336). Archie becomes ill as a result of the impossibility of his simultaneously

being attached to Madame Flemington and James. His existence comes to be

defined by 'the intense spiritual discomfort' which is the lot of those who struggle

'to loose themselves from an environment they have just quitted and to meet an impending one' (*Flemington*, p.351). Only death gives him respite.

However, it is through the representation of Skirlin' Wattie, who carries letters for the government, as well as his music, round the country, that the Scottish antisyzygy is most explicitly and powerfully dramatised in *Flemington*. Existing in a pre-welfare world, Wattie's position is very different form that of the disabled characters at the centre of the plots of the other novels and stories under consideration in this thesis because his role within society is not defined in relation to the spheres of institutional care or waged work. Instead, Wattie's contradictory embodiment of constrained mobility, due to his impairment, and extreme movement at the level of MacDiarmid's 'free development of human consciousness' (MacDiarmid, p.57), is suggested by how 'he would have been a man of prowess had his limbs been intact – and destiny, in robbing his body of activity, had transferred that quality to his brains' (*Flemington*, p.403).  His own appearance incarnates a 'zigzag of contradictions': because his looks are reminiscent of a wild boar, it is 'almost shocking to anyone with a sense of fitness to hear the mellow and touching voice… that [proceeds] from his bristly jaws' (*Flemington*, p.403). Wattie's contradictions are reflected in those embodied in the yellow cur that Wattie singles out from the pack drawing his cart, whose 'golden eyes, clear, like unclouded amber' contrast 'with the thick and vulgar yellow of his close coat, and the contrast was like that between spirit and flesh' (*Flemington*, p.361).

Crucially, the characterisation of Skirlin' Wattie directly establishes a link between disability and the Scottish spirit. We learn that 'the world that [Wattie's voice] conjured up before the imaginative listeners was a world of twilight; of stars that drew a trail of tear-dimmed luster about the ancient haunted places of the country', and 'it was a strange truth that, in the voice of this coarse and humble vagabond, [lies] the whole distinctive spirit of the national poetry of Scotland' (*Flemington*, p.403-4). In the same way as Scottish literature is for Smith defined by 'striking or astonishing extravagances' and a 'sense of movement… energy and variety' (G. Smith, p.35), Wattie's music potently materialises unpredictable connections by sending dancers 'now loosing each other for the more serious business of each one's individual steps, now enlacing again', while 'the odd-woman-out [circles] round… like a fragment thrown off by the spin of some travelling meteor' (*Flemington*, p.364). Tellingly, the link that is drawn between Wattie and the Scottish nation positions the latter as Balibar's scenario of the 'community without unity' (Balibar, 'The Antinomy of Citizenship', p.9), created by 'the articulation of citizenship with different insurrectional modalities of emancipation' that the former symbolises and enacts (Balibar, 'The Antinomy of Citizenship', p.6).

In particular, Wattie's movement within the national community and its space originates from a position defined by his anthropological difference. This demonstrates how anthropological difference does 'not enter into the process of reproducing the citizen' so that 'equaliberty can only be realised through the *subversion* of norms, of the existing codes that institute citizenship and

communication among citizens' (Balibar, 'New Reflections', p.128). On the one hand Wattie, unlike Archie and most of Jacob's characters, manages to shun crippling allegiances and identities, and enjoys carrying government secret letters uniquely because it brings him 'in contact with new varieties of men' (*Flemington*, p.404). On the other hand, he confronts Madame Flemington in a meeting that the codes of communication dominating society in *Flemington* make unthinkable due to extreme difference in social ranking. We realise this through the eyes of the servant who witnesses the encounter, 'struck back by the unblessed sight of her mistress, that paralyzing, unapproachable power, jesting, apparently, with Skirling Wattie' (*Flemington*, p.422). We are treated to Jacob's commentary that it is impossible to know 'how nearly the extremities of the social scale can draw together in the primitive humours of humanity. It is the ends of a line that can be best bent to meet, not one end and the middle' (*Flemington*, p.427).

MacDiarmid's and Jacob's visions of what the essence of the Scottish spirit consists in strikingly speak to the one entertained by late twentieth-century and early twenty-first century postmodern and pluralist approaches to Scottish literature. Fundamentally, however, they contrast with these through their use of disability imagery. The former draws on images of disability to render the positive attributes of the Scottish spirit as a zig zag of contradictions; to conceptualise a similar spirit, the latter relies on imagery of disability overcome to conceptualise the richness of Scottish culture as normal and healthy. The insights of postmodernism have allowed the possibility to valorise the fragmentation of Scottish culture and to undo the connection between its process of development

and derogatory images of disability. David McCrone re-interprets the consequences of the Union for Scotland by seeing its experience as prefiguring those common in post-national times. For him, Scottish culture is 'actually much healthier and more progressive than many critics have claimed'; its cultural identity should not be seen as doomed 'to fragmentation and division, to split personality, cultural identity', but as embodying 'the socio-political condition of "being between" full, formal independence and incorporation onto greater England'.[96] In line with this, he contests the belief that Scotland is still 'a deeply physically damaged society' by suggesting that it is, in fact, 'remarkably well-adapted' to its political circumstances (McCrone, p.148). This is reflected on the cultural level, as McCrone also asserts the value of the diversity of Scottish culture and its normality in relation to the contemporary context of postmodernity: for him, 'the variety and eclecticism of Scottish culture today corresponds to world conditions in the late twentieth century' and not to 'the distorting legacy' of the past (McCrone, p.131).

From pluralist perspectives, conclusions similar to McCrone's have been reached by literary critics who have simultaneously denied the validity of the search for a homogeneous national identity and valorised the diversity of Scottish culture. Significantly, they have done so by recycling narratives of disability to 'cure' Scottish literature of any association with disability imagery. Gerald Carruthers and Liam McIlvanney note that 'the 1980s also saw a rejection of the rhetoric of deformity and fragmentation that until then had been the house style of

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[96] David McCrone, *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Nation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p.147

Scottish cultural analysis'.[97] They relate this development to the process whereby cultural fragmentation came to index a 'vital, invigorating diversity' in the spirit of 'a new cultural buzzword – Scotlands', which celebrated a plural as opposed to a homogeneous national identity (Carruthers and McIlvanney, p.11). Schoene agrees that in proportion as 'discontinuity and adaptability… no longer signify lack and inferiority, but harbour a resourceful flexibility', Scottish literary studies has been able to champion 'the cultural authenticity of the fragmented, marginalised, shadowy and wounded over that of the allegedly intact, wholesome and self-contained'. As a result, Scottish culture, traditionally stigmatised for its divided nature, 'has emerged as from a distorting mirror' (Carruthers and McIlvanney, p.9).

Cultural nationalism too has rejected the negative imagery of disability by reappropriating for celebration the features of the Scottish literary tradition previously perceived as disabled – namely, its 'schizophrenic' divisions and contradictions. From a postmodernist perspective, Cairns Craig suggests that inferiorist views of the Scottish literary tradition respond to the parameters dictated by English literature as the epitome of coherence. Craig suggests that heterogeneity does define, but in a positive way, the Scottish literary tradition. This allows him to debunk the idea of a Scottish literature disabled by its fragmentation. For Craig, 'the problem of Scottish literature in the modern age has been the assumption that literary creativity is only possible in the context of a unified and coherent cultural tradition', while 'disunity, conflict and

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[97] Gerard Carruthers and Liam McIlvanney, 'Introduction' in *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish literature*, ed. by Gerard Carruthers and Liam McIlvanney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.10

contradiction' are 'just as creative for any national culture'.[98]  Therefore, 'a Scottish culture which has regularly been described as "schizophrenic" because of its inner divisions is not necessarily sick' (Craig 2007, p.115). Douglas Gifford agrees that Scotland's 'anomalous' political and cultural circumstances should be valued as stimulating creativity: in this way, 'Scottish literature's tradition of polyphony, fragmented visions, uneasy relations both literal and cultural, will come to seem neither inferior nor irrelevant'.[99]

If 'curing' Scottish culture of disability on a symbolic level has allowed critics to celebrate its value and normality from anti-essentialist and pluralist as much as essentialist and nationalist positions, this has been paralleled by the assertion of the need for criticism to pursue a process of normalisation in order to be able to appreciate the health and normality of its object of study. Gerard Carruthers suggests moving beyond essentialism and its search for a distinctive Scottish tradition. For him 'we should overcome anxiety in the face of England and accept that Scottish literature is connected to the wider world, sharing similarities as well as differences', because only by moving 'towards a position of normalisation, where Scottish literature is sometimes seen to be not out of step with culture elsewhere', one can realise that it 'is normal and healthy'.[100] For Craig, 'the process of normalisation' that unfolded in the 1990s consisted in

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[98] Cairns Craig, 'The Criticism of Scottish literature: Tradition, Decline and Renovation' in Ian Brown et al in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish literature*, Vol.3: *Modern Transformations: New Identities (from 1918)*, ed. by Ian Brown et al (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p.52
[99] Douglas Gifford, 'Re-mapping Renaissance in Modern Scottish literature' in *Beyond Scotland: New Contexts for Twentieth-century Scottish literature*, ed. by Gerard Carruthers, David Goldie and Alasdair Renfrew (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2004), p.36
[100] Gerard Carruthers, 'Rejecting Inferiorism and Superiorism: Normalising Scottish Literary Studies in the Early Twenty-First Century' in *Studies in Scottish literature*, Vol.38, Iss.1 (2012), pp.18-9

appreciating the normality that rests in the heterogeneity of Scottish culture in the postmodern era.[101] From a position of normalisation, Craig suggests that one can appreciate how 'Scotland is the place which is at once weirdly normal and normally weird – a place which celebrates its return from weird to normality by celebrating, equally, how weird the normal now is' (Craig 2001, p.23). Both positions illustrate the extent to which developments in Scottish Studies have been carried by a logic whereby the conception of both culture *and* criticism oscillates between stigmatisation through disability imagery and resumption through narratives of cure – or accommodation, through the adjustment of the category of 'normal' to changing cultural and political times.

**Conclusion**

Consideration of the deployment of disability imagery in Scottish criticism from the Scottish Renaissance to the present also illuminates, from a disability perspective, the ways in which the field, currently organised both by a postmodernist and by a nationalist impulse, 'bears a dynamic relation' to its past, which Matthew Wickman has delineated.[102] The dynamics unleashed by the encounter between critical discourse and narratives of disability in a Scottish context enact Foucault's idea of commentary, whereby in a given society major narratives 'are recounted, repeated, and varied' (Foucault, p.57). We have seen

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[101] Cairns Craig, 'Constituting Scotland' in *The Irish Review*, No.28 (Winter 2001), pp.1-27 (20)
[102] Matthew Wickman, 'The Emergence of Scottish Studies' in *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish literature*, ed. by Gerard Carruthers and Liam McIlvanney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)

how the focus of critical discourse moves from a state of Scottish culture

negatively conceived as schizophrenic, to one positively appreciated as

nondisabled through binary inversion, to one celebrated as nondisabled because of

its 'healthy' postmodern fragmentation. This pattern can be taken to be crucially

embedded in that identified by Wickman whereby, in Scottish studies, the

postmodern moment precedes the moment of nationalism, as indexed by how

narratives of schizophrenia are followed by the modernist phase of nationalism

and finally return to speak to cosmopolitan diversity. As Wickman explains,

> 'in Scottish studies, the postmodern moment in some ways comes first;
> and, while the dialogic emphasis of the current era in some ways conserves
> traditional… categories like nationhood, it also potentially threatens its
> own grand narrative of enlightened diversity with the spectre of
> dissolution, specially by admitting a "cosmopolitan" criticism which
> vacates the nationalist paradigm altogether' (Wickman, p.250)

Because the commentary that revolves around disability imagery is inextricably

linked to narratives of fragmentation, it is bound to participate in the dynamics

described by Wickman. Analysis of how its own logic impacts them indicates

further ways in which Scottish studies 'bears a dynamic relation' to its past: not

only through the tension between nationalism and postmodernism it

accommodates, but also through a dialectic between images of disability and their

'cure' which reveals the disablist rationale that underpins the politics of belonging of the field.

Through its analysis of nationed root metaphors of disability in Scottish studies and Scottish writing, this chapter has examined the different models of belonging that have governed the imagination of the relationship between disability and the nation from the start of the twentieth century until the present day. For Balibar, exclusion is both directed 'at "real" groups, institutionally deprived of rights or confined to segregated spaces', and at *idealities*, such as 'collective histories suppressed in the grand narrative of universal history' (Balibar, 'What are the Excluded', p.201). My analysis has delineated both how disability as a category of marginalisation from social citizenship has been represented in Scottish writing, and how its specific ideality has been rendered unthinkable in Scottish writing and Scottish studies alike. At both levels, disability's anthropological difference does 'not enter into the process of reproducing the citizen', if not indirectly through 'the *subversion* of norms' (Balibar, 'New Reflections', p.128). It is in this way, by dramatising the demand for 'a right to equality in difference' (Balibar, 'The Proposition of Equaliberty', p.59), in a context concerned to ban difference from the space where emancipation is achieved, that the nationed root metaphors of disability that populate Scottish studies and writing inscribe a trace of equaliberty in Scottish culture.

This chapter has traced how the function of what Fiona Kumari Campbell defines an 'abled imaginary' 'to "shut away", to exteriorize, and unthink

disability', so that it 'cannot be thought of / spoken about on any other basis than the negative'[103] is reproduced by the impulse at work in Scottish criticism to neutralise the disability imagery it invokes as a narrative prosthesis, or a symbolic figure deprived of 'its social and political dimensions'.[104] For Amy Vidali, a disability studies approach to metaphor problematises the assumptions enshrined in disability metaphors to 'challenge beliefs that such metaphors are "naturally" acquired'.[105] A disability studies approach, uniquely apt to criticise normalcy and valorise experiences and representations of disability, will be necessary to rescue for analysis the ideality of disability that informs much Scottish writing but is foreclosed by the unregistered representations of its marginalisation in Scottish studies. Coupled with a perspective informed by Marxist autonomist theory, a disability studies approach is what will allow me to study, in the rest of this thesis, the ways in which Scottish writing produced from the start of the twentieth century to the present has engaged with the critique, and disruption, that disability carries against identifying and reifying processes alike in the spaces of work, welfare, and the nation.

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[103] Fiona Kumari Campbell, *Contours of Ableism: The Production of Disability and Abledness* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p.13

[104] David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, 'Narrative Prosthesis and the Materiality of Metaphor' in *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000), p.48

[105] Amy Vidali, 'Seeing What We Know: Disability and Theories of Metaphor' in *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies*, Vol.4 No.1 (2010), p.51

**Chapter Two**

**Crip Precarities**

**Immaterial Labour and Disability in Post-Devolutionary Scottish Writing**

In this chapter I will examine autonomist narratives of disability in post-devolutionary Scottish writing, arguing that these portray the intersection between class and disability as categories of oppression that coalesce around the phenomena of the 'precarious' and of 'immaterial labour'. If the 'precarious' defines conditions of insecurity under capitalism, 'crip precarities' encapsulates the ways in which disability intensifies the condition of precarity experienced by nonproductive bodies as soon as these encounter the commodifying logic of capitalism that underpins the internal exclusion of disability.[1] 'Immaterial labour' indicates both the form of work central to the current biopolitical mode of production, and the efforts nonproductive bodies in conditions of precarity must put forth to navigate the spheres of production and social reproduction under capitalism. I will draw on the post-operaist strand of autonomist Marxism in order to explore the ways in which the 'precarious' and 'immaterial labour' are dramatised in Scottish writing that is simultaneously concerned with class and with incapacitated bodies under neoliberalism. My investigation will follow a tripartite structure. I will start by examining John Burnside's *Glister* (2008)[2] in terms of the 'Disabling Systemic Precarity' it represents. I will continue by considering the 'Immaterial Labour of Benefit Claiming and Unpaid Care-Work'

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[1] Étienne Balibar, 'What Are the Excluded Excluded From?' in *Equaliberty: Political Essays*, trans. by James Ingram (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), p.201

[2] John Burnside, *Glister* (London: Vintage Books, 2008)

with which James Kelman's *Mo Said She Was Quirky* (2012)[3] and Ali Smith's

*Hotel World* (2001)[4] are concerned. I will conclude by addressing the

representation of 'Precarious Lives and Communities of Care' in A.L. Kennedy's

*Paradise* (2004)[5] and Jenni Fagan's *The Panopticon* (2012).[6] I will further

contend that these novels are traversed by narratives of disability that speak to an

autonomist critique of welfare capitalism. This starts from a vision of the welfare

state regime as structured so as to maintain 'a useful working class… as a service

to capital',[7] and connects the vulnerability of nonproductive bodies to their

marginal position in the capitalist modes of production and social reproduction.

In the introductory section of this chapter I will perform a double

contextualisation which will situate the literary narratives I am going to examine

in relation both to the stage of capitalist development they engage with, and to the

discourses that define the post-devolutionary moment in Scottish studies. When

the former is considered, Burnside's, Kelman's, Smith's, Kennedy's and Fagan's

works refract the encounter between the commodifying logic of capitalism and the

internal exclusion of nonproductive bodies under welfare capitalism (Balibar,

'What are the Excluded', p.201) at a specific stage of the restructuring of

capitalism. As I will detail, this conjuncture is first of all defined by the centrality

of immaterial labour, or labour that 'creates immaterial products, such as

knowledge, information, communication, a relationship, or an emotional

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[3] James Kelman, *Mo Said She Was Quirky* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2012)
[4] Ali Smith, *Hotel World* (London: Penguin, 2001)
[5] A.L. Kennedy, *Paradise* (Jonathan Cape, 2004)
[6] Jenni Fagan, *The Panopticon* (London: William Heinemann, 2012)
[7] Kittens, 'What is wrong with free money?' on *Antinational.org* (28 July 2015)
https://antinational.org/en/what-wrong-free-money/

response',[8] in the capitalist mode of production and social reproduction. Secondly, it articulates the global form of sovereignty post-operaists Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri call 'Empire'[9] with neoliberal precarity in ways that increase the disabling power of capitalism to such an extent that incapacitated bodies become 'the standard to an increasing degree'.[10]

As for the latter, I will inquire into the visibility of autonomist narratives of disability in Scottish literary studies at a particular stage of its development - post-devolution. While the idea of a 'new politics' in post-devolution Scotland refers to specific sets of assumptions about the political culture supposedly enabled by the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, the commitment to pluralism and openness to international contexts that defined the political discourse on the 'new politics' had a counterpart in the development of similar sensibilities in nationalism studies as well as Scottish studies. Chapter one considered how the discourse on defeatism proper to Scottish literature mutated in concert with the pursuit of a new Scottish essence post-devolution – diverse, healthy, and not inclusive of disability. The introductory section of this chapter will instead be devoted to unpacking how the paucity of theoretical investigations of post-devolutionary class and disability narratives in Scottish literature relates to the 'new politics' discourse that established itself post-devolution in Scottish politics and culture alike.

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[8] Michel Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (London: Penguin, 2004), p.108

[9] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2001)

[10] David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *The Biopolitics of Disability: Neoliberalism, Ablenationalism, and Peripheral Embodiment* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2015), p.40

**Autonomist Narratives of Disability and the 'New Politics' of the Nation**

By the first decade of the twenty-first century the relationship between nationalism and globalisation constituted a major topic of debate in nationalism studies. For some critics the nation-state has lost power to supranational institutions in ways that 'weaken its citizens' loyalty'.[11] Most theorists, however, register a continued relevance of the nation-state in contemporary politics, a stance encapsulated in Daphne Halikiopoulou and Sofia Vasilopoulou's conviction that 'we live in an increasing interdependent world' but 'it is nations and national states, and their citizens' that seek to influence 'the global agenda' with national interests in mind.[12] Similarly, according to Craig Calhoun, 'globalisation challenges nation-states and intensifies flows across their borders, but it doesn't automatically make them matter less',[13] and for Daniel Béland and André Lecours 'state institutions still matter a great deal'.[14]

Within this consensus there is also agreement that if the nation-state is still a powerful force in global affairs, any essentialist conception of national identity has been, however, undermined by globalisation as much as by the rise of identity politics within the nation. While Ulf Hedetoft and Mette Hjort suggest that 'the

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[11] Montserrat Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), p.29
[12] Daphne Halikiopoulou and Sofia Vasilopoulou, 'Introduction: Bridging the Gap between Nationalism and Globalisation' in *Nationalism and Globalisation: Conflicting or Complementary*, ed. by Daphne Halikiopoulou and Sofia Vasilopoulou (Abington: Routledge, 2011), p.1
[13] Craig Calhoun, *Nations Matter: Culture, History, and the Cosmopolitan Dream* (Routledge, 2007), p.9
[14] Daniel Béland and André Lecours, *Nationalism and Social Policy: The Politics of Territorial Solidarity* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.2

organicism and essentialism of national identities are no longer just taken for

granted' as globalisation has introduced 'wedges of uncertainty and

impermanence into the imagined oneness of political and prepolitical orientations

that underpin national identity',[15] Keith Breen and Shane O'Neill contend that

nationalism and the nation-state must now 'take irreducible diversity and

multiplicity into account' as global developments 'shake the foundations of

national sovereignty'.[16] Ralph Grillo[17] and Will Kymlicka[18] have drawn attention

to issues of pluralism and multiculturalism within the nation. More normatively,

for David Miller the challenge is to think creatively about how best to implement

'underlying values of republic citizenship as a form of politics and nationhood as

a form of political identity' in the contemporary world.[19]

In commentary on Scottish politics similar debates can be traced. On the

one hand, in reflecting on the possibility of independence for Scotland, Jo Eric

Murkens, Peter Jones and Michael Keating propose that 'the problem is that in an

increasingly inter-dependent world the idea of national sovereignty has been

diminished',[20] while for SNP politician Kenny MacAskill 'independence is not

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[15] Ulf Hedetoft and Mette Hjort, *The Postnational Self: Belonging and Identity* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), pp.xv-vi

[16] Keith Breen and Shane O'Neill, 'Introduction: A Postnationalist Era?' in *After the Nation? Critical Reflections on Nationalism and Postnationalism*, ed. by Keith Breen and Shane O'Neill (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.7

[17] Ralph Grillo, *Pluralism and the Politics of Difference: State, Culture, and Ethnicity in Comparative Perspective* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p.5

[18] See Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) and *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

[19] David Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), p.3

[20] Jo Eric Murkens, Peter Jones and Michael Keating, *Scottish Independence: A Practical Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), pp.1-3

inconsistent with an interdependent world but essential to participating in it'.[21] On

the other hand, for Frank Bechhofer and David McCrone, the possibility that new

identities have rendered national identity obsolete should be dismissed as

'national identification had suffered the least decline' in the face of 'processes of

individualisation… driven by commerce.[22] Both strands of reflection have

informed discussions about Scottish institutional politics, most powerfully in

relation to issues of social justice, at a conjuncture when, as explored by Nicola

McEwen, there is a widespread sense that 'devolution gives the Scottish

Executive new opportunities to develop distinctive welfare unionist strategies and

nurture a recognisably Scottish welfare system'.[23] This belongs within a wider

discourse around the 'new politics' in Scotland post-devolution, associated with

expectations that devolution would 'improve the political process'[24] and stimulate

the emergence of 'a new political culture'[25] in Scotland and a 'Scottish approach'

to policy-making.[26]

    Post-devolution, two tendencies can be traced in Scottish literary studies

that map neatly onto their counterparts in nationalism studies and Scottish studies:

one is constituted by interest in the relevance of international contexts for the

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[21] Kenny MacAskill, *Building a Nation: Post Devolution Nationalism in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Luath, 2004), p.15

[22] Frank Bechhofer and David McCrone, 'Conclusion: The Politics of Identity' in *National Identity, Nationalism and Constitutional Change*, ed. by Frank Bechhofer and David McCrone (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp.192-3

[23] Nicola McEwen, *Nationalism and the State: Welfare and Identity in Scotland and Quebec* (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2006), p.158

[24] Neil McGarvey and Paul Cairney, 'What is Scottish Politics?' in *Scottish Politics: An Introduction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.11

[25] James Mitchell, *Devolution in the UK* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), p.136

[26] Paul Cairney, Siabhainn Russell and Emily St Denny, 'The 'Scottish approach' to policy and policymaking: what issues are territorial and what are universal?' in *Policy & Politics*, vol.44, No.3 (2016), p.334

national culture; the other by the theorisation of its pluralist dimension. The

former can be traced in Gerard Carruthers, David Goldie and Alasdair Renfrew's

assertion of the importance of 'international contexts to the Scottish literary

experience in the twentieth century',[27] as well as in Eleanor Bell's call for Scottish

literature to drop its hostility to forces 'such as globalisation… in order to

embrace, or at least become more conversant in, contemporary theoretical

discourses'.[28] In a similar spirit, Bell and Scott Hames have argued that Scottish

literature needs urgently 'to engage with modern critical discourse surrounding

cultural tradition, literary history, linguistic identity and "internationalism"'.[29] As

for the latter, Berthold Schoene has noted a need to conduct discussions of

Scottish nationalism and nationhood always 'with reference to other debates on

contemporary "identity"'.[30] Along the same lines, scholars have argued that 'a

meaningful conception of the nation' should acknowledge 'both internal diversity

and the complexity of international cross-cultural relations'[31] in order not to be

out of step with 'writers increasingly interested in emancipatory projects premised

on questions of class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and so forth'.[32] This view is

echoed by James McGonigal and Kirsten Stirling's proposal that 'the standard

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[27] Gerard Carruthers, David Goldie and Alasdair Renfrew, 'Introduction' in *Beyond Scotland: New Contexts for Twentieth-century Scottish Literature*, ed. by Gerard Carruthers, David Goldie and Alasdair Renfrew (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2004), pp.14-5

[28] Eleanor Bell, *Questioning Scotland: Literature, Nationalism, Postmodernism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.3

[29] Eleanor Bell and Scott Hames, 'Editorial: Theory and Scottish Exceptionalism' in *International Journal of Scottish Literature*, Vol. 3 (Autumn/Winter 2007), p.4

[30] Berthold Schoene, 'Introduction: Post-devolution Scottish Writing' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature*, ed. by Berthold Schoene (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p.2

[31] Duncan Petrie, *Contemporary Scottish Fictions: Film, Television and the Novel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), p.6

[32] Matt McGuire, *Contemporary Scottish Literature: A Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p.52

way of reading Scotland in the early twenty-first century [should be] plural'.[33]

Even theorists not critical of nationalism justify their interest in nation-centred

frameworks for Scottish literature on the basis of the ambiguity,[34] heterogeneity,[35]

and 'mongrel' nature[36] of Scottish culture, as well as of the 'more inclusive and

democratic' nature that will be a feature of the 'emerging Scottish nation-state'.[37]

      The first chapter of this thesis has explored the ways in which Scottish

literary criticism failed to generate a disability studies perspective in responding

to this 'new politics' of the nation as a result of its imbrication with a disablist

discursivity that forecloses such an approach. Narratives of illness and disability

in Burnside's *Glister,* Kelman's *Mo Said She Was Quirky*, Smith's *Hotel World*,

Kennedy's *Paradise* and Fagan's *The Panopticon* provide a crucial lens through

which to appreciate the ways in which, after devolution, the pursuit of a pluralist

and postnationalist progressivism in Scottish culture  not only fails to contest

capitalist relations of normalcy, but is inseparable from the neoliberal identity

politics which grounds the upgrading of the concept of the nation through the

'new politics' rhetorics, to the exclusion of both class analysis and approaches

informed by disability studies. On the one hand, they do not participate in the

envisioning of such 'new politics' because their focus rests on how incapacitated

bodies are trapped in a position of internal exclusion within structures of

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[33] James McGonigal and Kirsten Stirling, 'Introduction' in *Ethically Speaking: Voice and Values in Modern Scottish Writing*, ed. by James McGonigal and Kirsten Stirling (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006), p.10

[34] Carla Sassi, *Why Scottish Literature Matters* (Edinburgh: The Saltire Society, 2005), p.9

[35] Cairns Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp.30-1

[36] Angus Calder, 'Introduction' in *Scotlands of the Mind* (Edinburgh: Luath, 2002), p.10

[37] Michael Gardiner, *Modern Scottish Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), p.7

production and social reproduction. This prevents the imagination of a good life under capitalist normalcy. On the other hand, their denunciation of how the neoliberal rolling back of workers' rights as well as welfare structures of support affects specifically the constituency excluded from neoliberal inclusivism does not speak to sentiments of welfare state nationalism because they neither portray Scottish society as more caring, nor do they project hopes for a more benign Scottish social security system. Instead, they engage with the determination of which lives are considered worthy of care and which lives are not under neoliberal capitalism, denouncing the economy of production and social reproduction that underpins such determination through the differential distribution of precarity and immaterial labour.

The compound preoccupation with disability, precarity and immaterial labour under contemporary capitalism in Burnside's, Fagan's, Kennedy's, Kelman's and Smith's novels situates disability as enmeshed in the specific form of capitalist relations post-operaist thinkers have been studying since the final decades of the twentieth-century. This is a form of production Hardt and Negri call biopolitical because it 'spills over beyond the bounds of the economy traditionally conceived'. Within it, what is produced 'is not just material goods but actual social relationships and forms of life' (Hardt and Negri 2004, p.94). This biopolitical form of production that extends beyond factory walls into society to appropriate life itself has allowed Hardt and Negri's theorisation of the multitude, 'a broad category that includes all those whose labor is directly or indirectly exploited by and subjected to capitalist norms of production and

reproduction' (Hardt and Negri 2001, p.52). The significance for disability politics and studies of Hardt and Negri's re-thinking of the subject of anti-capitalist struggle lies in the extent to which it encompasses disabled bodies that were excluded because nonproductive from previous conceptualisations of the social composition of working-class struggles. Mitchell and Snyder have underlined how the centrality assigned to nonproductive bodies by Hardt and Negri can benefits anti-capitalist resistance. They crucially point out that 'this definition of resistant subjects does not simply expand outward to include those who occupy "nonproductive bodies", but rather takes its lead from those whose capacities make them "unfit" for labor as the baseline of human value' (Mitchell and Snyder, p.211). Logics similar in spirit to Mitchell and Snyder's insight pervade the novels under consideration.

Consideration of immaterial labour too is crucial to the theorisation of disability's place in the multitude as well as in the contemporary biopolitical form of production and social reproduction. When the former is considered, at a time when capitalism 'has to deal with collective cognitive labour power, living labour, and no longer simply with muscle-power',[38] the figure of immaterial labor comes to occupy a 'central position in both the schema of capitalist production and the composition of the proletariat' (Hardt and Negri 2001, p.53). On the one hand, the labour of care that is represented in the novels I will consider corresponds to Hardt and Negri's third type of immaterial labor, affective labour - the one that 'involves the production and manipulation of affect and requires (virtual or actual)

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[38] Yann Moulier Boutang, *Cognitive Capitalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), p.37

human contact, labor in the bodily mode' (Hardt and Negri 2001, p.293). Thus, while for Silvia Federici a distinction obtains between 'reproductive' and 'affective' labour 'because in its dominant characterisation, the latter describes only a limited part of the work that the reproduction of human beings requires', [39] it is important to see the links between reproductive labour and the other forms of immaterial labour. These are key to grasping the friction between nonproductive bodies and capitalism. On the other hand, crip experiences of exploitation cannot but be located in the dimension of the 'immaterial'. In underscoring how communication, cooperation, and the production and reproduction of affects belong within the contemporary biopolitical mode of production, the concept of immaterial labour brings into focus the ways in which a plethora of relations that rely on the extraction of labour power are disrupted through the encounter with disability. This resonates with Mitchell and Snyder's observation that nonlaboring populations are 'not merely excluded from, but also resistant to', standardized labor demands of productivity particular to neoliberalism (Mitchell and Snyder, p.211).

As for social reproduction, the biopolitical character of contemporary production is also relevant to any theorisation of the place of disability within processes of social reproduction, on two counts. First, because under capitalism care for individuals is conditional on them contributing to its reproduction. This positions the nonlaboring populations that are included in capitalism only through their resistance to 'standardized labor demands of productivity particular to

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[39] Silvia Federici, 'The Reproduction of Labor Power in the Global Economy and the Unfinished Feminist Revolution' (2008) in *Revolution at Point Zero* (PM Press, 2012), p.101

neoliberalism' (Mitchell and Snyder, p.211) in a precarious situation. On the other

hand, the biopolitical character of contemporary production is relevant to

theorising how disability is located within processes of social reproduction

because nonproductive bodies occupy a key place within the multitude and the

communities of care that resist, through solidarity, the violence of neoliberal

capitalism. They do so precisely by cripping social reproduction through the

injection of an anti-productivist rationale into practices of care and self-

organisation. Approaching this as an instance of what Hardt and Negri call 'the

virtual', which indicates 'the set of powers to act (being, loving, transforming,

creating) that reside in the multitude', allows the nonproductive rationale that

defines disability from a capitalist viewpoint to appear as a 'productive excess'

that is 'is at once the result of a collective force of emancipation and the substance

of the new social virtuality of labor's productive and liberatory capacities' (Hardt

and Negri, 2001, p.357). This provides a second instance of how Hardt and

Negri's definition of resistant subjects lends itself to being read as actually taking

'its lead from those whose capacities make them "unfit" for labor as the baseline

of human value' (Mitchell and Snyder, 2015, p.211).

The novels I will consider exemplify the ways in which the lives of

nonproductive and disabled bodies offer a prism through which to grasp the

precarious as a feature of life under contemporary capitalism. Isabell Lorey

explores the concept of the precarious as consisting of three dimensions -

precariousness, precarity, and governmental precarization - to conceptualise how

insecurity has come to dominate life under capitalism.[40] Disability studies, and the representations of disability that will be the object of my analysis in this chapter, foreground the points of intersection between disability and the three dimensions of the precarious: a disability perspective grounds a focus on the extent to which precariousness is an ineluctable endangerment of bodies that commands solidarity and care; on how such precariousness is unequally distributed in society under conditions of widespread precarity; and on how resistance to this involves resistance to precarization as a mode of governing bodies that specifically targets the most vulnerable. Married to an autonomist perspective, it also generates an optic which illuminates the ways in which it is on the most non-productive members of society that the worst effects of the precarious converge.

**John Burnside's *Glister*: Disabling Systemic Precarity**

John Burnside's *Glister* is set in the post-industrial village of Innertown where the inhabitants, ex-employees at the disused chemical plant and their families, are physically affected by the damage that the plant, and its closure, have wrought on environment and society alike. Narrated from the perspective of the dead boy Leonard, it confronts us with the different aspects of the existence of a decaying community and sets these against the backdrop of the disappearance of several local boys. As Irvine Welsh has suggested, while Burnside's novel is 'a deliberation on post-industrialisation', it is also a reflection on 'the nature of storytelling and the darker

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[40] Isabell Lorey, *State of Insecurity: Government of the Precarious* (London & New York: Verso, 2015), pp.12-3

extremities of human psychological experience.[41] This combination is rooted in Burnside's aim 'to fight the impulse to write books that are essentially political… preachy or didactic' while retaining a determination 'to write something about the way we have damaged our environment and continue to do so in all kinds of inventive and subtle ways'.[42] As a result, *Glister* interweaves a realist narrative of social and environmental decline under post-industrial capitalism with non-realist, fantastical elements, Narratives of disability, as I will trace, are central to both narrative levels.

As far as the realist dimension of *Glister* is concerned, it frames narratives of disability within a denunciation of the systemic violence of capitalism. It portrays this as rooted both in Lorey's three dimensions of the precarious and in the immateriality of the power of money grasped by post-operaist Maurizio Lazzarato's reflections on finance as '*the politics* of capital'. Its specificity, for Lazzarato, lies in the way in which 'the capital-labor relation is not at the center of economic, social and political life'.[43] Similarly to the context of financialization and debtor-creditor relation described by Lazzarato, in *Glister* the life of the local community of ex-workers is dominated by a power with which no contact is possible: that of the owners of the plant, and that of local magnate Brian Smith, who manages the regeneration of the area. On the one hand, *Glister* dramatises the relationship between the demise of industrial labour and the rise of immaterial labour through its concern with the work of coping with bodily and environmental

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[41] Irvine Welsh, 'Poisoned minds', review of *Glister* in *The Guardian* (17 May 2008) https://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/may/17/fiction5
[42] John Burnside, Interview, on *Scottish Book Trust* (2008) http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/interview-john-burnside-on-glister
[43] Maurizio Lazzarato, *Governing by Debt* (South Pasadena: Semiotext(e), 2015), p.13

damage that the former has engendered. On the other hand, the poisoned environment surrounding the plant, and the precarious lives conducted in the shadow of its immaterial power of contamination, are constant reminders of the ways in which the immaterial power of money keeps the place from being decontaminated.

The effects of precarization, which indicates 'the complex interactions between an instrument of governing and the conditions of economic exploitation and modes of subjectivation' (Lorey, p.13), are foregrounded as what prevents local people from taking action to stop the degeneration of the area. The opening chapter, 'Homeland', introduces us to local policeman Morrison, who is defined by his failure to stop the disappearances of teenagers from the town, despite knowing the man responsible for their murder, local tycoon Brian Smith. He draws attention to a much wider pattern of failure of care as the local people 'know that nobody beyond their poisoned tract of industrial ruin and coastal scrub cares a whit about what happens to the Innertown's children. Even the families give up after a while, sinking into mute bewilderment, or some sad regime of apathy and British sherry' (*Glister*, p.8). This in turn relates to how the decay that is structurally kept in place is presented as interrelated with the psychological traits of the local population. We learn that 'mostly… the town goes about its business; though, these days, it would seem that its sole business is slow decay' (*Glister*, p.9). Powerfully, the town's self-delusion about the poisoning of the land is highlighted: 'everybody understands, by now, that the entire land under their

feet is irredeemably soured, poisoned by years of run-off and soak away from the plant' (*Glister*, p.9).

Precarity in *Glister* is a class issue. It manifests as a differential 'striation and distribution of precariousness in relations of inequality' (Lorey, p.12). On the one hand, locals 'believed, of course, because they *had* to believe' that the chemical plant was not dangerous because 'the Innertown's economy depended almost entirely upon the chemical industry… They had wanted to believe they were safe because there was nowhere else for them to go' (*Glister*, p.10). Concomitantly, 'there were people in the Outertown, up in the big houses, who had an interest in ensuring that things ticked over without too much fuss' (*Glister*, p.10). The structural network of privilege that is destroying the town is constantly denounced. We learn that 'nobody out in the wider world cared about the people in the Innertown, or the environment… but it was in all their interests to have somebody local – somebody like Brian Smith – make a good show of developing and regenerating the area' (*Glister*, p.39). Along similar lines, 'a fair amount of money did flow into Homeland Peninsula's accounts, not because the Consortium felt guilty or generous, but because the politicians needed to be seen to be doing something', but 'nobody checked to see if Homeland Peninsula could deliver a safer, cleaner Innertown' (*Glister*, p.40). The universe within which the Innertown is stuck is Brian Smith's, whose ideology and actions are responsible for all the unsolved problems of the Innertown: 'What Brian Smith looks for, what he can see where others see nothing, are the patterns that lead to money' (*Glister*, p.36).

The local environment of the 'Homeland' frames the novel as a poisoned and poisoning space, increasing the local dimension of precariousness as 'a condition inherent to both human and non-human being' that 'is always relational and therefore shared *with* other precarious lives' (Lorey, p.12). We learn that 'you could see evidence wherever you looked of the plant's effects on the land'. On the one hand are 'avenues of dead trees, black and skeletal along the old rail tracks and access roads; great piles of sulphurous rocks where pools of effluent had been left to evaporate in the sun'; on the other are 'mutant sea creatures washed up on the shore' and 'bizarre animals out in the remaining tracts of woodland, not sick, or dying, but nor right either, with their enlarged faces and swollen, twisted bodies' (*Glister*, p.11). Crucially, inseparable from the poisoned nature of the land, is that of its inhabitants: as teenaged protagonist Leonard says, 'People say we are what we are, the future is written in our blood – and you have to admit, there's no avoiding chemistry. If you lived out here, I don't think you'd argue with that' (*Glister*, p.70). We learn that 'the most convincing evidence that some evil was being perpetrated on the headland, however, was the fact that, for as long as the plant had existed, the people themselves had not been right'. Aptly, 'there were unexplained clusters of rare cancers. Children contracted terrible diseases, or they developed mysterious behavioural problems', as well as 'exotic or untreatable illnesses, a sudden and huge increase in depression' (*Glister*, p.12). The illnesses and disabilities in the Innertown are multiple and are portrayed as bringing together physical illness and psychological hopelessness in a way which confirms that 'none of the three dimensions of the precarious occurs individually'

(Lorey, p.15). *Glister* continually reminds us that 'The Innertown wasn't a healthy place to live; the trouble was that, for most people, there was nowhere else to go'; as a result, 'many also died of things that no doctor could have diagnosed – disappointment, anger, fear, loneliness' (*Glister*, p.31).

The non-realist dimension of *Glister* sharpens the representation of the inability the Innertown residents experience to acknowledge or fix the environmental damage caused by the plant and its detrimental effects on their own health and lives. What materialises the supernatural in *Glister* are the creatures who inhabit the poisoned space surrounding the plant. These cover a spectrum ranging from the disabled to the supernatural in ways that point to the link between the two in the novel and to how this link is key to its rendition of the ungraspable power of the violence of capitalism. On the one hand, the animals living in the headland are endowed with both disability and supernatural associations: as already mentioned, there are 'bizarre animals out in the remaining tracts of woodland, not sick, or dying, but nor right either, with their enlarged faces and swollen, twisted bodies' (*Glister*, p.11). The supernatural dimension within which these animals belong is the subject of the legend about the ghost of a girl believed to be roaming an area used by people as a dump. The link between environmental abuse and the supernatural is made explicit as we are told that the story 'might have something to do with Johnsfield ending up as an unofficial landfill, because it probably gives people permission to do whatever they like there and of course they've ruined it' (*Glister*, p.109).

The supernatural framing of *Glister* is constituted by the telling of the story by the dead boy Leonard and by the increasing presence of his killer, the Moth Man, a mystical visitor to the headland who possesses the capacity for both murder and regeneration. The overlapping of the two is enshrined in the Moth Man's targeting of those guilty of 'the sin of omission, the sin of averting our gaze and not seeing what was going on right in front of our eyes' (*Glister*, p.223), starting with Morrison, the local policeman. Even if Morrison has not killed anyone, he is guilty of 'the most extreme form of an offence the whole town has been mired in for decades' (*Glister*, p.249). Crucially, 'it is a redemption, or the beginning of redemption' that Morrison's murder involves and the Glister room is turned by the Moth Man into 'a sacred place where the guilty policeman can be set aside and so, eventually absolved from the sin of the world' (*Glister*, p.250). Murder and regeneration also come together in the killing of Leonard.  Leonard knows that the Moth Man's plan is to regenerate the peninsula through 'some kind of purification process' and that central to this is 'a portal of some kind, a gateway that's already partly built into the plant's inner workings' (*Glister*, p.218). Leonard is also aware that his own fate is tied to the portal and the Moth Man 'is thinking about the Glister, and how he will show [him] the way through. Not to get [him] *out* of here, but to get [him] further in. All the way in' (*Glister*, p.251). The difficulty to conceptualise the coexistence of murder and regeneration is placed beyond resolution by the ending of *Glister*. While for Welsh Burnside has opted 'to keep the tale shimmering under that fabulously ambiguous light that dances across each page' (Welsh 2008), Burnside

The Moth Man, a mysterious individual whose father helped build the plant and is set on remedying the injustices involved with the poisoning of the land, represents and acts out a multilevel principle of regeneration. On the one hand, he leads Leonard to envisage regeneration as conditional upon the destruction of the inequality which grounds precarity; Leonard reflects 'everybody thought the plant was a terrible thing, that they should finally demolish what was left of it' but 'it was the town they should demolish, the Innertown and the Outertown, the terraces and the villas, the poor and the rich, everything' and 'move the people further along the coast and teach them to fish, give them little plots of land to look after' (*Glister*, p.213). On the other hand, the Moth Man's practice of regeneration is constituted by punishment of those failing to act to stop the decay that envelops the Innertown, starting with Morrison. Leonard explains:

> 'The Moth Man knows our local bobby hasn't killed anyone, but he also knows that in its own, very particular Innertown way, the policeman's offence is too grievous to go unpunished, the most extreme form of an offence the whole town has been mired in for decades: the sin of omission, the sin of averting our gaze and not seeing what was going on right in front of our eyes' (*Glister, p.*254)

**Ali Smith's *Hotel World* and James Kelman's *Mo Said She Was Quirky*: The Immaterial Labour of Benefit Claiming and Unpaid Care-Work**

This section will consider how Ali Smith's *Hotel World* and Kelman's *Mo Said She Was Quirky* dramatise the immaterial labour involved in benefit claiming and unpaid care-work under conditions of precarity. Kelman's *Mo* is related through the perspective of Helen, a single mother who works night shifts in a London casino and is overwhelmed by the multiple tasks of care she needs to fulfil towards her family, by her anxiety over the care she cannot provide for her missing brother Brian, and by the night shifts she needs to work. Ali Smith's *Hotel World* draws together the stories of five characters who have encountered the Global Hotel: amongst these is Lise, formerly a receptionist, now confined to bed by an undiagnosed illness as we follow her in her attempt to fill in a benefit form. *Mo* and *Hotel World* bring together, via narratives of disability, a dramatisation of the moment when industrial labour loses its hegemony in favour of immaterial labour with a denunciation of the immaterial labour and the precarious existence that become the lot of care-workers and benefit claimants under welfare capitalism.

More particularly, in Kelman's novel reflections on disabled conditions and disabling processes are a feature of narratives that denounce the violence that capitalism inflicts on those individuals who provide immaterial labour through the precarity and inhumane working hours their jobs involve. As Hardt and Negri note, in the biopolitical mode of production of contemporary capitalism 'life is made to work for production and production is made to work for life. It is a great hive in which the queen bee continuously oversees production and reproduction'

(Hardt and Negri 2001, p.32). As a result, 'life is no longer produced in the cycles of reproduction that are subordinated to the working day; on the contrary, life is what infuses and dominates all production' (Hardt and Negri 2001, p.365). These conditions are powerfully depicted in *Mo Said She Was Quirky*, in which most of the narrative is taken up by Helen's thoughts, filtered through a debilitating fatigue. This is exemplified by how, after Helen has come back from her night shift at the casino, in bed next to her partner Mo, she thinks 'less than twelve hours from now and she would be at the table so she needed to sleep, she did need it. She would though. She was tired. Oh so tired, so so tired, she was' (*Mo*, p.115). On another occasion, she repeats to herself that 'weary and tired, that was her. Tiredness. Where did it come from? From living. Exhaustion. She was too weary to smile, she had been working all night dealing cards, dealing cards and taking money, putting up with it all, everything' (*Mo*, p.24).

The effects of exploitative work patterns on Helen's health are highlighted. We learn that Helen is 'used to nightshift but … Shift workers need to rest. Doctors spoke about it. They didn't get enough sleep. Life becomes unbalanced, the social side of it' (*Mo*, p.63), and later we are told that 'She was so very tired, beyond tired. Mo worried about her health' (*Mo*, p.99).  Kelman's *You Have To Be Careful in the Land of the Free*,[44] which tells the story of Glasgwegian exile Jeremiah Brown as he prepares to return home after twelve years in America, provides a similar picture of the harmful impact of the contemporary biopolitical mode of production on Jeremiah's quality of life and

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[44] James Kelman, *You Have to Be Careful in the Land of the Free* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2004)

health. Jeremiah explains 'my energy wasnay that great. And my concentration was desperate. I am talking about very very desperate' (*Free*, p.48). He alternates reflections on how the debilitating work patterns of bar work impact his writing, such as 'That bar I worked in, sometimes it was so fucking boring, but it didnay work in favour of the writing… my brains were like fucking minced beef' (*Free*, p.101), with specific comments on working conditions, for example 'I was a fucking zombie at the end of these shifts, I didnay have two thoughts to run the gether, exhausted, incapable of gaun to my ayn place' (*Free*, p.102).

In the world of work, not only is the disabling impact of capitalism represented in relation to the disabling impact it has on the labour force that provides immaterial services; it is also presented as residing within the very unsustainable nature of the demands capitalism makes of bodies so incapacitated by the system that the line between disabled and able-bodied individuals becomes blurred. Indeed, all the narratives under consideration can be approached as uttered through what Rod Michalko calls 'the voice of disability', which presents itself as a departure from the situation where 'unlike the other (natural body)… the disabled body must actively position itself into the "frame" by demonstrating its commitment to fitting into the "world of the normal"'.[45] It is Helen's voice of disability that declares her incapacity to fulfil the requirements of capitalism, from a perspective internal to that proper to the pool of the incapacitated bodies of the multitude that are 'not merely excluded from, but also resistant to, standardized labor demands of productivity particular to neoliberalism'(Mitchell and Snyder,

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[45] Rod Michalko, *The Difference Disability Makes* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), p.69

p.211). In the morning, Helen already thinks 'oh why could she not sleep if she could only sleep! She couldn't. It didn't matter nights off and days off the only time she could sleep was when she wasn't supposed to' (*Mo*, p.57).  A similar stance is adopted by Jeremiah in *You Have to Be Careful in the Land of the Free*, who notes, 'Even that stupit fucking bar job, when I phoned in sick it was like ye werenay supposed to get sick, people didnay get sick, the manager never got sick, she always went to her work… I couldnay handle it man, these mental jobs' (*Free*, p.140).

Prompted by her difficulties with sleep, Helen is forced to confront her fear of losing her job because of unsatisfactory performance, in ways that speak to 'a sense of overwhelming precariousness, in work , in matters of money, and in culture generally; a feeling of being kept in suspense which appears like a law of nature, rather than something human-made'.[46] Significantly, Helen's awareness of the unsustainability of her working life keys into widespread 'contradictory but taken-for granted feelings – a fear of imminent destruction and at the same time a wish for this corrupted and imprisoning system to collapse' (Southwood, p.3). This is captured in her reflection 'if she did fall asleep at the tables. But it would just be so funny if she did, and the customer was asking, Card please! And the dealer was snoring, oh my God that would just be so funny, the customer complaining to the Inspector: oh I asked the dealer for a card and she was fast asleep' (*Mo*, p.59), and in her further considerations 'a fit of the yawns, all she did was yawn, even in work. That was nightshift. You would think she was used to it

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[46] Ivor Southwood, *Non-Stop Inertia* (Winchester and Washington: Zero Books, 2011), p.3

by now, but still the difficulty. You weren't supposed to yawn at the tables. That was frowned upon. In one casino the Inspector gave wee warnings about it' (*Mo*, p.63). The bottom line of Helen's thinking is enshrined in her realisation that 'you worked on automatic pilot as a dealer but only to a point and if your mind was someplace else like family problems. Everybody made mistakes. But not too many else you would be out on the street, and you couldn't blame them like for mistakes, mistakes are money' (*Mo*, p.115).

Impossible demands are also what the benefit system imposes on Lise. Its pressure exemplifies the ways in which, as Lorey suggests, precarization is 'an instrument of governing and, at the same time, a basis for capitalist accumulation that serves social regulation and control' (Lorey, p.1). Despite the guideline set by a welfare state system imbricated within capitalist relations - '*Do not delay filling in and sending back this questionnaire or you could lose money*' (*Hotel*, p.87) - Lise inevitably persists as 'a body incapable of working within the narrow standardization efforts of capitalism' (Mitchell and Snyder, 2015, p.221). Bed-ridden and incapacitated by a profound fatigue, she is unable to provide the immaterial labour demanded of her, as encapsulated by how we witness her 'holding the form in her hand. It could have been in her hand for hours… she could have been asleep for days and awake for days, holding it' (*Hotel*, p.87).

Indeed, *Hotel World* denounces the violence capitalism inflicts on benefit claimants as the less discussed counterpart of that inflicted on precarious workers through the representation of Lise's existence as a bed-ridden benefit claimant. The ways in which such violence is able to extend into Lise's life by demanding

of her immaterial, communication-based labour points to how the 'immaterial nexuses of the production of language, communication, and the symbolic' (Hardt and Negri 2001, p.32) proper to the biopolitical order of production also encompass the sphere of social reproduction. This is particularly the case when the social security system is concerned, as it is based on assessment and form-filling practices that index the link between the characteristic features of immaterial labour and the labour extracted from benefit claimants. We learn that 'Lise was lying in bed. A form had to be filled in. it was important' (*Hotel*, p.94). That this imperative issues from the neoliberal regime of governance of nonproductive bodies, characterised by demands impossible to satisfy, is suggested by Smith's account of how 'Lise was lying in bed. Was she lying? Was she faking, lying, in bed? The form made her ask herself. It made her nervous. You probably aren't ill. Prove to us how ill you really are, it said' (*Hotel*, p.94). Lise inevitably feels oppressed by multiple figures of care, as her thoughts encapsulate: '*write down the things you can remember for* me, the poet-mother was saying. *Write down your symptoms*, the lady doctor was saying. *Fill me in*, the government form in her hand demanded' (*Hotel*, p.94).

This worsens the immaterial labour Lise already performs as a disabled person, in place of waged work. The narrator renders the difference between the form of work Lise engages in when bed-ridden as ex-hotel worker, and that which characterised the life she lived through a healthy body before the onset of a debilitating fatigue. We are confronted with two images; in one Lise is presented as she 'walks across the room with brisk purpose'; in the second one the narrator

foresees how Lise will be 'incapable of walking across a room with brisk purpose. She will be almost incapable of walking across a room' (*Hotel*, p.107). We also encounter Lise as placed in a temporal dimension apart from the one she experienced at work before falling ill. What she is not able to remember, the narrator tells us, is a past in which 'Lise, behind Reception, is at work. The clock on the computer reads 6.51 p.m., but at the very moment she glances at it the black 1 changes to 2. 6:52 p.m. She is pleased to have seen it happen. It feels meant' (*Hotel*, p.119). The contrast engenders 'a *memento vivere*, reminding us of the good fortune of a "normal life"' (Michalko, p.12). Lise's desire is thus suggested as being for rehabilitation as 'a productive process of recovery leading to a return to approximations of normative embodiment (and, ultimately, employability)' (Mitchell and Snyder, p.181). Somewhat differently from Lise, in Kennedy's *Paradise* Hannah conceptualises her being disabled as involving labour, connecting her identity to her alternative employment in ways that speak to Michalko's idea that 'Coming out as disabled implies the necessity of reconnecting disability and identity' (Michalko, p.70). She says 'being me is a job – is labour so time-consuming and expensive that I have to have a second job just to support it. So that I can drink, I have to *get* drink and that isn't something people give away… That's a full-time occupation: that's like being a miner, or a nurse. It involves constant work' (*Paradise*, p.84).

In *You Have To Be Careful in the Land of the Free*, the labour involved in surviving under capitalism too confirms Michalko's contention that 'disability is rarely represented as a life worth living in our society' (Michalko, p.68). The

ways in which disabled people figure prominently amongst those involved in the

survive or perish insurance betting provide a striking indictment of the

disposability of disabled lives under capitalism. We learn that a significant

number of individuals flying on cheap flights 'were individuals in straitened

circumstances. It included bankrupts who saw the scheme as a virtuous end to the

whole goddam mess, i.e. life' (*Free*, p.125), and

> 'a significant proportion of those who 'speculated on the "Persian
>
> bet" were poverty-stricken bodies on an income so far below what official
>
> government experts reckoned it took to stay alive that the term "income"
>
> was dropped. These included young folks and asylum-seekers, immigrants,
>
> refugees; war vets, down-and-outs, alcoholics, addicts; unwantit orphans
>
> and homeless people; people with mental and psychological disorders;
>
> people with long histories of abuse, disabilities and deficiencies' (*Free*,
>
> p.127).

The constituency of those involved in the survive-or-perish betting business,

namely in taking out life insurance hoping to cash in by dying in a plane crash,

pivotally forms 'like a majority of the population; the millions of daily would-be

suicides, those who spend three-fifths of their waking hours dreaming of how to

accomplish death in as unobtrusive, unselfish and un irresponsible a manner as

possible' (*Free*, p.127).

As for social reproduction, immaterial labour also features as care-work in *Hotel World* and *Mo Said She Was Quirky*. The need to approach dependency work as a form of labour through a materialist critique that takes the capitalist relations within which it is produced into consideration underpins Eva Feder Kittay's 'dependency critique'. This is rooted in the belief that 'a conception of society viewed as an association of equals masks inequitable dependencies', and 'those who care for dependents, who must put their own interests aside to care for one who is entirely vulnerable to their actions, enter the competition for social goods with a handicap'.[47] *Hotel World* foregrounds how this is the case for Deirdre, Lise's mother. We learn that 'at the height of her fame Deirdre had appeared weekly on a consumer television programme making up verses about news and current affairs', but now she has become 'Deirdre, Queen of Sorrows', Lise's full-time carer (*Hotel*, p.91). We learn that 'Deirdre would come. She was coming. Even in the timeless zone of the average day of an unwell person invisible to the rest of the fast-moving world there was Deirdre at four o'clock' (*Hotel*, p.94). The pain care-work often involves too is depicted as we learn that that 'everything in Lise's mother's body hurt, because it hurt just to be near her daughter' as 'she watched the nothing happening in the room' (*Hotel*, p.121).

*Mo Said She Was Quirky* even more extensively portrays the labour of care that in many ways defines Helen's life. The emotional effort which care as a form of immaterial labour demands of Helen is foregrounded both in relation to her attempts to track Brian, and in relation to her looking after her family. It

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[47] Eva Feder Kittay, *Love's Labor: Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), p.xi

powerfully speaks to Kittay's observation that dependency workers 'become vulnerable to economic deprivation, lack of sleep', while subjecting 'themselves to work conditions which are among the most emotionally and morally demanding' (Kittay, p.183). Kelman opens his novel by presenting the encounter between Helen and two homeless men, one of which resembles Brian. When Helen reaches home, we learn 'she wouldn't sleep, not now, thinking about everything, she wouldn't be able to, she knew she wouldn't, just worrying about things all the time over and over, worry worryworry' (*Mo*, p.10). When she sees her boyfriend Mo taking Sophie to school from the window, we witness how Helen 'waved until they were out of sight, then was crying. She couldn't stop', thinking 'it was so beautiful seeing them, and if anything happened… Buses and lorries and all traffic, it was normal, everything, except her and her worries and all worrying, constant, just so silly' (*Mo*, p.99). The emotional effort of worrying is coupled with the need for Helen to balance the work of social reproduction with her job. After Mo and Sophie return home, we learn that 'Helen returned to the ironing, rearranged the clothing. Mo followed her, wanting to talk but she wasn't wanting to listen, not just now, not when she was trying to work in this confined space' (*Mo*, p.151). In bed next to Mo, at the thought of having to go to work in less than twelve hours, Helen reflects that 'she knew what a living death was. She had been married to one. Her brains full to capacity; family familyfamily, she was sick of it.' (*Mo*, p.115).

Helen's worrying points to how, in *Mo*, disability recurs as a prism through which the disabling violence of the system appears in intensified form.

Helen's reflections start from her worrying about her brother Brian, whom she fears is missing because mentally ill. However, the way in which she locates disability as a pervasive condition and possibility in spaces of marginalisation means that in *Mo* 'disability is not an exclusively individual issue; it is a collective one' (Michalko, p.6). Commenting on how in the Glasgow Barrows 'a few people were poor. Really really poor. Immigrants and asylum-seekers, bags of old clothes and whatever', Helen continues to reflect 'you might be healthy at first but the more you were on the street the worse it would get. The worse you would get. And if you were mentally ill. It was the worst nightmare. Poor Brian' (*Mo*, p.189).

For Lorey, however, precarization demands a novel form of organising that does not aim to go back to the period of time preceding precarization: 'Since the formation of capitalist relations of production, there have been many for whom freedom of labour-power has not been a guarantee against existential vulnerabilities. Wage labour brought neither security nor independence' (Lorey, p.5). Indeed, in the novels under consideration it is care that offsets the harshness of the precarious and welfare institutions under neoliberalism. On the one hand, it is through Deirdre's help that Lise is able to engage with her claimant form at all. Significantly, we realise that Deirdre's contribution transforms such engagement into a subversive practice. Lise's mother tries to tell her daughter's story through a poem: 'Deirdre would sit on the end of the bed with her pen held erect and wagging. Tell me a few little things, she would say most days. Are you up to it? Darling? Up to it today? It'll help you concentrate. Concentrate for Deirdre. Lise. Lise? Tell me anything' (*Hotel*, p.93) and 'three days later she announced her new

epic poem, to be called "Hotel World"' (*Hotel*, p.93). This can be read as a powerful manifestation of the liberatory potential that resides in what the post-operaists call 'general intellect'; namely, 'the skills, knowledge, social relations and general know-how of the working class',[48] on which the capitalist system of production and social reproduction represented in *Hotel World* relies. Similarly hinting at the emancipatory rationale that care affords, in *Mo Said She Was Quirky* Helen conceptualises her own labour of care in ways that resonate with 'a view of society as consisting of nested dependencies' (Kittay, p.188). After being upset by the encounter with the homeless man, Helen reflects 'Mo was like normality. If only she could close her eyes and count to ten, then open them again and there she was beside him' (*Mo*, p.7). Thinking of how Mo 'made a joke about being the sheriff in a cowboy movie, she reflects 'but it was true, he was there to sort out the problems' (*Mo*, p.11).

**Jenni Fagan's *The Panopticon* and A.L. Kennedy's *Paradise*: Precarious Lives and Communities of Care**

This section will explore the ways in which Jenni Fagan's *The Panopticon* and A.L. Kennedy's *Paradise* represent the creation of communities of care as the only way to cope with conditions of precarity. *Paradise* tells the story of Hannah, an alcoholic, as she struggles with alcoholism and the pursuit of recovery together with the man she loves, Robert, also an alcoholic. *The Panopticon* recounts how

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[48] Queequeg, *The Last Great Enclosure: The Crisis of the General Intellect* (2014), p.2

the vulnerable residents of the Panopticon, a care home, are similarly brought together by their common exclusion from society, but also by mutual care. Both stories combine narratives of disability with a denunciation of the immaterial labour generated by conditions of precarity as well as the pressures of institutional or family (failures of) care with which individuals who are deemed to have no chances to become productive members of society are confronted.

For Lorey, precarity 'involves social positionings of insecurity, yet it implies neither modes of subjectivation nor the power of agency of those positioned' (Lorey, p.12). In *Paradise*, Hannah similarly registers her exclusion from the workforce as related to the inflexibility of neoliberal work patterns in ways that speak to Robert McRuer's insight that under neoliberalism individuals are expected to be 'flexible and innovative' in ways that cannot be fulfilled by disabled bodies.[49] Hannah tells us 'modern business has no flexibility. *We're* supposed to be flexible, the people who do the working, but the businesses, they're allowed to be carved in stone. Big, stupid, unsympathetic stone… They'll just sack the first person they see, no matter what' (*Paradise*, p.123). Then, through a disability perspective that confirms Michalko's insight that 'silencing the voice of disability and keeping its standpoint invisible are fundamentally necessary for denying and ignoring the social fact that normalcy is socially structured and produced with an implicit set of assumptions' (Michalko, p.69), Hannah reflects on the necessity for her to find a job, and the impossibility of her

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[49] Robert McRuer, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York and London: New York University press, 2006), p.17

doing so. She says:

> 'getting a job – eventually, it's unavoidable. You have neglected to have
>
> savings, your position regarding state benefits is obscure…Not that you
>
> really believe you might ever get lucky and *find* a job – and as soon as you
>
> even consider this, your face changes, you start looking unemployed:
>
> unemployable: long-term' (*Paradise*, p.233)

Precarity as 'the striation and distribution of precariousness in relations of
inequality', and a 'hierarchization of being' which accompanies 'processes of
*othering*' (Lorey, p.12), also defines the positioning of disabled characters in
family life. In the novels under consideration structural obstacles to the social
reproduction of nonproductive individuals, and the principles by which these are
underpinned, are a feature of institutional care but extend into the sphere of
informal care within the family. Thematisation of the ways in which not all
individuals are deemed equally worthy of reproduction recurs in *Paradise*.
Hannah's disability as an addict acquires the aesthetic value disability is endowed
with on the basis of its representing, for makers of art, 'a critical resource for
thinking about what a human being is'.[50] Hannah's brother is assigned the role of
expressing the rationale for refusing Hannah the care she needs: that she belongs
within those populations that should not be reproduced because not fully human.
He says 'C57 mice. They're bred to be addicted, to take part in experiments. Give

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[50] Tobin Siebers, *Disability Aesthetics* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2010), p.3

them a choice of alcohol or water and they'll always pick the drink. They can't help it. The way they need alcohol buries every other instinct. They love to kill themselves'. When Hannah responds 'Is that supposed to be me? You think 'm a wino? You think I'm an *animal*?', Simon confirms 'I think you act like an animal, yes' (*Paradise*, p.122). Hannah herself interprets her family's behavior as grounded in the assumption that she does not fully belong within the human species due to her addiction. She says 'they always do this: your mother, your father, your brother, your worried partner… They will talk about you in the third person while you are there, as if you were an idiot, or a dog', or 'they will take away your clothes and your belongings, as if you were a criminal, and they will lock you in, as if you were a werewolf, a monster, they will lock you in' (*Paradise*, p.143). Similarly, the protagonist of Fagan's novel, 15-year-old Anais, resident in a care home, introduces us to her existence as an 'experiment' under constant surveillance. *The Panopticon* is effectively prefaced by her reflection '*I'm an experiment. I always have been. It's a given, a liberty, a fact. They watch me. Not just in school or social-work reviews, court or police cells – they watch me everywhere*' (*Panopticon*, p.1).

How the apparatus of surveillance reinforces the disabling power of the system is powerfully rendered as Fagan summons a disability narrative to highlight the arbitrariness with which individuals can be subjected to violence. This confirms Lorey's idea of precarity as involving 'social positionings of insecurity' but implying 'neither modes of subjectivation nor the power of agency of those positioned' (Lorey, p.12). In particular, in a context of capitalist relations

programmed to 'produce needs, social relations, bodies, and minds – which is to say, they produce producers' (Hardt and Negri, 2001, p.32), differential value is granted to the lives of those who can be transformed into producers and those who cannot. The residents of the Panopticon fit the second group and, in line with this, Anais finds herself at the mercy of the police when under investigation for the assault on a police woman we are not sure she has committed. Anais tells us 'the cell door has a small straight line in its middle, a wee hatch of an iron mouth set in a grim grin. That mouth can open any minute. Then an eye will stare through it' and conveys the pressure this exerts as she feels 'tears mix with sweat'. The disablement Anais experiences leads her to worry about its effect on her mental health: 'in the concrete, across the floor, and the ceiling – wee faces materialise…. I cannae breathe. What if this is it and I've gone psycho, just like my bio-mum? Clinical psychosis.Schizoidvisions.Permanent insanity or suicide? What do you do? Stay permanently crazy or just fucking jump?' (*Panopticon*, p.108), she says. The power of the system to disable its nonproductive subjects is also foregrounded when Anais encounters Jameson, an inmate at a care home who had met her mother. To Anais' remark 'you dinnae seem mental', he replies by denouncing the series of abuses he has been subjected to, recounting 'I was in the army before this, Anais. I went to boarding school from the age of four. Then straight into the army. Both are quite extreme institutions in their own right. They came for me early' (*Panopticon*, p.146).

The denunciation of the violence of the system in *The Panopticon* is achieved through an unreliable narration focalised through Anais's perspective

which troubles the realist attributes of the novel. On the one hand, Anais'
unreliability derives from gaps in her story. For example, we do not know whether
she really assaulted PC Craig, putting her into a coma, or if this is a fabricated
charge. Early on a social worker warns Anais 'PC Dawn Craig's condition is not
improving… if she doesn't improve, Anais, and they find any evidence, you will
be detained in a secure unit until you're eighteen' (*Panopticon*, p.105). While at
this point Anais thinks 'I'm not spending my life inside, for something I *didnae*
fucking do' (*Panopticon*, p.106), later on she will reflect 'I dinnae think I did
anyway… I was so fucking wasted that day, I could have massacred the mob and
no remembered. But here – you know, right hin here – I just ken I didnae'
(*Panopticon*, p.152). On the other hand, Anais' unreliability is tied up with her
disturbed perception of reality. This perception is defined by the terror Anais
experiences of the violent system of control in which she lives and of 'the
experiment' which personifies it.  Anais constantly feels as if she is being
watched. This creates explosive tensions in her mind when she is in the care
home, where under the sinister watchtower she keeps 'imagining men in suits
sitting behind that glass watching […] and none of them have noses' (*Panopticon*,
p.97), and when she is in prison. Here 'the cell door has a small straight line in its
middle, a wee hatch of an iron mouth set in a grim grin. That mouth can open any
minute. Then an eye will stare through it. Tears mix with sweat' (*Panopticon*,
p.108).

The impossibility for disabled people to belong within society is spatially
rendered by the fact that the clinic in Canada where both Hannah and her partner

Robert repeatedly travel to is located outside the world of normalcy, where health or its certain recovery provide the parameters for inclusion. Mitchell and Snyder suggest that 'those made expendable by late capitalism … serve as an active recognition that normalisation functions as little more than a façade – a false front disguising humanity's defining heterogeneity' (Mitchell and Snyder, p.222). Hannah's reflections on the clinic as a space set apart from the 'normal' world draw attention to the efforts by society to build facades beyond which to push 'expendable' populations. The extent to which behind these walls artificial facades are in turn constructed beyond which to relegate residents' incurable illnesses is cleverly implied by Hannah's consideration 'we delight in the safety any prison will provide: the absence of choices or disorder and our new selves clarified, fixed by confinement. We are already verifiably different form our bad old selves, although perhaps not powerfully altered, not yet' (*Paradise*, p.181). A similar perception of society's need to protect itself from, and segregate, nonproductive bodies is expressed by Anais in *The Panopticon* as she reflects 'I bet there's petitions to close this place down already; there'll be people from the village writing letters tae their MPs. Mr Masters is right. He told us all about it in history – communities dinnae like no-ones' (*Panopticon*, p.6).

The extent to which these dehumanising attitudes originate as a response to disability as impervious to cure is foregrounded by Hannah in ways that speak to Mitchell and Snyder's contention that disability is included within the global capitalist order only insofar as it can be 'transformed into a target of neoliberal intervention strategies' (Mitchell and Snyder, 2015, p.205). Hannah declares 'I

have no child and no hobbies and no plans in any direction, I can't even sing any

more. But I can always rely on my soul, my record of sin. It's my life's work'

(*Paradise*, p.107). This signifies a recipe for marginalisation in a world where

health is all that matters, as suggested by how Hannah's brother and her wife, who

are going to have a baby, say they are not interested in knowing the baby's gender

'as long as it's healthy, as long as nothing goes amiss, that's what matters most'

(*Paradise*, p.104).

Indeed, if *The Panopticon* and *Paradise* are concerned with institutions

responsible for taking care of vulnerable members of society, what both texts

dramatise is the institutionalised denial of care to individuals deemed to stand no

chance of rehabilitation into productive workers, ready for exploitation within the

capitalist system. Rehabilitation indicates 'a productive process of recovery

leading to a return to approximations of normative embodiment (and, ultimately,

employability)' but this cannot be separated from what Mitchell and Snyder call

'cultural rehabilitation', namely 'normalisation practices at work within the

neoliberal era through which nonnormative (i.e., nonproductive) bodies become

culturally docile' (Mitchell and Snyder, 2015, p.205). In *The Panopticon*, denial

of care is denounced from Anais' perspective, internal to a group deemed to be

beyond hope of rehabilitation. This is encapsulated in her reflection 'we're just in

training for the proper jail. Nobody talks about it, but it's a statistical fact. That or

on the game. Most of us anyway – but not everybody. Some go to the nuthouse.

Some just disappear' (*Panopticon*, p.8). This underpins the specific treatment the

residents of the Panopticon receive. In *Mo Said She Was Quirky*, Helen is

confronted with a similar scenario of institutionalised and normalised denial of care to the marginalised bodies that she encounters at the station, and imagines having no home or safe place to return to at night. Seeing 'people out for the night and going home, and here and there, others', Helen asks herself 'where they were all going' without support, 'all their days, and working so hard just to survive and some not able to because not everybody is able, they can't all manage. People can't, they can't' (*Mo*, p.192).

Crucially, not only is care not forthcoming from the institutions tasked with its provision, but such provision is prevented by the structure of a system that is programmed not to reproduce nonproductive populations, in ways that contradict the commonsense notion that 'the task of maintaining the nonworking populations falls on the welfare state, which utilizes its administrative machinery to supervise the transference of the social product from the productive population to those who are deemed nonproductive to the economy'.[51] This is powerfully conveyed by Anais' reaction to the title of an article, 'Nobody Could Prevent Child's Murder'. She denounces the assumptions underpinning such a line by noting 'how can someone say – on the front of a fucking newspaper – that there was nothing they could do to stop it?', and by calling out the complicity of the system with the crime reported through the newspaper's take. Anais asks 'what kind of message is that to send out to baby-murderers? What kind of apology, or acknowledgment of responsibility, is that? It's not an apology. It's not an explanation. It's a fucking insult, that's what it is' (*Panopticon*, p.185).

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[51] Nirmala Erevelles, *Disability and Difference in Global Contexts: Enabling a Transformative Body Politic* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.182

Significantly, she locates these dynamics within wider structures of inequality in concluding 'it'd be different if it was some foreign country and they were being ethnically cleansed, or were war victims. But it's no different here, at home, if you've no money… They just let it happen… All the fucking time' (*Panopticon*, p.185). In connecting the story in the newspaper to structures of inequality and the failure of institutions to care for vulnerable members of society, Anais effectively exposes how, within a biopolitical mode of production and social reproduction, in 'the production of social life itself', and in its prevention, 'the economic, the political, and the cultural increasingly overlap and invest one another' (Hardt and Negri 2001, p.xiii).

In a similar spirit, the governmental function fulfilled by the vocabulary used by institutions of care to conceptualise illness and cure is called out in *Paradise*. Hannah reports the definition that the World Health Organisation provides for alcoholics:

'those excessive drinkers whose dependence on alcohol has attained such a degree that they show a noticeable mental disturbance or an interference with their mental and bodily health, their interpersonal relations and their smooth social and economic functioning; or who show the prodromal signs of such developments. They therefore require treatment' (*Paradise*, p.168)

What Hannah contests is precisely the final part of the definition, noting that it 'does sound like a threat. "They therefore require treatment" – There's a lack of detachment and subtlety in that – it's interfering. Plus, it appears to be plastered on the back of every door we've got here' (*Paradise*, p.168). The potential for anti-capitalist resistance enshrined in Hannah's reaction is suggested by Mitchell and Snyder's contention that, under a neoliberal regime of rehabilitation, 'forms of therapy are increasingly becoming the market solution to ever-expanding ideas of debility, and to the degree that one resists therapy one also further resists greasing the neoliberal market skids' (Mitchell and Snyder, p.221).

Importantly, the weakness *Paradise* registers in Hannah's resistance to imperatives of rehabilitation lies in her awareness that the care family members provide for her is actually itself immaterial labour - what Kittay calls dependency work, 'the work of caring for those who are inevitably dependent' (Kittay, p.183). Speaking of her parents, Hannah acknowledges 'I make them upset. Just by being here and as I am, I do them harm'. She adds that, despite this, whenever she needs help, 'you don't even have to ask, you just stand there and the people who loved you, love you again. They surrender and let you in' (*Paradise*, p.271). With this in mind, the gaze of autonomy on migration that looks at migratory movements 'in terms that prioritize the subjective practices, the desires, the expectations, and the behaviours of migrants themselves',[52] shows how the transatlantic movements of both Hannah and Robert  in *Paradise* and Jeremiah in *You Have To Be Careful in*

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[52] Sandro Mezzadra, 'The Gaze of Autonomy: Capitalism, Migration and Social Struggles' in *The Contested Politics of Mobility: Borderzones and Irregularity*, ed. by Vicki Squire *(*London and New York: Routledge, 2011), p.121

*The Land of The Free* can be read as attempts by incapacitated bodies to relieve their families of the burden of dependency work. Hannah explains her disappearance to Robert by saying 'They just sent me awa, Robert, packed me off – I couldn't stop them. I was ill' (*Paradise*, p.209), within a framework where Robert himself had gone off to Canada without warning in search of a cure (*Paradise*, p.210). The 'exhaustingly healthy' regime (*Paradise*, p.168) that governs patients' lives at the Clear Spring Clinic on their forced journey to the semblance of recovery has a counterpart in the disciplinary one of the Panopticon.

Besides the incommunicability between paths of rehabilitation and the lived experience of recipients of care, what *The Panopticon* and *Paradise* engage with is also the total disconnect between the vocabulary used by institutions to address their residents, and the vocabulary used by residents themselves. In Fagan's novel, when Anais' social worker explains to her that she might be sent to the secure unit area if necessary, for the benefit of the 'healthy' needs of other residents, Anais cleverly responds 'is it healthy getting locked up twenty-four hours a day, like?' (*Panopticon*, p.17). This exchange has a counterpart in the Anais' exposure of the governmental function of definition as programmed to give the care institution a semblance of commitment to the wellbeing of its residents through the use of politically correct vocabulary. When Anais calls Jameson 'drooling old fuck' (*Panopticon*, p.126) and 'the longest crazy they've got' (*Panopticon*, p.241), her two social workers point out that '*drooling olffuck* is now known as mentally ill, or aged and infirm, or special needs' (*Panopticon*, p.126), and that she should be more considerate of people 'fragile to the pressures

of life' that 'can make them ill' (*Panopticon*, p.241). The emptiness of such

concerns is apparent when they are set against the ways in which the Panopticon

is represented as a prime example of how 'the welfare state has directed its entire

energies to monitoring the activities of its nonworking population, demonstrating

its investment in placing limits on the life choices of these populations'

(Erevelles, p.185).

For Lorey, resistance to governmental precarization should start from

connectedness with others: 'recognising social relationality can only be the

beginning of an entry into processes… in order to invent with others new forms of

organising' (Lorey, p.15). This is precisely what we witness in the novels under

consideration. *The Panopticon* crucially engages with how communities of care

can form within institutions too. Anais and her fellow residents are, throughout

the novel, followed as they create, through exchanges and acts of solidarity and

mutual care, what Mitchell and Snyder call 'insurrectional communities of

nonproductive bodies' that 'begin with the insurrectional potentiality of a "politics

of atypicality"' (Mitchell and Snyder, p.216). As she enters the Panopticon, Anais

encounters Isla, and immediately notices how she 'scratches her tummy. She

considers 'Her tummy's cut tae fuck. That's beyond normal. Normal is when

someone just cuts their arms, legs or sometimes thighs – not slash marks like that

right across their stomach. There's fucking hundreds of them, then there's thick

white ones under the fresh ones' (*Panopticon*, p.20). Tash, Isla's girlfriend, who is

saving up earnings from prostitution in order to apply for custody of Isla's twins

when old enough, tells Anais 'I think she's trying to cut the virus out, ay. She

feels so fucking bad that the twins have got it, she cannae take it… How come the nice people always get the shit luck, Anais?' (*Panopticon*, p.159).

The extent to which the Panopticon's community of care is rooted in interdependency speaks to Kittay's insight that 'We are all *interdependent*' and 'this interdependence begins with dependence' (Kittay, p.xii). Indeed, it is Isla that takes down the registration numbers of the cars Tash gets into at night and Anais, the night before Tash disappears, tries to prevent her from going to work, saying 'I can give you some cash… You dinnae want tae go… We could play Monopoly?' (*Panopticon*, p.231). The most utopian moment for the community of care represented in *The Panopticon* unfolds on the loch island as the girls take a break from the boat competition against the boys and stage a wedding between Tash and Isla. The wedding marks the establishment of an alternative system which puts queer relationships centre stage and, crucially, does this through embodied forms of disability. Shortie, as the officiating minister, simultaneously affirms the lapsing of mainstream regulations and her fulfilment of the duties these involve through the perspective and embodiment of her dyslexia: she exclaims 'Though I couldnae fill out a form, not with the dyslexia and that. But anyway, I could marry youz – on this here island!' (*Panopticon*, p.208).

While the community of care Fagan focuses on is gendered female and queer, it also extends to the rest of the residents of the care home. This is evident when Isla commits suicide after Tash's disappearance. the ambulance men are about to put her body in a bag but her fellow residents demand a stretcher. The ways in which Anais is able to relate 'the stretcher is carefully laid out on our

landing. The ambulance men lift Isla carefully onto it' (*Panopticon*, p.239)

provides a final example of what the 'set of powers to act (being, loving,

transforming, creating) that reside in the multitude' (Hardt and Negri, 2001,

p.357) can achieve to oppose the dehumanisation and the failures of care

underpinned by capitalist logics. However, excluded from the communities of

care of the Panopticon is Brian, who does not satisfy the alternative set of morals

and rules these communities identify with. Anais condones the scapegoating of

Brian who kills a dog, and Brian is marginalised by all the other kids too. When

during the loch outing Isla draws the other girls' attention to how the boys are

battering Brian, risking to drown him, Shortie responds 'I wish they fucking

would' (*Panopticon*, p.200) and when Brian later climbs to the top floor of the

turret in the Panopticon, learning the social workers' decision to call the fire

service to get him down John replies 'Noh, you dinnae, just fucking leave him'

(*Panopticon*, p.212).

The revolutionary potential that communities of care possess is central to

the ending of *The Panopticon*. Fagan's novel finishes with Anais' individual

revolution and with a collective one. The former takes the form of her escape to

Paris and the new start away from the 'experiment' and its violence this enables:

on the train to Paris Anais tells herself 'I am Frances Jones from Paris. I am not a

face on a missing-person poster, I am not a number or a statistic in a file'

(*Panopticon*, p.323). While Anais' break for Paris may come across as an

abandonment of the community of care within which she belongs, the personal

revolution that she enacts through the resolution to leave is connected to multiple

collective revolutions. First, Anais' escape is connected to the collective revolution of the French revolution, as intimated by Anais' reflection 'I heard they had a revolution there once, though, in France, ay; they killed the rich people because they were really beginning tae irritate the fuck out of the poor' (*Panopticon*, p.84). Second, Anais' regenerative turning point is triggered by the gang-rape she suffers at the hands of drug-dealers. As she becomes unconscious, Anais dreams of bamboo caskets swinging from tree-tops in a forest (*Panopticon*, p.292) containing her disappeared loves ones, including Tash. It is Tash who shakes her out of her torpor. Anais relates 'A basket above me is shaking – it's Tash. She's shaking her cage and her moutstache unfurls' (*Panopticon*, p.293) and 'She's shouting. 'Wake up. Right *fucking* now, Anais. WAKE the fuck UP!' (*Panopticon*, p.294). Anais wakes up both to the awareness that 'Nobody's gonnae catch those guys, and the polis fucking hate me anyway. What would they do? Clever experiment' (*Panopticon*, p.296) and with a new determination to break free to a safe place. Finally, and most importantly, Anais' escape occurs after she participates in the riot the residents of the Panopticon have orchestrated to happen in conjunction with Isla's funeral. We witness Shortie throwing a chair through the window, John smashing the strip-lights and Dylan taking a run at Angus. Intercalated with these actions Fagan presents the collective chorus 'This… this is how we fucking say goodbye to our own!'. The scene powerfully concludes with Anais lighting a throwing a bottle towards the surveillance window so that 'The whole surveillance window shatters' leaving the experiment 'for a fraction of a fucking second: exposed' (*Panopticon*, p.219).

A similarly liberatory alternative to the abuse that characterises institutional care is provided by what Silvia Federici calls 'the "commoning" of reproductive / care-work' to refer to 'communal forms of living based upon "solidarity contracts"… "communities of care"' aimed at 'socializing, collectivizing the experience of illness, pain, grieving and the "care-work"' in ways conducive to a 're-organisation of our everyday life and the creation of nonexploitative social relations' (Federici, 2009, p.126). A powerful example of a community of care is offered by that built by Hannah and her partner Robert in *Paradise*. Both alcoholics, their bond is based on their shared experience of addiction. This is encapsulated in how Hannah tells Robert

'I can be closer to you – more *of you* –in an hour than any teetotaler would be if they kept you drugged and naked in their basement for a month: if they ate your brain. If you and I were to *be drunk together,* then osmosis would give way to metamorphosis, to more and more permanent change. If you and I were *drunk together often* we might occasionally seem indistinguishable like two liquids blended in one' (*Paradise*, p.213)

Indeed, the bond that unites Hannah and Robert is strengthened by its rootedness in their common condition. Hannah suggests that their attempts not to drink, together, ground a community of care much more profound than the relationship that connects able-bodied individuals: she notes 'we were both not meant to be

drinking – or at least, not drinking very much. We are doing this together, because we want to. Simon and his wife, they wouldn't understand that kind of sharing' (*Paradise*, p.120). In *Paradise*, such a community of care contrasts with its institutional counterpart, characterised by indifference and its damaging consequences. This is demonstrated when Hannah sees an elderly woman 'laboring to escape… her own garden gate' with her left hand 'leaning heavily on a wheelchair, while she tried to push the gate open with her back' (*Paradise*, p.67). Hannah realises she is witnessing 'the sort of thing that shouldn't happen: the sort of thing that comes from lack of thought. Some moron in an office somewhere doles out a bloody wheelchair to a fellow human being who hasn't the use of both arms' (*Paradise*, p.68). In rushing to the woman's help, Hannah materialises what Hardt and Negri call 'the virtuality' that attaches to creative and transformative powers of the multitude (Hardt and Negri 2001, p.357). She translates it from the sphere of the community of care she creates with Robert to the wider dimension of the multitude she is part of.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has explored how a concern with the crip precarities that populate contemporary society is central to John Burnside's *Glister*, James Kelman's *Mo Said She Was Quirky*, Ali Smith's *Hotel World*, A.L. Kennedy's *Paradise* and Jenni Fagan's *The Panopticon*. It has argued that these crip precarities are portrayed as bringing together interlocking distributions of insecurity and

inequality under neoliberal normalcy, where immaterial labour succeeds industrial labour as the new hegemonic form of labour. Alison Kafer introduces the idea of a 'crip futurity' to theorise a politics that, taking 'the disavowal of disability from "our" futures' as a starting point, involves 'an insistence on thinking these imagined futures – and hence, these lived presents – differently', through the imagination of disability as 'political, as valuable, as integral'.[53] The texts this chapter has considered are informed by politics and conceptions of disability that share a concern with incapacitated bodies and their imbrication within structures of production. They simultaneously imagine disability as valuable and as endangered by the capitalist modes of production and social reproduction under welfare capitalism. It is on the basis of the related focus on how 'peripheral embodiments' can be in the vanguard of anti-capitalist resistance that they can be approached as what Mitchell and Snyder call 'antinormative novels of embodiment'; namely, novels which rely on 'the revelation of the normative body's secreted "dysfunctionality", the perennial operation of embodiment that covers over in-built biological inefficiencies, disjunctures, weaknesses, and incapacities' (Mitchell and Snyder, p.181). I have examined how this is the case by analysing how the autonomist narratives of disability in question carry an engagement with the immaterial labour involved both in remaining part of, and in dealing with exclusion from, the workforce due to the impossibility to satisfy the demands of capitalism under conditions of neoliberal precarity. These narratives yield a prism through which both the central place of disability within the re-

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[53] Alison Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), p.3

composition of the working class and its struggles, and its non-place in the neoliberal inclusivism of the 'new politics' of the Scottish nation, can be appreciated.

**Chapter Three**

**Crip Dignities**

**Antagonism and Disability in Devolutionary Scottish Writing**

The 1980s and early 1990s witnessed the flourishing of the nationalist movement in Scotland which led to devolution, as well as the intensification of anti-capitalist struggles as a result of the dismantling of the UK welfare state. This chapter will explore the intersection between narratives of anti-capitalist resistance with representations of disability in devolutionary Scottish writing, delineating the ways in which the latter intensify the antagonism portrayed by the former. In particular, it will examine the ways in which narratives of disability focus representations of resistance to the violence of the 'Welfare State and Waged Work' in Jeff Torrington's *The Devil's Carousel* (1996)[1] and Kelman's *How Late It Was, How Late* (1994),[2] and to that of 'Relationships of Care and Care Institutions' in Agnes Owens' *For the Love of Willie* (1998),[3] Jessie Kesson's 'The Gowk',[4] 'Good Friday'[5] and 'Dear Edith…' (1985),[6] and A.L. Kennedy's *Looking for the Possible Dance* (1993).[7] The intersection between narratives of class and disability that centres these texts provides a prism through which the

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[1] Jeff Torrington, *The Devil's Carousel* (London: Minerva, 1996)
[2] James Kelman, *How Late It Was, How Late* (London: Vintage, 1994)
[3] Agnes Owens, *For the Love of Willie* (1998) in *Agnes Owens: The Complete Novellas* (Polygon, 2009)
[4] Jessie Kesson, 'The Gowk' in *Where the Apple Ripens* (1985) in the *Jessie Kesson Omnibus* (London: Chatto&Windus, 1991)
[5] Jessie Kesson, 'Good Friday' in *Where the Apple Ripens* (1985) in the *Jessie Kesson Omnibus* (London: Chatto&Windus, 1991)
[6] Jessie Kesson, 'Dear Edith…' in *Where the Apple Ripens* (1985) in the *Jessie Kesson Omnibus* (London: Chatto&Windus, 1991)
[7] A.L. Kennedy, *Looking For the Possible Dance* (London: Vintage, 1993)

reifying logic that animates the forced integration of subjects into the capitalist mode of production, the dimension of capture that underpins the internal exclusion of disability and violence of welfare state retrenchment become apparent.

My investigation will argue that the novels and stories under consideration share a preoccupation with the crip dignities and antagonisms that, in this context, interlocking oppressions on the basis of class and disability call forth. For autonomist Marxist John Holloway, society under capitalism is criss-crossed by multiple antagonisms derived from the same source, namely the capitalist mode of production which creates an original 'binary antagonism between doing and done',[8] or human activity and its reification for profit. If 'this antagonism exists as a multiplicity of antagonisms' (Holloway 2002, p.42), as Holloway believes, the stories under consideration indeed render this multiplicity by portraying antagonistic pursuits of crip dignities in the contexts of waged work, welfare, and care institutions. In order to theorise these, this chapter will combine Open Marxism's examination of how practices of resistance to capitalism expose the ways in which the 'functioning of the market is based on the opposite of dignity'[9] with Lennard Davis' dismodernist perspective, according to which disability furnishes a lens through which to grasp how 'all groups, based on physical traits

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[8] John Holloway, *Change the World Without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today* (London: Pluto, 2002). p.42
[9] John Holloway, 'Dignity and the Zapatistas' in *Common Sense*, Vol.22 (December 1997), p.39

or markings, are selected for disablement by a larger system of regulation and signification'.[10]

In order to foreground how the autonomist narratives of disability I am going to consider in this chapter clash with the nationalist politics that drove the impetus in devolutionary Scottish studies to conceptualise defeatism as an unwelcome trait of the Scottish psyche, this introduction will situate the narratives of defeatism that accompanied the flourishing of Scottish literary studies in the last two decades of the twentieth century in relation to contemporaneous nationalist theory. It will delineate how their common focus on theorising possible reform and re-configurations of the nation-state cannot be reconciled with the antagonistic refusal of the terms of inclusion on offer as exploitative and exclusionary that is theorised by autonomist Marxism and disability studies, and dramatised by the autonomist narratives of disability that will be the focus of the main body of this chapter.

**Autonomist Narratives of Disability, Welfare State Retrenchment and the Discourse on Defeatism**

Reviewing Scott Hames' *Unstated* in the run-up to the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence, Alex Thomson perceived Hames' contributors to be divided between those who saw the 'cultural confidence' of the nation as the determining factor for the future of Scotland, and those more 'politically-

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[10] Lennard Davis, *Bending Over Backwards: Disability, Dismodernism & Other Difficult Positions* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2002), p.29

minded'.[11] As already examined in the first chapter, the relevance of Thomson's contestation of 'cultural confidence' as the goal Scottish writers should be committed to is relevant to (post-)referendum Scottish culture as much as to the disciplinary tradition of Scottish cultural and literary studies. In the run up to devolution, the term 'defeatist' gained increasing popularity as a shorthand for narratives guilty of an excessive concern with disadvantaged social circumstances and impaired psychological conditions; Scottish writing that had been produced in the 1980s and 1990s was simultaneously hailed as a new 'Scottish Renaissance' that tried to react against 'the stultifying restriction of a defeatist realism'[12] and condemned for painting a 'defeatist' picture of Scottish society nevertheless. Gavin Wallace was thus able to declare that 'a substantial majority of the most significant novels' published since the 1970s still comprised 'a catalogue of Kelman's "horror" in its range of constituent complaints'. And if Wallace mourned how the Scottish novel was continuing 'to build upon an already spectacular tradition of despair' (Wallace, p.216), he also condemned critics for reproducing 'the prevalence of this oppressive mood of disenchantment' (Wallace, p.218).

However, narratives dismissed as defeatist within the critical economy of cultural nationalism, under pressure from its concern with national confidence, enshrine powerful critiques of state, capitalism and normalcy. Most importantly, they call for examination of the ways in which the logic antagonistic to state,

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[11] Alex Thomson, 'Review Essay: Writers on Scottish Independence' in *Scottish Literary Review*, Vol.5, No.1 (Spring/Summer 2013), p.134

[12] Gavin Wallace, 'Introduction' in *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies*, ed. by Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), p.3

capitalism and normalcy that disability narratives intensify clashes specifically with the default nationalist framework of Scottish studies. If the disqualification of disability as a socio-political phenomenon in Scottish studies that narratives of defeatism were responsible for entrenching is rooted in the nationed framework of the field, this points to the need to investigate the nationalist underpinnings of Wallace's view. Specifically, consider his double contention that critical concern with defeatist themes should be overcome, and that critical emphasis should be shifted from the relationship between text and 'extrinsic factors (history, politics, class)' to 'intrinsic ones (form, structure, narrative)' (Wallace, p.221). I see three distinct implications of this: in relation to the search for cultural and by extension political confidence through policing of representations of national society within Scottish  writing, and to the foreclosure of sociopolitical critique in directions antagonistic to the nationalist one – as discussed in chapter one; in relation to contemporary nationalist theory; and in relation to contemporary Marxist autonomist theory as a necessary preliminary to the development of alternative approaches on Scottish writing and in Scottish studies.

I am interested in nationalism as 'a way of talking, writing and thinking about the basic units of culture, politics, and belonging that helps to constitute nations as real and powerful dimensions of social life'[13] and, most importantly for this project, disciplinary fields. Nationalist discourse in Scottish studies in the 1980s and 1990s was not exceptional in relation to that developed in nationalism studies at the time. Neither was its flourishing, as by the late 1980s the field of

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[13] Craig Calhoun, *Nations Matter: Culture, History, and the Cosmopolitan Dream* (Routledge, 2007), p.27

nationalism studies was proclaimed to have been revived in response to the resurgence of nationalist movements. In their 1988 introduction to *Nationalism, Self-Determination and Political Geography* R.J. Johnston, David B. Knight and Elenore Kofman noted how 'in the 1970s it was commonplace to open a discussion of nationalism with remarks about the paucity of the literature' but 'by the mid-1980s such a statement, though still occasionally uttered, would not be at all accurate'.[14] In a similar spirit, for Tom Nairn there was 'no doubt about the new spectre haunting Europe',[15] and could declare that compared to capitalism and its persistency, the contemporary conjuncture proved that 'nationalism, [remained] even more of a nuisance'.[16]

Several themes define nationalist theory from the 1980s and 1990s that are pivotal concerns in Scottish studies too in the same period. First, the concept of national community, influentially captured by Michael Billig's notion of a nationalist 'syntax of hegemony' by which 'the part claimed to represent the whole',[17] and by Benedict Anderson's of an 'imagined community' that unites individuals who will never 'know most of their fellow-member' despite the mental 'image of their communion'.[18] Secondly, the relationship between national community and the national state. Most famously, Ernst Gellner contends that 'What distinguishes the areas within which nationalism has become the crucial

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[14] R.J. Johnston, David B. Knight and Eleonore Kofman, 'Nationalism, Self-Determination and the World Political Map: An Introduction' in *Nationalism, Self-Determination and Political Geography*, ed. by R.J. Johnston, David B. Knight and Eleonore Kofman (London: Crook Helm, 1988), p.1

[15] Tom Nairn, *Faces of Nationalism: Janus Revisited* (London: Verso, 1997), pp.47-8

[16] Tom Nairn, 'Breakwaters of 2000: From Ethnic to Civic Nationalism' in *New Left Review*, Vol.I/214 (November-December 1995), p.96

[17] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995), p.98

[18] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2006), p.6

political principle is…   The powerful and novel principle of "one state, one culture"',[19] which Montserrat Guibernau effectively rephrases thus: 'the political character of nationalism as an ideology defending the notion that state and nation should be congruent'.[20] While John Breuilly too adopts a principle of classification 'based on the relationship between the nationalist movement and the existing state',[21] Michael Keating enters a note of caution by arguing that 'it is necessary to separate nationalism conceptually from the state' as 'there are nationalisms which do not aim at the creation of states'.[22] When theorists make this move, however, the focus tends to shift to national institutions, whether through the idea of patria,[23] or through that of self-determination'.[24]

Commitment to the good of the national community and to state institutions legitimated through national self-determination were the underlying principles of Scottish nationalism in the 1980s and 1990s. The economic argument for self-determination prevailed over any overt nationalist appeal and the SNP offered 'a way of making the old formula of prosperity work successfully at a regional level, a region which certain institutions enable one to define as Scotland' (Breuilly, p.381), where anti-Thatcher resentment was supposedly

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[19] Ernest Gellner, *Culture, Identity, and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p.1

[20] Montserrat Guibernau, 'Introduction' in *Nationalisms: The Nation-State and Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Polity, 1996), p.3

[21] John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), p.352

[22] Michael Keating, *Nations against the State: The New Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland* (London: Macmillan, 1996), p.18

[23] Maurizio Viroli, *For Love of Country: An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p.1

[24] For example, see Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalities* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993) and Neil MacCormick, 'Liberalism, Nationalism and the Post-sovereign State' in *Political Studies*, Vol.XLIV (1996)

derived 'from a clearer regional consciousness as well as a detestation of monetarist economics'.[25] These dynamics enhanced the legitimacy of institutions acting as a counter power rooted in a well-formed civic national community, the most significant manifestation of which was the cross-party Constitutional Convention.  The primary concern with national government is crystallised in the call contained in the 1988 'Claim of Right' for mechanisms to restore 'the health of the Scottish government'.[26] As Nicola McEwen suggests, because state national identity is often mediated through one's sub-state national identity, 'Thatcher's creation of a more centralised model of the state caused the weakening of Scots' attachment to the Union'.[27] The limitations of this outlook from an anti-capitalist perspective were called out by James Kelman amongst others, for whom the term Thatcherism was 'misleading, it [distorted] the issue': he poignantly declared 'the Prime Minister is simply a cog in a much larger machine. The world of capital is more sophisticated than the use of the term implies'.[28] Inevitably, despite the militant antagonism to the violence of capitalism that was glaringly manifest in the form of high rates of unemployment and economic restructuring, with the 1984-85 miners' strike and the struggle against the poll-tax from 1988 constituting the most visible events, Scottish nationalist theory saw parties as carrying on the struggle, at the institutional level.

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[25] Tom Nairn, 'The Crisis of the British State' in *New Left Review*, Vol.I/130 (November-December 1981), p.41

[26] Bernard Crick and David Millar, *To Make the Parliament of Scotland a Model for Democracy* (Edinburgh: John Wheatley Centre, 1995), p.165

[27] Nicola McEwen, *Nationalism and the State: Welfare and Identity in Scotland and Quebec* (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2006), p.34

[28] James Kelman, *Fighting for Survival: The Steel Industry in Scotland* (Glasgow: Clydeside Press, 1990), p.6

A commitment to the good of the national community and to the institutions of self-government also characterised the politics of Scottish cultural and literary studies in the 1980s and 1990s. This warranted the quest for cultural confidence as a stepping stone to political self-determination. Between the referenda of 1979 and 1997, Scottish studies took on the task of defining the relationship between current political and cultural contexts, within an explicitly nationalist framework. As Peter Zenzinger pointed out, for better or for worse the rise of Scottish nationalism had given 'an impetus to Scottish criticism totally unknown before'.[29] In this context, Scottish writing was invested with the role of representing the nation to make up for the failure of political representation: in the oft-quoted words of Christopher Whyte, 'in the absence of an elected political authority, the task of representing the nation has been repeatedly devolved to its writers'.[30] Starting from similar assumptions, Manfred Malzahn proposed to approach 'contemporary Scottish fiction as an expression of national consciousness, a parameter of national psychology'.[31] Inevitably, the concern to define a distinctive Scottish culture via 'a construction or reconstruction of a "usable" past' which would allow marginalised groups 'to preserve or develop a sense of their own distinctive identity'[32] brought with it a preoccupation with the unsuitable aspects that a distinctive Scottish culture might have featured.

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[29] Peter Zenzinger, 'Nationalism in Twentieth-Century Scottish Literary Criticism' in *Nationalism in Literature: Literature, Language and National Identity* (Frankfurt am Main and New York: Peter Lang, 1989), p.144

[30] Christopher Whyte, 'Masculinities in Scottish Fiction' in *Forum for Modern Language Studies,* Vol.xxxiv, No.3 (1998), p.284

[31] Manfred Malzahn, A*spects of Identity: The Contemporary Scottish Novel (1978-1981) as National Self Expression* (New York: Lang 1984), p.5

[32] Robert Crawford, *Devolving English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p.5

Pivotally, Keith Dixon, in noting how 'the decentring of British culture' under Thatcher had fostered new representational possibilities on the margins on the British empire, also registered how judgment on the suitability of different representations was often subjected to policing through the lens of cultural nationalism.[33]

As examined in the first chapter, the imbrication of the critical attack on 'defeatist' writing with nationalist politics is important for any appraisal of the (non-)place of a disability perspective in Scottish studies. This is because disability narratives in Scottish writing partake in the paradoxical marginalisation that attends 'bleak' representations of Scottish society deemed to disseminate images of victimhood. The former were rejected for building on a 'spectacular tradition of despair' (Wallace, p.216). This accusation was rooted in a wider cultural context where lack of confidence entertained and communicated by cultural critics was attacked as 'Inferiorist' - a term introduced to indicate negative 'images and discourses that profoundly affect the ways in which Scots apprehend themselves and their world',[34] causing Scottish culture to '[cower] in the consciousness of its own inadequacy',[35] as we saw in chapter one. Despite critics advocating an inclusive framework for Scottish studies as a field the

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[33] Keith Dixon, 'Making Sense of Ourselves: Nation and Community in Modern Scottish Writing' in *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, Vol.xxix, No.4 (1993), p.367

[34] Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull, *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture: Inferiorism and the Intellectuals* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1989), p.1

[35] Cairns Craig, *Out of History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and British Culture* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996), p.10

legitimacy of which had been established by the 1990s,[36] policing of criticism and writing that was perceived as not conducive to the flourishing of national confidence persisted.

At the same time, however, 'defeatist' narratives and disability representations can be taken to have been problematic because, if approached through the lenses of their concern with socio-political issues, they could be seen to advocate a struggle defined by antagonistic resistance to state and capitalism incompatible with the nationalist framework of Scottish studies. What commitment to national community and institutions of government is incompatible with are precisely principles of class-based resistance and antagonism specific to such a struggle. Kelman himself captured the limitations inherent in discourses of national unity aimed at defusing class struggle in his pamphlet *Fighting for Survival: The Steel Industry in Scotland*. For him, 'This idea that the interests of the country at large can be expressed regardless of political and economic differences is very suspect indeed' (Kelman, 1990, p.11). Indeed, from an autonomist perspective, Marxism is a theory worth preserving only if it proposes itself as a theory against society via its contribution to class antagonism. As a nationalist, therefore, Anthony Smith is rightly unsympathetic towards class identity which 'both favours and militates against the formation of a stable community'.[37]

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[36] For example, see Susanne Hagemann, 'Introduction' in *Studies in Scottish Fiction: 1945 to the Present*, ed. by Susanne Hagemann Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996) and Ian A. Bell, 'Imagine Living There: Form and Ideology in Contemporary Scottish Fiction' in *Studies in Scottish Fiction: 1945 to the Present*, ed. by Susanne Hagemann Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996)

[37] Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin, 1991), p.6

This suggests that it is only from a nationalist perspective that the critical translation of 'the consistent preoccupation of novelists with the symptoms of a tangibly Scottish malaise' into 'a set of urgent sociological imperatives' is problematic, as it transforms 'fracture, disintegration and damaged identity' into 'ineluctable features' of the nation in ways detrimental to national confidence (Wallace, p.220). Adopting critical approaches alternative to a nationalist one in Scottish studies can be therefore legitimated as a political choice aimed at denaturalising the rules of the field by engaging with narratives made illegible by a nationalist framework that predicates pursuit of national confidence through culture. Disability studies and autonomist Marxism can be ideally drawn upon to unmoor bleak representations of Scottish society from critical dismissal because not conducive to national confidence or compatible with nationalist politics. Through an autonomist disability optic, defeatist and disability narratives emerge as enshrining complex engagements with systemic oppression, antagonism and resistance, valuable at the literary level as a refraction of real-life struggles and challenging for theoretical elaboration in opening up tensions between disciplinary frameworks and investigations conducted within these.

The complicity of the discourse on defeatism with capitalism and its state is all the more apparent when the specific political conjuncture at which it became popular in Scottish studies is considered. The 1980s and 1990s witnessed the dismantling of the post-war settlement and the breaking with the values with which it was associated: as Colin Hay argues, 'the values of compromise, consensus, equality and welfarism were to be replaced by a combination of those

of consumer capitalism, enterprise culture and initiative, tradition, moral fortitude and decency'.[38] On the basis of this change of value systems, the dismantling of the post-war settlement relied on the division between deserving and undeserving subjects. On the one hand were the '"deserving poor" – those who have accepted Thatcherism's "market logic"'; on the other hand were the '"undeserving poor" – those who have suffered disproportionately from the "rolling back" of the welfare state, among whom passive acquiescence has given way to active discontent' (Hay, p.145). The discourse on defeatism resonates with the strategic project of Thatcherism to 'unify the privileged nation of "good citizens" and "hard workers" against an increasingly subordinated and "undeserving" nation' (Hay, p.145). McEwen contends, in her study of welfare state nationalism, that welfare state retrenchment undermines unity and inter-regional solidarity within a multinational state in ways that 'threaten the political and territorial legitimacy of the state' (McEwen, p.69), crucially using the Scottish context as a case study. If the attack on the welfare state that was conducted under the Thatcher government weakened the continued attachment of Scots to the Union and contributed to the 1999 achievement of devolution (McEwen, p.34), because of its flirtation with, and reproduction of, anti-defeatist discourses Scottish cultural and literary studies did not feature the rhetoric of the pursuit of a fairer social security that distinguishes the discourse of welfare state nationalism.

Disability studies took an opposite stance on the discourses underpinning welfare state retrenchment by calling for a form of social integration 'not

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[38] Colin Hay, *Re-Stating Social and Political Change* (Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1996), p.129

dependent upon impaired people's inclusion in productive activity'.[39] This and related insights from disability studies speak powerfully to concepts that originated within the tradition of Open Marxism around the same time. A strand of autonomist theory that developed in the UK in the 1990s, Open Marxism takes its name from 'the openness of Marxist categories themselves'[40] and proposes to trace a Marxist trajectory for which 'to speak of struggle is to speak of the openness of social development'.[41] It is this openness of Marxist categories that allowed Holloway and Harry Cleaver to theorise the conditions of marginal subjects involved in the struggle against capital from a position of exclusion from production. Holloway focused on the issue of debt alongside the organising that developed against the introduction of the poll tax.[42] Cleaver argued that while for orthodox Marxism margins remain 'outside the central class relations of capitalism', actually working-class struggle includes not only 'the struggle against the capitalist imposition of work and exploitation' but also 'refusal of the subordination of life to work'.[43] In both Holloway's and Cleaver's analyses the subjects of disability, claimants' and working-class struggles overlap.

Especially relevant to disability studies and representations of disability in the texts under consideration is the specific thematisation of antagonism to state and capitalism that Open Marxism engaged in in the 1980s and 1990s. When

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[39] Paul Abberley, 'The Spectre at the Feast: Disabled People and Social Theory' in *The Disability Reader: Social Science Perspectives*, ed. by Tom Shakespeare (London and New York: Cassell, 1998), p.89

[40] Werner Bonefeld, Richard Gunn, Kosmas Psychopedis, 'Introduction' in *Open Marxism*, Vol.1: Dialectics and History (London: Pluto Press, 1992), p.xii

[41] John Holloway, 'Open Marxism, History and Class Struggle' in *Common Sense*, No.13 (Jan 1993), p.77

[42] John Holloway, 'The Politics of Debt' in *Common Sense*, No. 9 (April 1990), p.57

[43] Harry Cleaver, 'Marginality and Self-Valorisation' in *Common Sense*, No, 8 (September 1989), p.25

antagonism to capitalism is concerned, for Holloway 'the appeal of Marxism lies

in its claim to be a theory of struggle, of opposition, of negation'[44] and a central

place in any theorisation of struggle should be occupied by analysis of 'the scream

of NO against capitalism'.[45] It is because Marxism, 'as a theory of working class

struggle, is above all a theory of life'[46] and of 'capitalist instability',[47] which

makes the 'precise mechanisms of domination' transparent and easier to

confront,[48] that Open Marxism offers 'a theory of [...] rejection of society'[49] that

clashes with the nationalist imaginings of a national community to defend. As for

antagonism to the capitalist state, because 'the strength of the state is… the

strength of the collective capitalist',[50] from an autonomist perspective it is clear

why 'attempts to transform society through the state have not just failed to

achieve that end' but 'the fixation on the state has tended to destroy the

movements pushing for radical change'.[51] Here autonomist Marxism is at its

furthest from the possibility of entering into dialogue with nationalist theory that

postulates reform of state and capitalism as the route to emancipation. In this way,

it allows theorisation and valorisation of 'defeatist' narratives in Scottish writing

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[44] John Holloway, 'In the Beginning was the Scream' in *Common Sense*, Vol.10 (Winter 1991), p.71
[45] John Holloway, 'The Freeing of Marx' in *Common Sense*, Vol.14 (1993), p.19
[46] John Holloway, 'A Note on Fordism and Postfordism' in *Common Sense*, Vol.1 (May 1987), p.52
[47] John Holloway, 'Crisis, Fetishism, Class Composition' in *Open Marxism*, Vol.2: Theory and Practice (London: Pluto Press, 1992), p.162
[48] Harry Cleaver, 'The Inversion of Class Perspective in Marxian Theory: From Valorisation to Self-Valorisation' in *Open Marxism*, Vol.2: Theory and Practice (London: Pluto Press, 1992), p.109
[49] John Holloway, 'The Relevance of Marxism Today' in *Common Sense*, Vol.15 (1994), p.39
[50] Antonio Negri, 'State and Class in the Phase of Real Subsumption' in *The Politics of Subversion: A Manifesto for the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), p.187
[51] John Holloway, 'The Concept of Power and the Zapatista' in *Common Sense*, Vol. 19 (June 1996), p.23

when these shade into powerful autonomist narratives of disability that challenge structures of work and welfare under capitalist normalcy.

It is from this perspective that my analysis will consider the ways in which representations of disability in Jeff Torrington's *The Devil's Carousel*, James Kelman's *How Late It Was, How Late*, Agnes Owens' *For the Love of Willie*, Jessie Kesson's selected short stories and A.L. Kennedy's *Looking for the Possible Dance* intersect with autonomist narratives in ways that critique state, capitalism and normalcy. These texts imagine a different ordering of social relations on the basis of human dignity and the right for all to experience bodily difference without suffering discrimination, exceeding the narrow inclusionism allowed by nationalist frameworks of analysis. Holloway proposes a 'method of the crack' which is dialectical 'not in the sense of presenting a neat flow of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, but in the sense of a negative dialectics, a dialectic of misfitting' capitalism.[52] For Holloway 'the only way to think of changing the world radically is as a multiplicity of interstitial movements running from the particular' (Holloway 2010, p.11) to connect cracks. The autonomist narratives of disability I will consider, by incarnating Holloway's method of the crack as it develops through the connection of acts of misfitting, explode the discourse on 'defeatism' through the centrality they assign to disability as an all-pervasive presence, and standpoint of resistance, in Scottish society.

Texts considered to be landmarks in Scottish literature but associated with the mood of disenchantment proper to 'defeatism' often do provide extremely

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[52] John Holloway, *Crack Capitalism* (New York: Pluto Press, 2010), p.9

bleak pictures of Scottish society. However, individual suffering and hopelessness tend to be represented as seedbeds for both individual disintegration and antagonistic rejection of the oppression responsible for it. Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting*[53] and Janice Galloway's *The Trick is To Keep Breathing*[54] are a case in point. Welsh's text follows Mark Renton and his unreliable friends through the world of Edinburgh and London addiction. Renton reflects on how the state and its institutions attempt, in vain, to manage his addiction through therapy as a way of recuperating his refusal of the system that wants him to absorb the message 'choose us. Choose life. Choose mortgage payments; choose washing machines; choose cars…' (*Trainspotting*, p.187). Renton's attack on society, capitalism, state and country, however, is expressed as a way of asserting his own individuality, disconnected from issues of class or disability. So is that of his mates. For Sick Boy, for example, the issue is to contrast how 'the Tories go on about your employer, your country, your family' with the assertion 'it's me, me, fucking ME, Simon David Williamson, NUMERO FUCKING UNO, versus the world' (*Trainspotting*, p.30).

Galloway's novel is related from the perspective of Joy, who tries to cope with alcoholism, eating disorders and depression in an impaired economic situation at a time when support is only available from institutions which are inadequate at best. Joy's marginalisation is hinted at by how the scheme where she lives was built for 'undesirables' (*Trick*, p.13). However, in *The Trick Is To Keep Breathing* waged work remains the object of Joy's desire. Joy does not

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[53] Irvine Welsh, *Trainspotting* (London: Minerva, 1996)
[54] Galloway, Janice, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing* (London: Polygon, 1989)

perceive the capitalist system as a problem because it allows her to annihilate herself: she says 'work is not a problem...The good thing is that I need not be present when I am working. I can be outside myself… I am the problem' (*Trick*, pp.11-2). And when medical care is concerned, Joy's critique is expressed as a response to disappointed expectations not social injustice, both in a dialogue presented as happening between a doctor and an 'impatient' patient (*Trick,* p.52) and after she encounters the psychiatrists in the clinic she is referred to (*Trick* ,p.103). Thus, while both Welsh and Galloway's novels are organised by narratives of class and disability, as well as coloured by a mood of disenchantment which leaves them open to charges of defeatism, they do not express the intersection between disability and class antagonisms towards the work and welfare regimes under capitalist normalcy that distinguishes autonomist narratives of disability. The texts I will consider in the next two sections differ from *Trainspotting* and *The Trick Is To Keep Breathing* through their specific focus on the experience of disabled characters forced to navigate the violent world of the benefit system, waged work and care institutions from a perspective that yields a trenchant and precise critique of these.

**James Kelman's *How Late It Was, How Late* and Jeff Torrington's *The Devil's Carousel*: Resisting the Violence of the Welfare State and Waged Work**

In James Kelman's *How Late It Was, How Late* and Jeff Torrington's *The Devil's*

*Carousel* the anti-capitalist antagonism of resistance to dehumanising welfare regulations and industrial work patterns is crucially intensified through the experience of disability. While *How Late It Was, How Late* follows Sammy as he takes on the benefit system after the onset of sightloss, *The Devil's Carousel* is a collection of short stories which follow the workers of the Centaur Car Company automobile plant, where illnesses are created by unsafe work conditions and medical care is denied or provided too late. Both texts feature a series of what Holloway calls 'antagonistic metamorphoses', namely phenomena whereby the 'power-to' that is subjected to 'power-over' under capitalism rises 'in rebellion against power-over'.[55] And both represent the violence of welfare and waged work alike through the prism of the subjectivity this engenders as existing 'antagonistically, in opposition to its own objectification' (Holloway 2002, p.37). The narratives of disability through which this anti-capitalist critique is voiced are tinged with a dismodernist ethos whereby if, under capitalist normalcy, 'the perfection of the body and its activities' is the ruling fantasy (Davis 2002, p.32), the only demand that can be made is that because 'we are all nonstandard… it is under that standard' (Davis 2002, p.32) that structures of social support should be devised.

As Scott Hames suggests, *How Late It Was, How Late* foregrounds the ways in which Kelman's 'politics are anarchist-existential, not socialist-realist'.[56] It is also the text that most straightforwardly dramatises principles and

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[55] John Holloway, *Change the World Without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today* (London: Pluto, 2002), p.36
[56] Scott Hames, 'Eyeless in Glasgow: James Kelman's Existential Milton' in *Contemporary Literature*, Vol.50, No.3 (Fall 2009), p.497

confrontations that constitute the subject of his political essays, in ways that support Mitch Miller and Johnny Rodger's contention that Kelman's political writings, 'if approached on their own terms, offer us a richer, more expansive understanding of his art'.[57] In particular, his essays 'Opening of the Edinburgh Unemployed Workers' Centre' and 'Justice Is Not Money' engage with issues that are refracted throughout *How Late It Was, How Late*. In the former Kelman recalls the charade Edinburgh activists had to go through in appealing against the closure of autonomous community-based advice-centres, and registers how they 'were treating the process with the contempt it deserved'.[58] In the latter Kelman discusses the process through which victims of asbestos were put through a time-consuming process in which they knew diagnosis would be denied by DSS and medical authorities.[59] These politics and concerns become crucially intertwined with a complex disability representation in *How Late It Was, How Late*.

The novel foregrounds how the dismodernist ethos which extends the concept of disability to apply 'broadly across society as a civil right for all – the right to be ill, to be infirm, to be impaired without suffering discrimination or oppression' (Davis 2002, p.1) is fertile ground for antagonism to state and capitalism as both operate through structures of oppression – administrative in the first place – tasked to deny precisely the right to be impaired without suffering discrimination and oppression. On the one hand, antagonism and ambivalence are

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[57] Mitch Miller and Johnny Rodger, *The Red Cockatoo: James Kelman and the Art of Commitment* (Dingwall: The Drouth and Sandstone Press, 2011), p.3

[58] James Kelman, 'Opening of the Edinburgh Unemployed Workers' Centre' in *And the Judges Said: Essays* (London: Vintage, 2002), p.92

[59] James Kelman, 'Justice Is Not Money' in *And the Judges Said: Essays* (London: Vintage, 2002), p.206

built into the plot as Sammy undertakes the process of claiming compensation and dysfunctional benefit, or Dys Ben in the novel, from a position of 'implicit disavowal of public and symbolic goals', of interest not in 'de jure change' but in the 'immediate, de facto gains' that James Scott associates with the everyday resistance of the 'weak'.[60] On the other hand, antagonism and ambivalence colour Sammy's own thoughts which, by holding an attitude of ambivalence with regard to his responsibility for his sightloss, respond to the rules of his own tactics for survival, but are continually at risk of reproducing governmental assumptions and imperatives. The narrative of disability that relates Sammy's experience of structures that prevent his normal functioning after his sightloss amplifies this, as Sammy is forced to see his condition through the lens of 'artificial divisions within the disabled population'[61] imposed by a capitalist state and by the medical establishment.

The imbrication between state and capitalism through the former's management of work and benefit systems are illuminated by Werner Bonefeld's suggestion that 'the constitution of social reproduction as reproduction of capital involves the state as a distinct moment of the imposition of value and the organisation of life around imposed work'.[62] From a disability perspective too this interconnection can be grasped. As Mike Oliver notes, the mode of production that accompanied the rise of capitalism meant that 'impaired people became a

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[60] James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), p.33

[61] Mike Oliver & Gerry Zarb, 'The Politics of Disability: A New Approach' in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, Vol.4, No.3 (1989), p.223

[62] Werner Bonefeld, 'Social Constitution and the Form of the Capitalist State' in *Open Marxism*, Vol.1: Dialectics and History (London: Pluto Press, 1992), p.116

particular problem because they were unable rather than unwilling to cope with the new demands made on the labour force'.[63] And indeed Sammy's sightloss excludes him from the kind of work he used to do before the encounter with the police, forcing him to demand re-registration as dysfunctional, but in the meantime to continue to act as if he were able to work. Sammy 'would have to carry on as if he was fully operational, able-bodied. Until he was re-registered... So that was him man blundering about on a fucking building site' (*Late*, p.320). Sammy has no choice but to engage in a process which does not guarantee his survival, and in which he does not believe; forced, as an unemployed worker, to exist like labour 'in and against capital'.[64]

The narrative that hinges on Sammy's contradictory existence in and against capital and its institutions is further traversed by the tension between a subjective perspective and one informed by systemic values and procedures. The latter are subscribed to by Sammy's representative Ally, which Sammy is deeply critical of. For him, 'guys like Ally, they made ye smile, they really did; Sammy had met them for years, inside and outside. Play the game and do them in; that was the motto... These optimistic cunts' (*Late*, p.320). Sammy perceives the system as structured not to satisfy his needs but the demands of capital, while locking him into a long process of benefit claiming that would undermine his dignity, rooted in self-activity. Sammy's take is confirmed by Holloway's argument that 'within the framework of liberal theory it is not possible to discuss

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[63] Mike Oliver, 'A Sociology of Disability or a Disablist Sociology?' in *Disability & Society: Emerging Issues and Insights*, ed. by Len Barton (London and New York: Longman 1996), p.29
[64] Werner Bonefeld, 'Human Practice and Perversion: Between Autonomy and Structure' in *Common Sense*, Vol.15 (1994), p.4

the idea of dignity seriously' because 'liberal theory accepts as its point of departure the existence of the market, and the functioning of the market is based on the opposite of dignity' (Holloway 1997, p.39).

Sammy's strategies of survival also index a different form of struggle from that theorised by orthodox Marxism. The latter is associated with Sammy's friend Charlie. Sammy recalls 'Charlie aye made him feel guilty. In fact, he didnay make him feel guilty at all, he tried to: he failed' (*Late*, p.118). Sammy's form of struggle is different, but no less valuable: he reflects 'when everybodys gone and you're alone. That was what ye thought about, when they were all away, and you were left, you and naybody else. What happens then is that ye move' (*Late*, p.324). This supports Holloway's contention that 'if the revolution depends on the intervention of the enlightened, then it is not possible to have complete confidence in the opinion of the common people'. But the reality is that 'Dignity exists as the negation of the negation of dignity, not in the future, but as present struggle' (Holloway 1997, p.40).

As for Torrington's *The Devil's Carousel*, this is informed by a profound anti-work antagonism which starts off, in the two opening tales, by presenting the decision to take up employment as a fateful act rather than a liberatory one. In 'Starting', the protagonist, Steve Laker, is introduced to us as having 'been busy re-reading a life-changing letter – a skimpy one-pager – that bore the logo of a Centaur'. This informs him 'that his job application as a Telex Sequencer at Centaur Cars Chimeford Plant had proved successful'; crucially, he is 'now seated in that black nightchair, wondering if grafting in a car factory wasn't too radical a

step' (*The Devil's*, p.6). Indeed, in 'Walking the Widow', Steve encounters his gaffer, Stan Cutter, and 'at that very instant Laker'd been seized by an irrational urge to spin on his heels and start legging it to the nearest exit at a speed that'd make the Road Runner look like a tortoise on Mogadon' (*The Devil's*, p.8). In line with this, Steve repeatedly registers the extent to which death is preferable to working as a Sequencer: first, 'the very idea of becoming a car worker'd seemed so loopy, so bereft of commonsense, that he felt he would've been better to've checked into the nearest head-shredder' (*The Devil's*, p.9); then, when shown a locker and air conditioner from which to hang his jacket, we learn that 'Never mind his jacket, at that moment Laker felt like hanging himself from the roof' (*The Devil's*, p.22).

Anti-capitalist antagonism is also captured in how the short stories that make up *The Devil's Carousel* are alternated with issues of an anarchist anti-capitalist magazine called KIKBAK A LAFFING ANARKIST PUBLIKAYSHN. The first issue contains a poem published 'as a timely reminder of the dollar-driven credo of the Multi-Nationals' and entitled 'profit requires no self-justification!'. The poem recounts 'The Coming of the Centaurs' and sets what Chimeford was before, with cows that, like 'hairy engines/Pulled the ploughs', against the present, after the Centaurs have destroyed 'Our village habits… Our well-loved bars'' (*The Devil's*, p.23). Later issues contain information about health and safety breaches in the factory, with issue 99 featuring a notification about asbestos mocking the bosses' refusal to act on workers' concerns: 'Die asbestos you can, pal! … disturbing amounts of asbestos have turned up' but

'need not be unduly alarmed about health risks', instead 'they should be bloody terrified!' (*The Devil's*, p.46).

In *How Late It Was, How Late*, Sammy's anti-capitalist antagonism is intensified and rendered through his need to resist the injustice he suffers as a disabled claimant. In 1993, David Hevey interrogated the meaning we assign to 'disability representation', asking 'do we mean the representation of impairment, or do we mean the representation of social barriers, or do we mean the recording of the interface between the two?', arguing that only artwork that 'positions its gaze towards this interface begins to reflect the struggle'.[65] *How Late It Was, How Late* precisely performs this perspective by following Sammy through his ordeals at various governmental offices as he tries to get compensation and dysfunctional benefit. The incommensurability between Sammy's aims and methods and those prescribed by the benefit system becomes intensified on the occasion of the medical assessment on which his re-registration as dysfunctional depends. There is a profound disconnect between Sammy's and the authorities' perception of what is a valid account of his condition. As Simon Brisenden notes, 'our opinions, as disabled people, on the subject of disability are not generally regarded with the same validity as the opinions of "experts", particularly medical experts'. This is structural as the medical model is 'rooted in an undue emphasis on clinical diagnosis, the very nature of which is destined to lead to a partial and inhibiting

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[65] David Hevey, 'The Tragedy Principle: Strategies for Change in the Representation of Disabled People' in *Disabling Barriers – Enabling Environments*, ed. by John Swain, Vic Finkelstein, Sally French and Mike Oliver (London and New Delhi: Sage, 1993), p.119

view of the disabled individual'.[66] The differential distribution of validity of perspective is made immediately clear as Sammy's assessment starts as a dialogue between Dr Logan's assessment and the one conducted in the past by one Dr Crozier. Sammy's rejection of the relevance of Dr Crozier's diagnosis to his present circumstances is dismissed by Dr Logan. Similarly, when Sammy points out the necessity for him to re-register in order to be able to work by stating 'Well I'm gony have to re-register. ye've got to be able to see to serve on a building site', Dr Logan's answer is 'I'm afraid I don't follow' (*Late*, p.223).

Crucially, the Hollowayan power and dignity that inhere in everyday struggle is affirmed by Sammy through the lenses of the intensified antagonism and hardship related to his blindness. On the one hand, it is the increased bodily discomfort of the struggle that forces attention to its presentness: we learn from Sammy that 'he was just bloody tired; knackered and drained, knackered and drained; nay energy… Mind you that was something about this being blind; how ye were knackered all the time' (*Late*, p.174). This confirms the necessity indicated by disability theorists already in the 1980s and 1990s that it is important to incorporate into a disembodied social model focused on the demand for barrier-removal an embodied perspective.[67] Remarkably, it is the embodiment of everyday struggle that allows Sammy to be conscious of the resistance he is putting up: 'Sammy had stopped, he turned to the tenement wall and leaned his forehead against it feeling the grit, the brick' and this makes him realise 'Every

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[66] Simon Brisenden, 'Independent Living and the Medical Model of Disability' (1986) in *The Disability Reader: Social Science Perspectives*, ed. by Tom Shakespeare (London and New York: Cassell, 1998), p.20
[67] Bill Hughes and Kevin Paterson, 'The Social Model of Disability and the Disappearing Body: Towards a sociology of Impairment' in *Disability & Society*, Vol.12, No.3 (1997), p.327

day was a fucking problem. And this was a new yin. So ye thought it out and then ye coped' (*Late*, p.37).

In the context of the critique levelled against the benefit system that informs *How Late It Was, How Late* survival depends on interdependence and solidarity, not welfare institutions complicit with capitalism. Indeed, an embodied disability perspective foregrounds how the impossibility for independence dawns on Sammy, despite the fact that 'independence is generally considered to be something disabled people desire above all else', as 'it is all too easy for the relationship between the helper and the person being helped to develop into an unequal one'.[68] This scenario repeatedly materialises in *How Late*, for example when Sammy loses the wall, falls and believes himself to be off the pavement on a busy road: 'Fucking hell. There were people passing. He heard them. He was fucking blind man he wasnay deaf. He wanted to grab them and tell them, fucking tell them and he turned about, he had lost the wall' (*Late*, p.41). However, rather than an endorsement of individualist independence, this can be read as a call for solidarity in the face of systemic and able-bodied indifference.

As opposed to the difficulty of obtaining solidarity under normalcy, Sammy imagines self-organised solidarity among disabled people. He muses about how severe impairment is flush with potential invisible to the outside world of normalcy: 'even for an upper trunk, ye could still do yerself in, if ye wanted, ye would find ways, ways only known to folk in that exceptional circumstance. The average person wouldnay know causetheywouldnayknow' (*Late*, p.316). He

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[68] Sally French, 'What's So Great About Independence?' in *Disabling Barriers – Enabling Environments*, ed. by John Swain, Vic Finkelstein, Sally French and Mike Oliver (London and New Delhi: Sage, 1993), p.44

continues to imagine the alternative ways of organising that a community of disabled people, a 'self-help society', would use in order to demand dignity and improved conditions of life: 'yez would all meet to discuss it at yer meeting place, getting yer living conditions improved, yer quality of life, start yer petitions to parliament and the town council and sending yer man to Brussels although ye would have to post the cunt if it was a torso'. Kelman also hints at the possibility of the demands not to be delivered as a result of the mediation of representation: 'ye would need folk to listen for ye and translate, to represent ye, yer interests, except ye couldnay tell them what yer interests were so they would must have to guess' (*Late*, pp.316-7). While a touch of satire and hopelessness can be felt to colour this section of *How Late*, the political message it puts across in terms of the need for self-organisation by oppressed groups is serious and central to a novel concerned with the lack of solidarity that dominates society and its institutions under capitalist normalcy.

However, Sammy is living under rules set by normalcy, state and capitalism, and these do not allow for survival. He repeatedly voices the desire to refuse engagement with institutions that perpetuate systemic oppression. At a certain point he tells to himself 'There wasnay much he could do, there wasny really much he could do at all. No the now anyway… Sammy had turned back onto his side, he wished he could fall asleep' (*Late*, p.30). And again, 'Never.Fuckingnever.Never as bad as this. It was alright saying ye had to relax, ye had to take it easy, it was alright saying that but ye cannay always manage…. Sammy folded his arms, he closed his eyes, he felt like sleeping' (*Late*, p.44).

Fantasies of refusal escalate into imaginings of disappearance. For Sammy 'life was too claustrophobic, ye couldnay cope with it. He had to get away' (*Late*, p.258). Significantly, *How Late It Was, How Late* culminates in Sammy's disappearance out of sight into a taxi: 'he tapped forwards, waving his stick in the air…The driver had opened the door. Sammy slung in the bag and stepped inside, then the door slammed shut and that was him, out of sight' (*Late*, p.373). Sammy's disappearance does not constitute the kind of 'quick fix' that, by removing disability, restores normalcy at the level of narration. Rather, it presents Sammy's escape from subordination to capital, as capitalism is defined by the freedom of both worker and capitalist,[69] and as an escape from the state which is endowed with the 'institutional invisibility' that attends practices of everyday resistance (Scott, 1985, p.36). These do not make for success in terms of bureaucratic processes but finally afford dignity for Sammy.

Anti-work antagonism too is intensified via disability in *The Devil's Carousel*. In the stories a recurrent theme is the possibility of things going wrong, machines breaking down and workers becoming hurt. In the second story, 'Walking the Widow', Scott Wainbeck, responsible for showing Laker the ropes regarding the office telex machine, explains '"The widow"'s a nickname for the main assembly track' as 'there's so many guys conking with ticker shutdowns or brain blow-outs that the local hospital here calls one of its wards The Centaur Recovery Unit' (*Devil's*,p.13). He continues, 'the most important thing to keep'n mind, Laker, is that mistakes cost: if you screw-up, then the ops follow suit; make

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[69] John Holloway, 'Capital Moves', *Capital and Class*, 57 (1995), available on Lib.com
https://libcom.org/library/capital-moves-john-holloway

a balls of the line-sequence and the car-shells'll start to boomerang' (*Devil's*, p.14). Crucially, once Laker has completed the tour of the factory, he reflects on the contrast provided by the detailed warnings he has been given with respect to machine maintenance and the 'lack of reference to the damage inflicted upon men and women by having to repeat the same actions over'nd over. True, Wainbeck'd referred to heart attacks and strokes but he'd said zilch about mental injury' (*Devil's*, p.18). Indeed, 'nor for a single moment… was he fooled into believing that modern car plants were humane places, and that they rated concern for their workforce as a prime consideration' (*Devil's*, p.18). He continues 'No, to give credence to the preposterous notion that there was such a thing as a humane car plant was only a step away from accepting the tyrant's claim that his regime was a benign one because at executions his firing squads always fixed silencers to their weapons'. With this in mind, 'Laker began to wish he'd acted upon his earlier intuition to cut'n run' (*Devil's*, p.18).

Many of the rest of the stories validate Laker's fears about how disabilities flourish in the plant. 'Night of the Worm' is a story entirely devoted to recounting how a worker, Wormsley, starts experiencing the symptoms of a heart attack and the failure to take these seriously results in his death. The story opens with Wormsley explaining to his workmate Butcher that he has been having difficulty putting his boot on; immediately after this, we witness how 'Wormsley pressed a hand to his chest. His heart had begun to behave oddly, leaping and skipping like a salmon on the rocks' (*Devil's*, p.29). When, at a certain point, 'a huge pain opened like a firework in his chest, crackled ominously in its cavity for some

seconds, and then spluttered out', Wormsley believes it has been caused by indigestion. It is in the hope of alleviating this that he decides to seek medical help (*Devil's*,p.30). When he reaches the surgery, the seriousness of his condition becomes clearer: 'Normally, even if you hopped into the surgery carrying your own leg, the Centaur medics had but one panacea – aspirin'; however the nurses had 'been known to grudgingly issue the odd sick-pass – a matter of small comfort to its recipient for it was a virtual death sentence, proof to the sick person that he or she was suffering from something that was undoubtedly terminal' (*Devil's*,p.33). Wormsley understands he is in a difficult position when the nurse sends him home with a letter to give to his GP. He interprets the nurse's words as 'something equivalent to 'And you shall be taken to a place designated, and there be hanged by the neck until you are dead' (*Devil's*, p.35). We finally witness Wormsely's death: he is 'plodding along now like a deep-sea diver, many fathoms deep… air running out. A slab of rock seemed to be crushing his chest' (*Devil's*, p.36). We learn that 'After the miracle of being granted a sick-pass on the nightshift he'd been found dead on the step of a fishmonger's shop near his home. Apparently he'd suffered a heart-attack' (*Devil's*, p.44).

A counterpart to the portrayal of physical illness provided in 'Night of the Worm' is the representation of worker McQuirr's mental breakdown in 'The Fade', again situated in a framework of failure to take symptoms of ill-health seriously. Everything starts with McQuirr receiving a letter from the company which 'thanked him for his job application but regretted its inability at this time to grant him employment at Centaur…. For McQuirr, who'd been working at the

plant for over a decade, this was mind-bending news' (*Devil's*, p.160). Following this, we witness McQuirr feeling 'the odd sensation he'd had of being adrift form his body', as well as 'Panic, like pronged lightning' (*Devil's*, p.161). Crucially, despite the fact that 'administrative cock-up, that's all it'd been' and 'he'd accepted the apology… the obsession had continued to haunt him that the Centaur Car Company was still intent on striking him from its payroll' (*Devil's*,p.161). McQuirr's mental breakdown worsens and culminates in his becoming involved in an accident of which two versions exist: 'officially, the incident… never happened. The personnel records might show, "Dismissed due to industrial misconduct" or, more accurately, "Discharged for medical reasons"'; on the other hand, McQuirr's working partner's version has it that McQuirr 'made confetti' of a batch of metal sheets and darted towards other workers with a glue can (*Devil's*, p.169). Tellingly, this happens against a background in which the Centaur Car Company does not 'employ an industrial psychologist. When faced with the mental casualties that came off-track with their cars, the Company [tends] to rely upon the "it-never-happened' strategy"'; therefore 'with a blanket of secrecy thrown over him, the unfortunate "breakdown" would be taken to the edge of some administrative ravine and hurled over' (*Devil's*, p.162). The title of the story speaks directly to these cover ups and failures of care, which result in how 'now and again the wan phantom of a victim might be seen wandering in its old working area but inevitably it would fade away' (*Devil's*, p.163).

**A.L. Kennedy's *Looking for the Possible Dance*, Jessie Kesson's *Where the***

**_Apple Ripens & Other Stories_, Agnes Owens's _For the Love of Willie_: Resisting the Violence of Relationships of Care and Care Institutions**

A.L. Kennedy's _Looking for the Possible Dance_, Jessie Kesson's 'The Gowk', 'Good Friday' and 'Dear Edith…', and  Agnes Owens's _For the Love of Willie_ thematise disability as an intensified focus of antagonism and resistance to the dehumanisation and violence that are the norm in care settings under a capitalist system where vulnerability to abuse is inseparable from class disadvantage. Kesson's rendition of the constraining violence of institutionalisation speaks to her own biography, in particular to the time she spent in an orphanage after being removed from her mother's care by the courts. Isobel Murray suggests that whether 'in Elgin slum or institution, whether orphanage or hospital… [Kesson's] main characters strive to retain some privacy, some distance around them, some element of control over circumstances, however constraining'.[70] In the stories under consideration, characters' dignity is foregrounded through the careful rendition of the interstitial acts of resistance they put up, reminiscent of Holloway's idea that 'dignity is to assert one's humanity in a society which treats us inhumanly' (Holloway 1996, p.24).  Indeed, Kesson's stories, as well as Owens' novella, are organised by a double concern with the violence inflicted on disabled people in the community or care homes, pitted against the spaces of solidarity and liberation created by their protagonists. Kesson's 'The Gowk' dramatises the violent act of institutionalisation, preceded by the unwelcome,

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[70] Isobel Murray, 'Jessie Kesson: Writing Her Self' (1997)
http://asls.arts.gla.ac.uk/Laverock-Jessie_Kesson.html

conspicuous presence of disability in a small community, as well as the different order on which the relationship between Jock, a disabled man, and his father develops. Kesson's 'Good Friday' and 'Dear Edith…' respectively portray the reality of life in a psychiatric institution and in a care home, defined by the protagonists' refusal to subscribe and adhere to the rules of conduct set by a medical establishment which dismisses their subjectivity and needs. Owens' *For the Love of Willie* is informed by similar concerns but the antagonism of the residents of the care home at the centre of the story is foregrounded more powerfully, alongside the solidarity on which this relies. All stories draw attention to the clash between on the one hand communities and institutions that deprive individuals of dignity in proportion as they deviate from the standard of normalcy and independence and, on the other, relationships of solidarity between residents which prefigure the richness of a society in which 'impairment is the rule, and normalcy is the fantasy' (Davis 2002, p.31).

As for Kennedy's *Looking For the Possible Dance*, it follows Margaret Hamilton as she develops an understanding of life painfully marked by the perception of overwhelming constraint and vulnerability under overlapping systems of oppression – state and its institutions including the medical establishment, capitalism, and normalcy. These are interrupted only by fleeting, precious moments of dignity. In this way, on the one hand it powerfully echoes a dismodernist sensibility whereby disability can be read as a lens through which to develop 'a critique of and a politics to discuss how all groups, based on physical traits or markings, are selected for disablement by a larger system of regulation

and signification' (Davis 2002, p.29). On the other hand, it portrays the development of spaces of dignity in the face of humiliation and alienation which culminate in the exchanges between Margaret and James, a severely disabled man in a wheelchair who cannot speak that Margaret meets on the train. If, as Holloway argues, the starting point for the analysis of society is the scream as 'the drive to change society radically' (Holloway 2002, p.37), James' alternative form of communication functions precisely as Holloway's scream which, by making discrimination visible, simultaneously interrogates the hegemony of normalcy in society, and calls for its overcoming.

In line with this, on the one hand, *Looking For the Possible Dance* is pervaded by anxiety about the constraints and violence of the capitalist system. Holloway suggests that under capitalism 'there is a filtering out of anything that is not compatible with the reproduction of capitalist social relations'. This operates either as outright repression of revolutionary activity or as 'a less perceptible filtering, a sidelining or suppression of passions, loves, hates, anger, laughter, dancing' (Holloway 1996, p.23). It is the latter that constitutes Kennedy's main concern in the novel. The notice at Margaret's workplace captures this

'TO ALL CENTRE ASSISTANTS

REMEMBER the REPUTATION of the CENTRE is in your hands.

Although the CENTRE is open to all, ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOR,

POLITICAL DEBATE and agitation on behalf of DUBIOUS

MINORITIES cannot be tolerated.

…

SINGING, DANCING, FIGHTING, DOMINOES, or OTHER

GAMBLING, ALCOHOL, CHIPS, FISHING MAGGOTS and

CLIMBING BOOTS are forbidden. As are RELIGIOUS TRACTS of THE

ALTENATIVE kind.

AT ALL TIMES, BE AWARE. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE' (*Looking*,

p.25)

The filtering out capitalism requires takes a literal form when Margaret is sacked

on the basis of allegations of misconduct, fabricated by her employer. The

violence of capitalism escalates further as Margaret's boyfriend Colin is crucified

in punishment for his thwarting of a local loan-shark.

The counterpart of Margaret's denunciation of the violence of capitalism is

provided by James' perceptivity to the injustice he suffers under normalcy,

exemplified by how the two women that accompany him see him as a burden. To

the question 'work with them, do you…. the Handicapped' that James' aunt asks

Margaret, she replies 'no, no. I mean, sometimes groups came to the place where I

worked. We had good access. I mean, they're only people, no, I don't work with

them'. To this the woman responds, 'we don't work with them either, dear. We

just have them with us, day and night' (*Looking*, p.157). As opposed to the

unwanted presence James represents for his family, Margaret encounters in him

one of the very few 'PEOPLE YOU CAN TALK TO', as the man writes for her

'very quickly, as if he were hurrying to save her from embarrassment. The way a

friend would' (*Looking*, p.191). Throughout the journey Margaret registers awareness of the precariousness of the experience she is living on the train. This draws attention to the search for dignity that runs through *Looking for the Possible Dance*, from the reclamation of 'one's humanity in a society which treats us inhumanly' to reclamation of 'control over one's life in a society which denies such control' (Holloway, 1996, p.24). Both are powerfully intensified through James' own assertions of dignity:

'PEOPLE YOU CAN TALK TO

'Yes.,. You meet people you can talk to and be yourself with. Not often, but you do. Are you yourself now?'

YES NO PILLS NO JAGS ALL MEEEE

'One-hundred per cent James Watt. I'm honoured.'

FUC

'Away you go. You should learn to take compliments better, then you'll get more.'

FUC WON HUNNER PERCEN MEEEEE

Which was all that seemed to matter at the time. She hopes no one manages to change that' (*Looking*, p.191)

The denunciation of refusals of care happening at the community level also focuses Kesson's 'The Gowk'. The story is interwoven with images of exclusion and imprisonment which prefigure Jock's ultimate institutionalisation.

At the start of the story we are told 'you'd felt pity for the Gowk, when yourself was young. And he was a boy – debarred. Clutching the school gates'; however, 'in manhood, this on-looking compulsion was still with him. But you had outgrown pity. Revulsion, tinged with apprehension, had taken its place' ('Gowk', p.416). How images of imprisonment at the start of the story anticipate Jock's final institutionalisation is immediately suggested by local villager Jean Aitken, who suggests that the man 'should have been lockit up and away a long time ago' ('Gowk', p.416). After local young woman Liz becomes pregnant after being assaulted by the Gowk, rumours start that the Gowk is responsible for Liz's pregnancy and in the village the common sense becomes that 'that Gowk should never be allowed to roam the countryside' ('Gowk', p.425). His powerlessness at defending himself results in his institutionalisation. As Jock's stepmother Kate Riddrie explains, 'it's Liz's word against a Gowk's word. And he's got none. At least none that anybody could make any sense out of' ('Gowk', p.428).

In powerful dialogue with these representations of the denial of voice normalcy inflicts on disabled subjects can be put Kennedy's representation of the exchanges through which human dignity and solidarity become the defining feature of crip relationships, as we will see. These will fulfil the search for dignity that Margaret pursues from the start of the novel. As Holloway explains, 'truth is dignity, having the dignity to say at last the "Enough!"' and 'dignity is to assert one's humanity in a society which treats us inhumanly' (Holloway 1996, p.24). Under capitalist normalcy, this inevitably means 'to live in the present the Not Yet for which we struggle' (Holloway 1996, p.24). This spirit poignantly defines the

opening passage of *Looking for the Possible Dance*, which will haunt the rest of the novel through its call for a perspective of dignity: Margaret's father tells her 'the moon looks down at us and we look up at her and it's wonderful. She's telling us, "Everything else is a waste of time"' (*Looking*, p.1). Later in the book, when Margaret and her dad recall that moment, Margaret's father repeats 'you'll grow up, you see, and do things and run about and you'll think that what you're doing is important, but it's not' (*Looking*, p.5). And adds, in ways that resonate with Holloway's idea that 'to be armed with truth or dignity is to assert the power of living now that which is not yet' (Holloway 1996, p.24), 'being alive is important. Everything *else* is a waste of time' (*Looking*, p.5). A similar logic informs the advice that Webster, a mysterious man who repeatedly appears in the novel, gives Colin after his crucifixion 'you have to burn your light through, Colin, drink it all down, have it all inside you. Do every tiny thing you want to do. It's the small things that matter, you'll always regret the small things you left undone' (*Looking*, p.131).

In Kennedy's novel, a dismodernist vision is articulated through the tension between narratives of entrapment and dialogues that tear through these by offering perspectives internal to vulnerable characters' imaginings or prefiguration of a non-oppressive reality of care. As anticipated, this is achieved by the communication between Margaret and James. James' disability perspective and crip form of expression are rendered as Holloway's 'dissonant, discordant, often inarticulate scream: sometimes no more than a mumble, sometimes tears of frustration, sometimes a confident roar – but all pointing to the upside-downness

of the world, to the untruth of the world' (Holloway 1995, p.155). The narrative of disability that revolves around the figure of James runs counter to those identified by contemporary analyses of disability representation that 'dehumanises and objectifies its subject',[71] while confining disabled characters to 'the margins of fiction as uncomplicated figures or exotic aliens whose bodily configurations operate as spectacles'.[72] James' story and perspective make the most of the revolutionary potential that lies in how 'disability defies correction and tends to operate according to its own idiosyncratic rules'.[73] In the figure of James, revolutionary and disability logics merge as James is presented to us as asleep, 'knowing he shares his name with a leading Industrial Revolutionary – a man of steam who disapproved of trains' (*Looking*, p.71).

James' stance is articulated through crip modes of expression and movement. From a disability studies perspective, the impossibility of reconciling politicised and medicalised disability models resides in how 'resistance to cure or successful rehabilitation determines disability's unnatural status in medical and social discourse' (Mitchell and Snyder 1997, p.4). At the same time, as Oliver points out, issues of control are at stake: 'the debate is not just about services but also about the politics of control; who should be in charge of the rehabilitation

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[71] Paul Anthony, 'The Elephant Man (David Lynch, EMI Films, 1980): An Analysis from a Disabled Perspective' in *Disability & Society*, Vol.9, No.3 (1994), p.327

[72] Rosemarie Garland Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p.9

[73] David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, 'Introduction: Disability Studies and the Double Bind of Representation' in *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourses of Disability*, ed. by David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), p.4

process, disabled people or the professionals?'.[74] These issues ground the rejection of the original definition of disability 'as an individual problem requiring medical treatment'.[75] James' refusal of control and conventions is delivered unmediated through James' own words as he 'can't speak… but he can write some things' (*Looking*, p.56). As Margaret watches the man writing, we too are allowed to witness James' subversive manipulation of his means of communication behind the back of his aunt and mother:

> 'The letters shiver away from his hand.
>
> FUC OF
>
> 'I see.'
>
> 'Said hello, have you, Jamie?'
>
> 'Something like that'.
>
> 'Well, just ignore him if he gives you any nonsense. He wants attention.'
> The smaller, darker woman dips out into the corridor. 'I'm going to get
> some tea. That thermos is tainted.' James follows her laboriously with
> FUC OF TO' (*Looking*, p.57)

In parallel, the rejection of systemic constraint and violence is apparent through James' performance of the right to perform his bodily difference

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[74] Mike Oliver, 'Re-defining Disability: A Challenge to Research' in *Disabling Barriers – Enabling Environments*, ed. by John Swain, Vic Finkelstein, Sally French and Mike Oliver (London and New Delhi: Sage, 1993), p.61

[75] Mike Oliver, 'A Sociology of Disability or a Disablist Sociology?' in *Disability & Society: Emerging Issues and Insights*, ed. by Len Barton (London and New York: Longman 1996), p.29

antagonistically, rather than apologetically.

> 'James shivers and scrunches his fingers, lets out a smile. He is about to enjoy himself. He begins to eat his Snowball, not entirely carefully, and Snowballs should always be eaten with great care.
>
> Almost five minutes pass before anyone speaks.
>
> 'James Watt, you will never, ever be given one of those things again. That was a treat. And now you've spoiled it.'
>
> James shrugs his hands. A few more fragments of coconut fall and stick to the table-top.
>
> 'James, this is ridiculous. That is enough. I'm sorry, he's perfectly capable of eating like anyone else. He just isn't trying' (*Looking*, p.68).

The power of James' inappropriateness is increased by the contrast with the way in which he is introduced to us as an objectified concentrate of politeness and subordination – which nevertheless has caused delay to other travellers: Margaret considers 'the train seems to hang by the platform for longer than it should', before noticing how 'lifted waist high by a staggering guard, a boy appears. A boy or perhaps a man, his face seems older than his body… arranged like a basket of flowers, a limb display' (*Looking*, p.55). In contrast to James' initial decorous appearance, his insubordination is immediately intimated by the conversation between the man and his aunt: 'we're all going to Warrington, aren't we James?', she asks, and 'James makes a noise which could be "Yes" or "No" or

"Maybe" or "I hate Warrington and wish never to see it again"' (*Looking*, p.56).

The condemnation of James' behaviour by his mother and aunt provides a

measure of how disability is 'a social and political category in that it entails

practices of regulation'.[76] Margaret engages with James, responding to

inappropriateness with inappropriateness in ways that create a sphere for herself

and James that sets them apart from the appropriate space of their fellow

travellers:


'BOR

'What?'

YOU BORIN

'Well, you'd better talk to me then, or I'll go back to thinking and be even

more boring. Cheeky bastard.'

OOOO SHOCKED

For the second time, Margaret laughed too loudly to go unnoticed and

James joined her, applauding softly' (*Looking*, p.129).


The rejection of systemic constraint and humiliation and the simultaneous

creation of an alternative system of relationships is what constitutes the space of

resistance Margaret and James create on the train. Kaye Mitchell has underlined

the importance of the 'journey motif' in *Looking for the Possible Dance*,[77] and

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[76] Len Barton, 'The Struggle for Citizenship: The Case of Disabled people' in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, Vol.8, No.3 (1993), pp.238-9
[77] Kaye Mitchell, *A.L. Kennedy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), p.59

Margaret indeed reflects on the unique space for special encounters that trains can provide: 'it's different on trains… you can relax here – this isn't anywhere. Whatever happens outside, there's nothing we can do about it right now' (*Looking*, p.191). Crucially, the antagonism towards illegitimate institutional interventions, inflected through a disability perspective, is communicated through James' rejection of the medical establishment in conversation with Margaret:

       'What do you think of doctors? Do you go to doctors?'

ARSOLE

…

WAN ME BE DIFFREN SHAPE I SAY NO

'I don't understand, James.'

DIFFREN

'There's a "t" at the end of that.'

DIFFRENT FUC

'Ok, take it easy.'

MEAN THEY NOT LIK ME AS I AM

'I'm sure they do like you. I'm sure they do.'

NO

'I like you as you are.'

CHEAT' (*Looking*, p.125).

In Kesson's 'The Gowk', a similar space of resistance and care is set up by Jock's father. This animates the narrative of a different conception of human dignity to that underpinning the community's hostility towards the Gowk.  To a hostile community is opposed Hugh Riddrie's love for his son. Their tender relationship is epitomised by their form of communication which, 'though primitive, was natural'; in it, 'tone of voice transcended interpretation. And monologue, comprehended by the listener, gave release to the speaker' ('Gowk', p.425). Aptly, when the Gowk's father's wife tells him 'what on earth can anybody say to a GOWK!', he finds himself 'searching dumbly for words, that could be put into words. *Knowing* them. Thousands of them. Words that often weren't words at all, but instincts.Transmitted by tone and touch' ('Gowk', p.429). He responds, 'you can say *anything* to a Gowk […] Anything at all. That's the best thing about Gowks. They never tell. And that's the worst thing about them. They cannot tell' ('Gowk', p.429). And indeed, from the start of the story, a sense of inability to protect Jock pervades his father, who 'had long since found that words failed to justify to himself the existence of his idiot son. And was beginning to discover that they failed even to protect him' ('Gowk', p.417).

Kesson's other stories and Owens' novella focus on relationships, violence and resistance within care institutions. If, for Holloway, the starting point for the analysis of society is the scream, this is because it leads 'us to place the question of doing in the centre of our discussion' and to focus on 'the antagonism between doing and done' (Holloway 2002, p.39). In the stories to which I will now turn, the slippage between doing and done plays out in the sphere of patient-nurse

relationships, patient solidarity, as well as relationships and acts of writing not accepted by institutions. 'Good Friday' is a story about endless institutionalisation which leaves the protagonist at the mercy of the resident doctor's decision to judge her cured or not. The protagonist's monologue informs us of this: 'you weren't a daftie. Acute neurasthenia. That was all that ailed you. It had no symptoms. At least, none you yourself recognised. Except when the passing of time took hold of you like a terror' ('Friday', p.452). The story is organised by a series of moments that have recurred for years in the life of the protagonist, lending it a feeling of never-ending repetition. First, standing at a window 'that looked down on the outside world… A vigil shared with Miss Henly' every morning ('Friday', p.452). Secondly, the knitting, with the protagonist's sock having 'gone far beyond human dimensions, in a year of weaving' ('Friday', p.455). Third, the failure of the telephone to ring: 'even silent, cradled in its own shining aura of black magic, it never lost potential power. Some day. One day, it would ring for you' ('Friday', p.455). The story is similarly punctuated by the appearance of a series of characters that invest the life of the protagonist with a feeling of never-ending repetition. On the one hand is Madge, the 'invisible tormentor… Dusting the bed rails. A task unending. Set upon her by Hercules' ('Friday', p.454). On the other hand is Jean, pushing the laundry and having been 'too long inside to ever want to go outside' ('Friday', p.456).

For the Love of Willie carries the same denunciation of medical power we encounter in 'Friday', and is similarly set in a psychiatric hospital. However, the focus is on the ways in which two elderly patients, Peggy and the Duchess,

navigate such oppression, and on the friendship that helps them do so. The two female protagonists are introduced to us side by side: 'two patients sit on the veranda of a cottage hospital run by a local authority for females with mental problems, some of them long-term and incurable' (*Willie*, p.267). Theirs is a teasing relationship and we witness how Peggy makes jokes about the Duchess all the time: when the latter says 'the nurses say that for my age I've the best legs in the ward', the former retorts 'at that rate when you're six feet under you'll have the best skeleton in the cemetery, if anyone cares to dig it up' (*Willie*, p.272). Crucially, their friendship is strengthened by the solidarity Peggy and the Duchess provide to each other when it comes to resisting the nurses' authority. When the Duchess refuses to eat, Peggy says 'it's a wonder they haven't done you in long ago. Give me that liver and I'll get rid of it' and throws it out of the window. This prompts the Duchess to exclaim 'I don't know what I'd do without you' (*Willie*, p.286). Also, when the Duchess insists on needing a bedpan, Peggy tells her 'I like the way you stuck out for that bedpan. For once you got the better of [the nurse]' (*Willie*, p.291). The death of the Duchess after the nurses fail to provide her with a bedpan triggers Peggy's anger: she shouts 'if they'd got the old woman a bedpan sooner she'd probably have been ok', and when told that the Duchess might not last the day, she replies 'I bet she won't… They'll have been giving her one of those lethal injections to finish her off' (*Willie*, p.338).

The relationship between Peggy and the Duchess also revolves around Peggy's writing her memoirs as a way of building a space of resistance to the one defined by the regulations that regulate life in the hospital. This, in the novella, is

a practice that enacts dignity as 'projection-beyond-its-denial-to-a-different-world, as a presently existing not-yet' (Holloway 2002, p.35). At the start of the novel Peggy tells the Duchess 'I remember lots of things. That's why I'm writing a book… About my life before they put me inside' (*Willie*, p.323). For Peggy the writing represents a strategy of survival in the hospital. The Duchess captures this by telling her 'keep writing and get it all out of your system, and don't forget to let the world know what is going on in here, how they keep us doped up most of the time so we won't complain' (*Willie*, p.296). Aptly, Peggy's writing meets with hostility from the nurses: when Peggy asks a nurse for more writing paper, she senses by her tone that 'she'd either forget or had no intention of seeing' (*Willie*, p.331). The writing space of resistance is also built by Peggy's reading to the Duchess, despite the frequent arguments they have. After one such argument, the latter says 'I know I'm always saying the wrong thing, but I am interested in what you write… It's just that I don't feel well and I think I'm going to die'. To this Peggy replies 'oh yeah… Well, before you die listen to this'and 'she took out the pad from her pocket and began to read aloud' (*Willie*, p.325). Significantly, once the Duchess dies, Peggy realises the importance of their friendship to her survival in her care home. Peggy is portrayed as taking 'from under her vest the jotter and pencil she always kept and read aloud the chapter she had written' (*Willie*, p.338). She reflects, 'there was one whose advice or opinion she could ask now that the Duchess had gone. The Duchess had not been good on advice but she'd always been strong on opinion' (*Willie*, p.350).

'Dear Edith' analogously dramatises the creation of a space of resistance. Central to this creative act writing as a practice of unalienated doing that exists as a form of resistance to its very denial (Holloway 2002, p.35). The story is punctuated by Old Cresswell's thoughts in the form of letters starting with 'Dear Edith', and it is through this letter-writing that resistance is recorded and we are afforded access to Old Cresswell's crip perspective. In a letter Old Cresswell reflects 'when we come to be a burden to others, we will find our *own* way out' ('Edith', p.472); in another, she confides 'what affects me, Edith, what frightens me most, is the anticipation with which what I can only describe as "medical days" are looked forward to…. For the "medical days" have become the highlights of our weeks, of our existence' ('Edith', p.476). Finally, she writes, reflecting on Christmas as 'a contest of cards' and on whether its purpose is 'to see which of us can lay claim to the largest number of cards received, to prove something to ourselves? That we still have friends?' ('Edith', p.480). Old Cresswell also writes to Edith about her resistance to staff intrusions, for example when she is put under pressure to go for walks. Mrs Cresswell writes 'I know, Edith, I know I should be grateful for all that the Committee Ladies try to do for us, it's just, I get so tired of *having* to feel grateful' ('Edith', p.473).

Both *Looking for the Possible Dance* and 'The Gowk' culminate with the disappearance of their disabled protagonists. The dissolution of Margaret and James' space of solidarity is rendered through the image of James being carried off the train, with the buckles 'all in place' around him (*Looking*, p.170), and that of Margaret realising that 'she has a tightness in her throat as the carriage edges

into movement' (*Looking*, p.170). Margaret's reaction suggests how in *Looking for the Possible Dance* James' disappearance signifies the opposite of a cathartic end; is not 'the fall of the tragic character into either a real (that is, narrated) death or a (again, narrated) living death' intended to 'aid the disavowal, the catharsis, of the non-disabled audiences' (Hevey, 1993, p.118). Rather, it generates a sense of mourning for the passing of the crip space of dignity Margaret and James had hoped to make permanent. As for 'The Gowk', at the end we are confronted with the Gowk's absence and his father's reflections on the injustice the Gowk has suffered. He says to his wife 'You'll be satisfied *now* then Kate. You've gotten your will. You've gotten rid of Jockie, at last' ('Gowk', p.429).

Owens' novella ends with a reconfiguration of Peggy's space of resistance, where the void left by writing the nurses have taken from her is filled by a new companion, after the death of the Duchess. When informed of her imminent discharge, Peggy is not happy as the matron would have expected: she explains '[I want] to stay and finish my writing… I'm writing a novel and I don't want to be distracted from it. Being would distract me so much I might not be able to continue' (*Willie*, p.346). To this the matron responds, 'This isn't a holiday camp where one can lounge about writing novels, and I'm sure you'll have fewer distractions in a place of your own than in here' (*Willie*, p.347). Institutional violence is epitomised by staff getting rid of Peggy's writing: Peggy had told the nurse she would donate her manuscript to the hospital but when it dawns on Peggy 'she'd never see her manuscript again. They would have chucked it in the bin' (*Willie*, p.351), she is not allowed to take it back. However, the story ends

with Peggy's encounter with a new flat mate with whom she shares the flat into which she is discharged: 'a white-haired old lady with the gaze of a child' (*Willie*, p.352). Peggy decides she will look after the lady, thinking 'It was obvious the woman needed someone to look after her, as well as the cat. For a start it would learn to sleep on the floor. If this was to be her home, she certainly wasn't having a sofa covered in hairs' (*Willie*, p.353). The destruction of Peggy's writing, thus, does not amount to the loss of the space of dignity it provided because it is recreated by the opening up of a new space of solidarity and care.

In Kesson's 'Dear Edith' and 'Friday', acts of dignity triumph as the stories end in ways that validate the disabled protagonists' perspectives, devalued by staff in the care homes, as having from the start embodied 'the materiality of the scream, the truth which allows us to speak of the existing world as untrue' (Holloway 2002, p.35). 'Dear Edith' ends in such a way that Old Cresswell's claims to have written to Edith are vindicated when her sheets are found after her death: '"Warden! Warden!" the assistant's voice halted the Warden at the door. "Look at this! [...] Writing paper. Pages and Pages!"' ('Edith', p.484). The conclusion to 'Friday' is a happy ending which speaks back to the title, which prefigures liberation from the institution. This materialises thanks to the protagonist's knowledge of what to say and what not to say to the resident doctor in order to be discharged. This knowledge has been built through conversation with other inmates: she is approached by the doctor, who asks her 'And how are you this morning?' and we learn that because that 'was the doctor who held the keys to outside… you remembered not to wring your hands. And your feet,

clamped firmly down on the wooden floor, kept your legs form shaking'('Friday', p.460).

**Conclusion**

Jeff Torrington's *The Devil's Carousel*, Agnes Owens' *For the Love of Willie*, Jessie Kesson's selected short stories, A.L. Kennedy's *Looking for the Possible Dance* and James Kelman's *How Late It Was, How Late* simultaneously speak to, and exceed, the discourse on defeatism that has circulated in Scottish studies since the 1980s and 1990s. They feature bleak representations of society, but these are sharpened through the centrality of disability narratives. Disability and socio-economic distress in the stories under consideration thus work not as metaphors for unwelcome traits of the Scottish psyche but as vehicles for a denunciation of the violence of capitalism and its welfare state. In so doing, they expose the nationalist impulse that haunts the nationed framework of Scottish literature as well as the need for approaches to Scottish writing that acknowledge the structural constraints this framework predicates and, in response to this, attend to the narratives it makes invisible.

**Chapter Four**

**Crip Negativities**

**Disability and Refusals of Care and Work in Post-War Scottish Writing**

In the three decades following the Second World War, the welfare state regime developed based on specific concepts of work and institutionalised care defined by class compromise and technocratic management. Colin Hay proposes the term *post-war settlement* to refer to 'the relationship between the state, the economy, civil society and the public sphere' that became institutionalised in post-war Britain, and the term *post-war compromise* to refer to 'the form of the capital-labour relation' assumed under the welfare state regime. This was characterised by '*compromise* or accord with labour' in ways that lay 'the foundations for a period of relative social harmony'.[1] This chapter will engage both with the post-war settlement (as an articulation of institutional relationships and responsibilities), and with the post-war compromise (as a form of capital-labour relation) as they are dramatised in post-war narratives of disability in Scottish writing. In doing so, it will explore the ways in which the commodifying logic of a capitalist system that reifies subjects for exploitation is rendered through the refusal and the resistance it encounters, crucially amplified by narratives organised around disabled characters and their encounter with the two dimensions of the welfare state regime: waged work and care-work. My analysis

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[1] Colin Hay, *Re-Stating Social and Political Change* (Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1996), p.44

will focus on Robin Jenkins' *The Cone-Gatherers* (1955),[2] Naomi Mitchison's

*Memoirs of a Spacewoman* (1962),[3] Muriel Spark's *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*

(1963)[4] and Alasdair Gray's *Lanark* (1981)[5] as all these texts portray practices of

institutional care and work in terms of the non-identity experienced by their

subjects in relation to the concept of their role. It will argue that in these narratives

disability functions as a prism, intensifier and originator of non-identity between

the concept and the experience of subjects of work and care. Through the prism of

narratives of disability, the novels under consideration either call out this non-

identity or dramatise refusals of work and inadequate care in ways that delineate

an autonomist disability perspective on work and welfare.

The main body of my investigation will follow a bipartite structure. The

first section will examine how autonomist narratives of disability in Robin

Jenkins' *The Cone-Gatherers* and Naomi Mitchison's *Memoirs of a Spacewoman*

represent the intersection between practices of care and work in a form of

'Delinquent (Care-)Work'. My analysis will argue that both novels are organised

by a mode of negative dialectics which highlights the slippage between the

concept and the experience of care and work in a context haunted by the legacies

of the Second World War and of eugenics. The second section will engage with

how autonomist narratives of disability in Muriel Spark's *The Ballad of Peckham*

*Rye* and Alasdair Gray's *Lanark* foreground the same non-identity between

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[2] Robin Jenkins, *The Cone-Gatherers* (Longman, 1991)
[3] Naomi Mitchison, *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* (London: The Women's Press, 1985)
[4] Muriel Spark, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* (Penguin Books, 1963)
[5] Alasdair Gray, *Lanark: A Life in 4 Books* (London: Picador, 1994); Gray's novel is considered in this chapter by virtue of several of its chapters having been written and published between the late 1950s and the late 1970s

concept and reality of care and work under welfare capitalism through their dramatisation of a proliferation of 'Refusals of Care and Work'. In this introduction I am going to situate the literary texts I will be examining in the political context of the post-war welfare state, in relation to the fortunes of Scottish nationalism, and within the framework of Scottish literature. In doing so, I will reflect on the tensions these positionings can create.

## Autonomist Narratives of Disability and the Golden Age of Welfare Capitalism

The autonomist narratives of disability that will be the focus of this chapter problematise discussions of the intersection between nationalist and labour movements in ways that can be helpful for thinking their position within a national framework of analysis such as that provided by Scottish literature as a discipline. Theorists that have analysed the relationship between socialism and nationalism during the period under consideration have explored how the two were not irreconcilable. For Michael Keating and David Bleiman, there persists a difference between the two movements' rationales, grounded in how the concerns of the latter 'appear to be "above" all class interests, while the former express the interests of particular sections of society, interests which come and go as society develops, while the national identity is timeless'.[6] Class and nationalist politics become reconcilable when the class enemy appears to be foreign, when national

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[6] Michael Keating and David Bleiman, *Labour and Scottish Nationalism* (London and Basingstoke: the Macmillan Press Ltd, 1979), p.1

independence becomes 'a tactical necessity for the advance of the working class' and when a labour movement is forced 'to take on board other demands' (Keating and Bleiman, p.12). The autonomist narratives of disability that will be the focus of this chapter are concerned with the ways in which disability is excluded from, and subversive of, attempts at integration within society and the local or national community, as these reproduce the structures and principles of capitalist normalcy with which disability clashes.

Explanations for the rise of the welfare state alternatively root its development in a sense of collective solidarity or in social divisions and unrest. For Richard Titmuss the welfare state emerged out of a sense of collective solidarity created by the Second World War as people in Britain became convinced that their country 'had something better to offer than had [its] enemies – not only during but after the war'; this materialised in the form of social measures 'centred round the primary needs of the whole population irrespective of class, creed or military category'.[7] At the other end of the spectrum, for John Saville it was the struggles of the working class that dictated 'the pace and tempo of social reform'.[8] Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward concur with Saville that 'expansive relief policies' such as those associated with the welfare state 'are designed to mute civil disorder, and… reinforce work norms', from a perspective which stresses how relief-giving is a secondary and supportive institution that must be analysed in relation to 'the functions it serves for the larger economic and

[7] Richard Titmuss, *Essays on the Welfare State* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1958), pp.82-3
[8] John Saville, 'The Welfare State: an historical approach' in *The New reasoned*, Vol.1 No.3 (1957), pp.5-6

political order'.[9] The novels under consideration represent communities divided along class and power lines that are difficult to square with Titmuss' reading.

This is especially the case when narratives of disability are explicitly considered as these illuminate the purported universalism of the welfare state regime as a fiction, and denounce its 'technocracy, managerialism and paternalism' (Hay, p.57) as constraining care provision. This resonates with critiques of the development of disability benefits and rehabilitation services under welfare capitalism as having occurred in response to the 'major social and economic changes of the first half of this century', from the shortage of manpower, unemployment and the political threat of social unrest following the two world wars, to developments in medical science. These accounts are guilty of neglecting 'the nature and quality of the new contracts between individuals and society which were ultimately created'.[10]Anne Borsay specifically discusses social policy in relation to disabled people in terms of persisting marginalisation: on her account, since the Industrial Revolution, and into the present day, 'social policies have created and sustained the discrimination that continues to make disabled people excluded citizens',[11] as a result of purportedly neutral policies being rooted 'in an "idealized image" of the human being as white, male and able-bodied' (Borsay, p.7).

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[9] Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare* (New York: Vintage books, 1993), p.xv

[10] Helen Bolderson, *Social Security, Disability and Rehabilitation: Conflicts in the Development of Social Policy 1914-1946* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1991), p.160

[11]Anne Borsay, *Disability and Social Policy in Britain Since 1750* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.1

The (non-)place of disability in the development of the welfare state highlighted by Borsay, and its inadequate incorporation, is also rendered by the novels under consideration. These engage with the intersections between oppression and resistance on the basis of class and disability under welfare capitalism in ways that speak to Hughes' contention that there exists 'a hierarchy of inclusions in the welfare state'. These are grounded in the nature of any welfare state settlement as a 'set of positions negotiated by the key or most powerful groups in society' which create an equilibrium in which some groups will see their welfare needs either ignored or met 'in a stigmatised or "residual" way'.[12] The marginalisation of disabled people in welfare state settlements warrants Piven and Cloward's rejection of 'the popular supposition that government social policies, including relief policies, are becoming progressively more responsible, humane, and generous' (Piven and Cloward, p.xv). Similarly, through their focus on resistance to selective and inadequate provision of care and compulsion to work within dehumanising frameworks, the stories under consideration confirm Saville's perception that 'Britain remains a society in which the distribution of capital wealth is no more equal than it was half a century ago' (Saville, p.24). They do so by foregrounding the tension that animates the Marshallian concept of social citizenship, which encompassed 'the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security'[13] but was simultaneously rooted in the idea that 'equality of

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[12] Gordon Hughes, '"Picking Over the remains": The Welfare State Settlements of the Post-Second World War UK' in *Unsettling Welfare: The Reconstruction of Social Policy*, ed. by Gordon Hughes and Gail Lewis London and New York: Routledge and Open University, 1998), p.4

[13] T. H. Marshall, 'Citizenship and social class' in *Citizenship and Social Class* (London: Pluto, 1950), p.11

status is more important than equality of income" (Marshall, p.56). Indeed, it did

not amount to a 'direct redistribution of wealth'.[14] This points to how 'relief-

giving [has always been] partly designed to enforce work' (Piven and Cloward,

p.xix), as the autonomist narratives of disability I will consider draw attention to.

This brings us to the ways in which the novels this chapter is concerned

with refract dynamics specific to the post-war compromise. Hay notes how this

'institutionalised social contract' caused the pattern of conflict to change from

contestation of the mode of production to struggle around its 'volume, form and

regulation' (Hay, p.49). For Mary Davis, 'the post-war Labour government

represented the triumph and the limit of social change through the mechanism of

reform within the framework of the capitalist system'.[15] Thus, under

Keynesianism, full employment became both a reality and an aim to pursue, as

encapsulated in Marshall's 1950 declaration that 'the basic civil right is the right

to work' (Marshall, p.10). But while for Porter full employment played an

important role in 'allowing universal public protection to create an equal society,

not least because it prevented the alienation which results from social rejection'

(Porter, p.233), the autonomist narratives of disability under consideration show

that what the demands of wage labour engender is not consensus but

marginalisation and refusals of both work and inadequate care.

Through their critique of post-war compromise and settlement, these

narratives also clash with the statist politics that determined the fortunes of the

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[14] Dorothy Porter, *Health, Civilization and the State: A History of Public Health from Ancient to Modern Times* (London: Routledge, 1999), p.232
[15] Mary Davis, *Comrade or Brother? A History of the British Labour Movement* (London: Pluto, 2009), p.227

nationalist movement in the post-war period. As far as its relationship with the

post-war settlement is considered, Sir Reginald Coupland's analysis foregrounds

the extent to which the welfare state project can both assuage and arouse

nationalist sentiments; while the nationalist surge which had followed the First

World War was not repeated after the Second World War because 'public interest

was absorbed for a time by the task of reconstruction and re-adjustment', it

revived in intensified form through resentment of 'the continuance of the war-

time control exercised by the Government in London over Welsh and Scottish

life' that was perpetuated 'as a cardinal feature of the "welfare state"'.[16] For

Richard Finlay, with the coming of the welfare state, 'the Scots may have

harboured nationalist sentiments' but 'their political loyalties would be defined by

the prospects for social well-being and economic prosperity and, in the

circumstances of the time, this meant looking to the British state to realise these

aspirations'.[17] James Mitchell agrees that 'the Welfare State provided Scots with

reason for supporting the constitutional status quo'.[18] This is in line with Nicola

McEwen's argument that in its golden age the welfare state consolidated 'the

social and national solidarity that contributes to the maintenance of the

[multinational] state's political and territorial integrity'.[19] However, the stories

under consideration suggest that even during its golden age, the welfare state

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[16] Sir Reginald Coupland, *Welsh and Scottish Nationalism: A Study* (London: Collins, 1954), p.408
[17] Richard Finlay, 'Continuity and Change: Scottish Politics 1900-1945' in *Scotland in the 20th Century*, ed. by T.M. Devine and R.J. Finlay (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p.81
[18] James Mitchell, 'Scotland in The Union, 1945-95: The Changing Nature of the Union State' in *Scotland in the 20th Century*, ed. by T.M. Devine and R.J. Finlay (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p.93
[19] Nicola McEwen, *Nationalism and the State: Welfare and Identity in Scotland and Quebec* (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2006), p.62

regime functioned to reproduce both a 'useful working class… as a service to capital'[20] and marginalisation for all non-productive subjects, and disabled ones in particular. In this way, they fundamentally interrogate the discourse on welfare state nationalism, whether concerned to theorise the nation-building project of multinational states or that of national minorities and their prospected states, as ultimately imbricated with the foreclosure of discussion of the exclusionary nature of welfare capitalism.

The statist framework which sustains nationalist movements is discomforted by narratives critical of post-war settlement and compromise: the belief that 'the state is itself politically neutral and can be captured by workers and socialists and used to advance the cause' (Keating and Bleiman, p.14) assumes that the welfare state regime *does* provide the care and mediation necessary for the social reproduction of society, in exchange for working-class acceptance of the capitalist mode of production. On the contrary, the stories under consideration are organised by the refusal of this care and mediation as inadequate. They also exceed the national(ist) framework of Scottish literature exemplified by Cairns Craig's positioning of *Lanark* in relation to the developing constitutional status of Scotland and Scottish identity. For Craig, '*Lanark* proclaimed the vitality and originality of a culture which, to many, seemed to be close to exhaustion' and started the work of redefinition of 'the nature of Scottish experience and the Scottish tradition, both to account for past political failure and to begin to build a Scottish culture which would no longer be disabled by a lack of confidence in its

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[20] Kittens, 'What is wrong with free money?' on *Antinational.org* (28 July 2015) https://antinational.org/en/what-wrong-free-money/

own cultural identity'.[21] Through the non-identity they proclaim with concepts of work, care, and nation as these are developed in a capitalist society, the autonomist narratives of disability I will consider encourage us to critically examine any contextualisation we perform within the framework of Scottish literature as a field of enquiry.

This chapter will approach the patterns of social exclusion and refusals represented as rooted in the slippage between concept and experience of subjects of care and work in ways that speak to Theodor Adorno's concept of non-identity thinking, or negative dialectics. For Adorno, 'contradiction is non-identity, under the aspect of identity' and 'indicates the untruth of identity, the fact that the concept does not exhaust the thing conceived' (Adorno 1990, p.5). Springing from the need to express 'that concept and thing are not simply equivalent',[22] negative dialectics 'responds to a negative condition of the world and, indeed, calls this negative condition by its proper name'.[23] These points are echoed by John Holloway, Fernando Metamoros and Sergio Tischler, for whom 'dialectics exists because we are in the wrong place in the wrong sort of society'.[24] The novels under consideration dramatise the ways in which the struggle against the negation of life passes through the experience of non-identity and it is through this focus that they depict the refusals conducted by disabled subjects faced with inadequate

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[21] Cairns Craig, 'Going Down to Hell is Easy: *Lanark*, Realism and the Limits of the Imagination' in *The Arts of Alasdair Gray*, ed. by Robert Crawford and Thom Nairn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), p.92

[22] Theodor Adorno, 'Lecture 2' (13 May 1958) in *Negative Dialectics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017), p.8

[23] Theodor Adorno, 'Lecture 8' (19 June 1958) in *Negative Dialectics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017), p.72

[24] John Holloway, Fernando Metamoros and Sergio Tischler, 'Negativity and Revolution: Adorno and Political Activism' *in Negativity and Revolution: Adorno and Political Activism*, ed. by John Holloway, Fernando Metamoros, Sergio Tischler (London: Pluto Press, 2009), p.8

care and labour exploitation. If the post-war settlement and compromise meant that the 'development of negativity within the antagonistic whole [was] barely demonstrable' at the time,[25] the autonomist narratives of disability I will look at instead focus a negative logic which highlights the slippage between concept and reality of different subject positions in the spheres of production and social reproduction.

I will combine with Adorno's insights those developed by operaist Mario Tronti. The operaist movement during the 1960s tried to make Marx relevant to the development of contemporary class struggle by theorising 'the relationship between the material structure of the working class, and its behavior as a subject autonomous from the dictates of both the labour movement and capital'.[26] These ideas speak to how the narratives of disability that are the focus of this chapter embody the non-identity between concept and reality of subjects of work and welfare, alongside an antagonistic refusal of the role assigned to these in a context of industrial maturity and in the golden age of the welfare state. The dialogue between autonomist Marxism and critical theory is a fruitful one as both aim to denaturalise, through a negative form of dialectics, the forms that constitute capitalism.[27] And indeed, thinking the wrong world of work as organised under capitalism through the lens of negative dialectics is precisely what Adorno's contemporary autonomist Marxists were doing in privileging a workers' perspective which took the form of the perspective of a struggle against work.

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[25] Herbert Marcuse, 'The Concept of Negation in the Dialectic' in *Telos* (Summer, 1971), p.130
[26] Steve Wright, *Storming Heaven: Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism* (London and Sterling: Pluto Press, 2002), p.3
[27] Vasilis Grollios, *Negativity and Democracy: Marxism and the Critical Theory Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 2017), p.6

Operaist Mario Tronti argued for the need to recognise the subjectivity of workers as part of the labour force and against work - the 'autonomous subjective power of the worker [was] against work, and thus against capital'.[28] Practices of passive non-collaboration in, and outright refusal of, work are core to the representation of disability in the novels under consideration.

**Robin Jenkins' *The Cone-Gatherers* and Naomi Mitchison's *Memoirs of a Spacewoman*: Delinquent (Care-)Work**

This section will explore narratives that fulfil the function of negative dialectics as an 'ontology of the wrong state of things' capable of bringing out the contradictions that organise life under capitalism (Adorno 1990, p.11). Focusing on representations of work and care as these become fused into a form of care-work in eugenicist (post-)war times, I will put forward a two-fold argument: on the one hand, I will contend that narratives of disability foreground the eugenicist practices that haunt the pretensions to fairness and inclusivity professed by the societies portrayed; on the other hand, I will suggest that they draw attention to the possibilities for resistance that are imbricated with a form of care-work that, by refusing the eugenicist rationale imposed on it, becomes 'delinquent', as Mitchison's protagonist Mary defines hers.  My exploration will focus on Jenkins' *The Cone-Gatherers* and Mitchison's *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* as both are informed by a preoccupation with the constraints imposed on care-work by the

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[28] Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy: Politics and Architecture within and against Capitalism* (New York: The Trustees of Columbia University and Princeton Architectural Press, 2008), p.37

framework of waged work. *The Cone-Gatherers* tells the story of two brothers, Neil and Calum, the latter a hunchback endowed with an intensely empathic nature, as their quiet life as cone-gatherers is endangered by Duror, the game-keeper, who hates the latter and plots to get both evicted from the wood. *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* is set in the future and tells the story of Mary, scientist and explorer, as she navigates the responsibilities, difficulties and excitement involved in exploration, experiments and motherhood. Through the non-identity the two novels foreground between concepts and actual experiences of recipients and providers of care and labour, Jenkins' and Mitchison's works make visible, and criticise, the legacies of eugenics and of the Second World War, while anticipating the ways in which these carry over into the welfare state regime. This section will start by delineating the eugenicist framework, and the resistance to it, that underpin the social relations represented by Jenkins and Mitchison. It will continue by exploring how a delinquent form of care-work is portrayed, and finish by connecting this to the contestation of the conditionality of care proper to eugenicist as much as welfare state politics that informs the autonomist narratives of disability under examination.

According to Gerard Carruthers, *The Cone-Gatherers* ironises the perception of 'the Second World War, secure now as in the 1950s, in its popular and historical account as a struggle against Nazi evil', by suggesting that for Jenkins 'the war against evil (or terror) is a rather pointless war, since it can never

be won. Evil does not reside in only one place or regime',[29] while for Bernard

Sellin Jenkins's decision to be a conscientious objector in 1939 was rooted in his

belief that 'moral weakness and a refusal to face reality are chiefly responsible for

the present degradation'.[30] My analysis will argue that the war is deployed by

Jenkins as a prism through which to focalise eugenicist practices and principles

still operative in the (post-)war period. It is from here that the bleakness of

Jenkins' novel, discussed by Gavin Wallace and Douglas Gifford[31] and by

Roderick Watson,[32] derives. Similarly, when *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* is

considered, if for Jenni Calder Mitchison's focus is on 'her exploring the

interactions of individual experiment and communal benefit'[33] and Carla Sassi

foregrounds the centrality to Mitchison's science fiction of 'the ethics of relation

to the other (human, alien, or animal)',[34] my exploration will suggest that

Mitchison's interest in social, family and community relations unfolds as a

specific engagement with eugenicist ideas, as her own interest in scientific

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[29] Gerard Carruthers, 'Iconic Mythology: Reading the Fictiveness of *The Cone-Gatherers*' in *The Fiction of Robin Jenkins: Some Kind of Grace*, ed. by Douglas Gifford and Linden Bicket (Leiden and Boston: Brill and Rodopi, 2017), p.38

[30] Bernard Sellin, 'Post-War Scottish Fiction – MacColla, Linklater, Jenkins, Spark and Kennaway' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-Century Scottish Literature*, ed. Ian Brown and Alan Riach (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p.124

[31] Gavin Wallace and Douglas Gifford, 'The Range and Achievement of Robin Jenkins: An Introductory Overview' in *The Fiction of Robin Jenkins: Some Kind of Grace*, ed. by Douglas Gifford and Linden Bicket (Leiden and Boston: Brill and Rodopi, 2017), p.5

[32] Roderick Watson, 'The Modern Scottish Literary Renaissance' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-Century Scottish Literature*, ed. Ian Brown and Alan Riach (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p.176

[33] Jenni Calder, 'More Than Merely Ourselves: Naomi Mitchison' in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, ed. by Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), p.453

[34] Carla Sassi, 'The Cosmic (Cosmo)Polis in Naomi Mitchison's Science Fiction Novels' in *Scotland as Science Fiction*, ed. by Caroline McCracken-Flesher (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2012), p.87

experiments and eugenics would warrant. Mitchison was critical of eugenics[35] but, as Clare Hanson argues in relation to *Solution Three*, her work remains 'deeply embedded in the eugenic problematic and the belief that an understanding of biology holds the key to social advancement'.[36] This tension, articulated with narratives of work and care, is lodged at the heart of *Memories of a Spacewoman* and underpins the repression of Mary's 'potential ethic of care' explored by Gavin Miller from a different perspective.[37]

Contestation of war and eugenicist discourses is integral to Jenkins' representation of how divisions in society on the basis of class and bodily difference determine the extent to which certain lives are deemed to be more eligible for care and reproduction than others. This speaks to the continuing influence of eugenics during and immediately after the Second World War, spurred by logics analogous to those that presented the Great War as 'a eugenics nightmare' that 'destroyed the finest physical, mental, and social stock in the country'.[38] These feelings are echoed by Duror's: he rejects as 'incomprehensible and unjust' that 'in Europe, in Africa, and in China, many tall, strong, healthy, brave, intelligent men [are] killing one another, while in that dirty little hut those two sub-humans [live] in peace, as if under God's protection' (*CG*, p.13). Consequently, not only does Duror explicitly advocate the eugenicist practices of

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[35] Fran Bigman, '"The Authority's Anti-Breeding Campaign": State-Imposed Infertility in British Reprodystopia' in *The Palgrave Handbook of Infertility in History: Approaches, Contexts and Perspectives, ed. by* Gayle Davis, Tracey Loughran (London: Palgrave, 2017), p.593

[36] Clare Hanson, *Eugenics, Literature, and Culture in Post-war Britain* (New York and London: Routledge, 2013), p.131

[37] Gavin Miller, 'Animals, Empathy, and Care in Naomi Mitchison's *Memoirs of a Spacewoman*' in *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol.35, No.2 (2008), p.251

[38] Richard A Soloway, *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), p.138

the Nazis, in particular how they are 'putting idiots and cripples to death in gas chambers', but does so because he connects those murdered to the cone-gatherers he hates: 'outwardly, as everybody expected, he [condemns] such barbarity; inwardly, thinking of idiocy and crippledness not as abstractions but as embodied in the crouchbacked cone-gatherer, he [has] profoundly approved' (*CG*, p.12). Expressing an extreme version of eugenicist thinking, Duror imagines and relishes destroying what he considers inferior. In a fantasy of killing, he sees himself storming the cone-gatherers' hut, 'shouting at them his disgust, and then blasting them both to everlasting perdition' on the grounds that 'surely they were of no more consequence than the frogs which in mating time, with the smaller male on his mate's back, crossed the public road and were crushed in their thousands under the wheels of the army trucks. Surely their deaths like the frogs' could not be called murder' (*CG*, p.12).

Neil takes a position on social reproduction that clashes with, and makes visible the inhumanity of, the stance overtly expressed by Duror and covertly reproduced by class relations in ways that confirm how 'dialectics exists because we are in the wrong place in the wrong sort of society' (Holloway, Metamoros and Tischler, p.8) – i.e. under capitalism. In conversation with Tulloch, forester and sympathetic employer of the cone-gatherers, Neil denounces how certain innocent lives are deemed less worth preserving than others and asks the forester why 'the innocent have always to be sacrificed?', just as in the war 'babies are being burnt to death in their cradles' (*CG*, p.3). Calum, instead, is incapable of confronting 'the terrifying mystery' whereby 'creatures he loved should kill one

another'; when told that 'all over the world in the war now being fought men, women, and children [are] being slaughtered in thousands… He [cannot] understand it, and so [has tried], with success, to forget it' (*CG*, p.3). Neil's and Calum's respective engagements in contestation of injustice and withdrawal to an alternative dimension of care and empathy carry the development of the theme of social reproduction in the novel in ways that intensify the poignancy of the double eugenic ending of *The Cone-Gatherers*. On the one hand, Neil forces us to reflect on the paradox whereby, as cone-gatherers, he and Calum are responsible for the reproduction of trees, which is the counterpart of the social reproduction happening despite the war; however, they will not themselves generate any offspring. Neil asks Calum 'trees can be replaced in time. Aren't we ourselves picking the cones for seed? Can you replace dead men?', and considers 'yes, the dead men would be replaced. After a war the population of the world increased. But none would be replaced by him. To look after his brother, he had never got married' (*CG*, p.4).

In *Memoirs of a Spacewoman*, Mary's differential valorisation of her children too clashes with eugenicist thinking in ways that make the dilemma that tore the eugenics movement apart between faith in selective reproduction and support for social welfare reform (Soloway, p.140) irrelevant. The narrative of care that organises Mitchison's novel in a context of proliferating diversity explicitly reverses the hierarchy fit / unfit, declaring the latter preferable to the former. Mary values her disabled children more, privileging as she does haploid Viola and graft Ariel in the opening sentences of *The Memoirs*. These introduce

her thoughts 'I think about my children, but I think less about my four dear normals than I think about Viola. And I think about Ariel' (*Memoirs*, p.17). Viola's birth is portrayed as itself making for Werner Bonefeld's society of human purposes, which 'recognises humanity as a purpose, not as a means':[39] the event leading to the activation of Mary's eggs unfolds as an act of care. This occurs during a disastrous expedition in which most of the participating Terrans are killed and it is 'the Martian members of the expedition who [rescue] those who [survive]' (*Memoirs*, p.59). Although Viola is not herself a trans-species hybrid but a haploid birth, activated by Vly, her creation makes for the overcoming of barriers between different species when the forms of contact leading to, and allowed by, her birth are considered. It is Mitchison's representations of these acts and relationships which undermines the concept of eugenics as 'a defensive strategy for a particular race'.[40] Mary relates 'I can only begin to recollect clearly when Vly was in contact with me, communicating reassurance and affection with all that was in him… his tongue, fingers, toes, and sexual organs. I felt so grateful; it was so kind, so kind of him' (*Memoirs*, p.58).

In the run-up to Viola's birth, Mary reflects on the consequences that her trans-species status is likely to have in terms of possible disabilities: 'Probably small, female, infertile. The brain? The body?' and asks herself, 'what right [have] I to create this entity? I knew it could never be normal, but could it be happy? Could it love? Could it be loved? By me?' (*Memoirs*, p.65). Crucially, it is the caring relationship necessitated by Viola's disability that will determine Mary's

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[39] Werner Bonefeld, *Critical Theory and the Critique of Political Economy: On Subversion and Negative Reason* (New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p.219
[40] Marius Turda, *Modernism and Eugenics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.7

preference for her over her siblings once she is born: Mary explains 'I have always felt a little closer to Viola. Integration for her could never be a hundred per cent complete' and 'The physical delicacies could be overcome, but I always feel that, as her sole real parent, I have a double responsibility (*Memoirs*, p.71). The parenting relationship that revolves around Viola is also depicted as consisting of acts of care and Mary's affection for Vly is suggested by how she calls her baby Viola 'to be as near as possible to Vly, who was finding himself very much involved' (*Memoirs*, p.66). Remarkably, we learn that Vly's accidental activation has both made him 'a kind of parent' and, through this, inhibited his 'natural feelings of revulsion towards a Terran female', leading him to 'deliberately [make] opportunities to visit Terra' and see Mary and Viola. All this prompts Mary to recognise that 'there is something about it all that makes [her] sure [the birth of Viola] is a plus fact in the great moral equation' (*Memoirs*, p.71).

Diametrically opposed to Duror's refusal of care are dissident practices of care-work, or delinquent care-work, in the form of the rejection of the logic of selective care and killing that is espoused by the conscientious objectors quartered in Ardmore forest. If the war created social cohesion at the local level, synecdochally with its national counterpart, by providing a sense that Britons 'were an integral part of a community – a national community',[41] the conscientious objectors enact in relation to this the ontology of negative dialectics and 'break out of the context from within'.[42] They stand negatively in relation to the nation as 'a reification, a conceptual abstraction' that through representations

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[41] Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War: National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.2

[42] Theodor Adorno, *Lectures on History and Freedom* (Cambridge: 2008), p.407

and rhetoric is made to assume a concrete form and to generate a 'pull of unity – of absolute' (Sonya Rose, p.7). Indeed, we learn that on the objectors' arrival at Ardmore, initially 'everybody had united against the outcasts' (*CG*, p.88).

Significantly, a bond instead develops between Calum and the conscientious objectors that dramatises a pull to unity between outcasts. This relates negatively to the social relations that define the nation and the local community, confirming Rose's contention that representations of the nation 'are not always successful in creating a single frame through which people see themselves as national beings, even in the face of total war' (Sonya Rose, p.8). From the point of view of the social totality, the connection between the conscientious objectors and Calum lies in how both are deemed cripples by the community: the objectors have 'a deformity of the mind just as Calum [has] one of the body' (*CG*, p.155). It will be this very difference that will ground their prefiguring of what Bonefeld calls the 'society of human purposes', which 'recognises humanity as a purpose, not as a means' (Bonefeld, p.219). Indeed, 'Calum [has] never taken part in the exclusion' of the conscientious objectors (*CG*, p.88). The community tries to delegitimise Calum's stance in a context where his sympathy is regarded 'as a variety of cognitive impairment'.[43] We learn that 'at first his non-cooperation had been resented until it was decided that, as a daftie, he must be excused' (*CG*, p.88). However, Calum's attitude is grounded in an alternative set of values underpinning an alternative set of relationships: 'Calum [is] too honest, generous, and truly meek. The young men from the

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[43] Gavin Miller, 'Sympathy as Cognitive Impairment in Robin Jenkins's *The Cone-Gatherers*: The Limits of Homo Sacer' in *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies*, Vol.2, No.1 (2008), p.22

beginning [have] treated him as if he was an adult human being, with his own views and outlook: instinctively he [has] returned the compliment' (*CG*, p.88).

Calum and the conscientious objectors are also connected through a delinquent care-work that materialises in the refusal to kill on command, or at all. Indeed, for Bonefeld, the only point 'from which to launch the society of human purposes' lies in 'revolution/critique' as 'its reality is entirely negative' (Bonefeld, p.221). If the constituents of the national community were ordinary people 'who were "doing their bit"' (Sonya Rose, p.5), Calum, like the conscientious objectors, stands in a negative relationship to them through his refusal to 'do his bit', if and when this consists in an inhumane deed. In line with this, he regularly releases rabbits caught in Duror's snares despite the gamekeeper's threat of using these acts of disobedience as an excuse 'to hound [the cone-gatherers] out of the wood' (*CG*, p.5). Against this background, we witness how the brothers come to a spot in the wood where 'several rabbits [are] caught, all dead except one', who '[pounds] on the grass and [makes] choking noises'; Calum, despite knowing 'the penalty for interfering might be expulsion from this wood where he [loves] to  work', above all '[shares] the suffering of the rabbit' (*CG*, p.6) and releases it. Similarly, when forced to participate in a deer drive, Calum proves to be unable to behave as expected of a beater. Soon, he no longer is 'one of the beaters; he too [is] a deer hunted by remorseless men. Moaning and gasping, he [flees] after them, with no hope of saving them from slaughter but with the impulse to share it with them' (*CG*, p.69). Finally, he fails to witness the death of the deer without intervening and 'screaming in sympathy, heedless of the danger of being shot, Calum [flings]

himself upon [it]'. The deer, 'terrified more than ever', drags Calum about 'in its mortal agony', leaving Captain Forgan, Lady Runcie-Campbell and her son Roderick 'petrified by this sight' (*CG*, p.71) and Calum open to retribution for having spoiled the drive.

The representation of the consequences of Calum's forced participation in the drive undercuts any call for inclusion of disabled people in a world of work, as this is denounced as both barbarous and inflexible. Steve Humphries and Pamela Gordon argue that employment is the solution to disabled people's marginalisation from public life. They thus welcome as a positive development how during the Second World War a 'dramatic but temporary change in the economic fortune of disabled people' saw 'more than a quarter of a million… recruited into full time employment… to do jobs vacated by those who had joined the armed forces'.[44] This is what happens in *The Cone-Gatherers* as it is shortage of men that allows Duror to put forward his case for the need to recruit Calum as a beater in the deer drive. But the disaster that ensues suggests that it is 'akin to a fake diamond [that] existing society radiates with the false premise that, if planned well, the further progress of economic development will liberate the propertyless producers of surplus value from the harsh reality of their socio-economic position' (Bonefeld, p.221). For Calum, forced inclusion into unsuitable employment is disastrous. Indeed, when in advance of the drive both Neil and Tulloch try to obtain an exemption for Calum from the drive, the former condemns the lady's refusal as an abuse of power. He shouts: 'if my brother is

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[44] Steve Humphries and Pamela Gordon, *Out of Sight: The Experience of Disability 1900 – 1950* (Tavistock: Northcote House, 1992), p.9

excused deer drives in the forest… why should he be made to take part in one here?' (*CG*, p.59). The lady confirms the arbitrariness of her decision by saying to Tulloch 'certainly I wouldn't wish to force anyone into acting against his principles, but I'm afraid I can't recognise principle in this case' (CG, p.48).

Similarly, in *Memoirs of a Spacewoman*, the refusal to refuse care, and the consequences of this decision, recur. The novel traces the inevitable slippage between the concept of care-work prescribed by the system and its reality, in line with the Adornian insight that 'the subject-object relationship' is 'grounded in… non-identity'.[45] The slippage turns on different experiences of the use of communication skills and of the ability to balance these with a stable personality (*Memoirs*, p.18). Over-commitment to communication and care creates unethical work practices. Mary first encounters these when she participates in an experiment to graft a fragment of a non-sentient life form on herself. She offers to host a graft, whom she calls Ariel, but her experience does not follow the expected course: she relates 'gradually I began to fuss in a way that was not at all normal to me, and that clearly surprised my scientific colleagues. I began to be possessive about my graft' (*Memoirs*, p.53). And when Ariel dies, the impact Mary registers is on the order, again, of irregular care-work. Mary confesses 'then Ariel died… I myself was completely unchanged. I had almost hoped I would not be. That was the measure of my grief' (*Memoirs*, p.57). These trends are intensified with Mary's second graft. Tellingly, Mary does not recognise herself

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[45] Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt Institute* (New York: The Free Press, 1977), p.71

in pictures taken of herself and the graft. She considers 'yes, I had been somebody else. Somebody, from a scientific point of view, delinquent' (*Memoirs*, p.159).

Analogously, over-commitment to communication and care result in delinquent work practices in the case of Mary's colleague Francoise, when she is faced with the eugenicist processes that regulate the butterfly community she encounters on an expedition. Francoise and her colleagues witness the butterflies helping a first emergent butterfly but killing another whose wing mass is uneven and, 'if it had lived, it would have been with a crippled wing' (*Memoirs*, p.99). Francoise is caught up in the dilemma that affected the eugenics movement itself in having to balance demands for unconditional care with principles of positive and negative eugenics (Soloway, p.140). We learn that the butterflies believe that those of them who have an even wing mass are undying. This justifies 'anything which was done to make [such a form] attainable' (*Memoirs*, p.121), including killing emergents with uneven wing masses, and preventing pattern-making by the caterpillars considered responsible for uneven wing masses. Francoise's judgment on the killing is straightforward: 'it *is* wanton oppression!' (*Memoirs*, p.121). In line with this, she encourages the caterpillars' pattern-making activity and also tells the butterflies that there are no undying butterflies because she has managed to kill one. For Mary, this constitutes 'definite interference' and a breach of the code of conduct on expeditions. If the butterflies stopped preventing the pattern-making through discouragement 'then it [would be] possible that a whole generation of malformed butterflies might emerge, crippled in the chrysalis,

unable to be part of a butterfly life' (*Memoirs*, p.123). As a result of her

delinquent care-work, Francoise is excluded from future expeditions.

*The Cone-Gatherers* too draws attention to the conditionality that

constrains care-giving and reflects that of the post-war welfare state regime. First

of all, in the period under consideration 'rehabilitation became an all-

encompassing term' to describe the reconstruction of Europe's infrastructure as

well as society,[46] within a framework in which 'reconstructing the body embraced

the individual, the communal, and the political'.[47] Duror rejects his role as care-

giver on the basis that his wife is beyond rehabilitation because Peggy 'for the

past twenty years [has] lain in bed and grown monstrously obese; her legs [are]

paralysed' (*CG*, p.16).  Tellingly, Duror's hostility to the cone-gatherers is part

and parcel of his hostility to Peggy as 'her wheedling voice [reminds] him of the

hunchback's' (*CG*, p.21). Secondly, the UK welfare state was surrounded by

specific 'myths and symbolic imagery of what it is to be a "UK citizen"' (Hughes,

p.6), and these translated into differential eligibility to receive care. Exclusion

from belonging within the community and the relationship between this and the

loss of the right to care is exemplified by Duror's hatred of Calum and the

conviction that care for him should not be provided. We learn that 'since

childhood Duror had been repelled by anything living that had an imperfection or

deformity or lack' (*CG*, p.11), and what now he cannot accept is that Calum is

receiving protection within the wood, despite his defects: 'he [is] now in the

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[46] Julie Anderson, *War, Disability and Rehabilitation in Britain: 'Soul of a Nation'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), p.4

[47] Ana Carden-Coyne, *Reconstructing the Body: Classicism, Modernism, and the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.3

wood, protected, not to be driven out or shot at or trapped or trampled on' (*CG*, p.10).

Finally, the threatened expulsion of the cone-gatherers from the wood as punishment for Calum's failure to perform satisfactorily in the deer hunt fits the conditionality structure that underpins how eligibility for relief has always been 'established through the occupational role' (Piven and Cloward, p.xvii), within a framework in which 'relief-giving is partly designed to enforce work' (Piven and Cloward, p.xix). The lady's son, Roderick, defends the hunchback and argues 'if he'd been left to climb the trees, there would have been no trouble'. He is joined by Tulloch in his accusations, who challenges the lady 'if I am to take [the cone-gatherers] away from the wood… what am I to tell them is the reason? … If they have done wrong, they will accept their punishment; but if they have done no wrong, and are punished, it will take away all their confidence'. When she retorts 'is it not enough that I wish them to go?' (*CG*, p.78), Tulloch damningly refuses to answer and validate the lady's terms.

Jenkins' focus on categories of exclusion from care foregrounds the disconnect between the proliferation of refusals of care during the war, represented in *The Cone-Gatherers*, and the rhetoric of 'a New Jerusalem "worth dying for"' that would realise 'popular aspirations of wide-scale social reform in the post-war period', and became 'the very condition of the successful prosecution of the war' (Hay, p.32). Neil directly sets the injustices he rejects against the rhetoric carried by narratives of equality in war-time, speaking to Rose's contention that 'the slogan "equality of sacrifice" inspired protests by people in

the working classes about upper-class privilege' and 'even during the war… there was defiance, resistance, and indifference'(Sonya Rose, p.8). We learn that Neil has read 'in the newspapers and… heard on the wireless that the war [is] being fought so that ordinary humble people could live in peace without being bullied and enslaved by brutal men with power'; significantly, 'the proud claims of honour and independence and courage made on behalf of his country at war [have] affected him deeply in his own private attitude' to the extent that it has become necessary 'for him to fight back against every injustice inflicted on him, and especially on his brother' (*CG*, p.82). And it is by directly referencing the war that Neil suggests taking shelter in the lady's beach hut when a storm breaks out: 'this is where we should be quartered', he tells Calum, 'even if we are just labourers. It's war-time, isn't it? Didn't somebody say on the wireless that in war-time everybody's equal?' (*CG*, p.127).

On the one hand, a different scenario of capitalist inclusivism emerges in *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* as Viola's right to care is indeed grounded in her compatibility with capitalism and progress. Worries persist at the initial stages of Viola's life that she will not be able to follow in her mother's footsteps and have a successful career because she cannot 'use the standard equipment'; only by convincing the administrators that Viola is 'specially worthwhile' is there a chance of obtaining accommodation. But indeed, Viola *is* 'specially worthwhile': 'she [knows] her theory backwards' (*Memoirs*, p.140) and the first time she goes on an expedition she manages to live with a species 'without getting cross with them', which no one else has so far managed to do (*Memoirs*, p.157). This

prompts Peder, Mary's partner, to attribute Viola's success to the very genetic anomaly she bears. He suggests to Mary 'you've got the instinct for communication, Mary… and when your genes are reinforced in [Viola] as they're bound to be without the normal chromosome partners – she might be the one, Mary', to which Mary responds: 'She'd make her name' (*Memoirs*, p.158). The ending suggests that Mary's experiment has been successful. Diane Paul's idea that 'to individuals who had achieved social success, controlled reproduction seemed only good common sense'[48] in eugenicist times thus neatly applies to Mary.

Through their exposure of the tension that obtains under capitalist normalcy between work and care-work, and between the provision of care within the framework of Bonefeld's society of human purposes and the conditionality that is imposed on it under capitalism, *The Cone-Gatherers* and *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* bring together criticism of the legacy of war and eugenics alike with anticipation of the failures of the welfare state which will be the subject of the next section. In providing a sense of the continuity of the oppression endured by disabled and classed people, they lend support to Borsay's contention that 'since the Industrial Revolution social policies have created and sustained the discrimination that continues to make disabled people excluded citizens' (Borsay, p.1).

**Muriel Spark's *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* and Alasdair Gray's *Lanark*:**

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[48] Diane B. Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity: 1865 to the Present* (New York: Humanity Books, 1995), p.2

**Refusals of Care and Work**

This section is going to examine how Spark's *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* and Gray's *Lanark* subvert ideas of care and work associated with the post-war welfare state. *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* follows Dougal Douglas, physically disabled with a lump on his shoulder and cysts on his head which make him resemble the devil, as he troubles and exacerbates the contradictions and tensions that run through the sphere of production and social reproduction in Peckham. In particular, as Michael Gardiner explores in relation to the former, in a 'world that has seen a large-scale rationalisation of work during the post-war consensus' Dougal works to 'unleash chaos into this environment'.[49] *Lanark* comprises four Books, arranged in the order Three, One, Two and Four which tell, respectively, of Lanark's time in Unthank, a dystopian city resembling Glasgow, and in the Institute, a sort of hospital which cures patients but uses them to generate energy and food; of Duncan Thaw's life in the East End of Glasgow from war-time evacuation to attendance at school and at the Glasgow School of Art, haunted by ill-health; of Lanark's return to Unthank, where life is marked by strife and inequality. My analysis will explore how in *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* and *Lanark* narratives of disability sharpen the dramatisation of the non-identity that, under welfare capitalism, exists between the concepts and the actual experiences of workers and recipients or providers of care, and in this way voice an autonomist logic. In order to do so, I will first map out how narratives of non-

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[49] Michael Gardiner, 'The Balladisation of Work' in *The Bottle Imp*, Vol.11 (November 2017) HTTPS://WWW.THEBOTTLEIMP.ORG.UK/2017/11/SPARKS-BALLADISATION-WORK/

identity with and refusal of work function in the novels; it will continue by examining how these are focused through disabled characters and narratives of disability; finally, it will explore representations of non-identity with and refusal of care.

In order to conceptualise the rejection of consensus over work and the failures of care that are portrayed in Spark's and Gray's novels, it is helpful to draw on Adorno's negative dialectics again, this time in the specific terms of non-identity thinking. Gillian Rose explains how for Adorno in 'the present state of society (the capitalist mode of production), the concept cannot identify its true object' and 'the consciousness which perceives this is *non-identity thinking* or *negative dialectic*'.[50] If, for Adorno, cognition of non-identity 'seeks to say what something is, while identity thinking says under what something falls, of what it is a specimen or representative, what it thus is not itself' (Adorno, 1990, p.159), autonomist narratives of disability in *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* and *Lanark* render precisely this cognition of non-identity between concept and subject of care and work, alongside the refusals of care and work predicated on it. In order to examine how this is the case, my analysis will address both the post-war settlement (as an articulation of institutional relationships and responsibilities) and the post-war compromise (as a form of capital-labour relation) in terms of the non-identity experienced by the subjects of work and care.

Critics have underlined the ways in which Spark deploys Dougal as an estrangement device to illuminate 'elegant oxymoronic patterns she is in full

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[50] Gillian Rose, *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno* (London: Verso, 2014), p.57

control of but from which she stands in comprehensive ironic detachment'[51] and to 'call attention to the constructedness of the fictional scenarios being portrayed in order to inhibit readerly immersion and promote instead a critical engagement with those situations and events'.[52] These estrangement techniques, my analysis will suggest, function to expose the non-identity between concept and experience of the subject of work in *The Ballad*. If precisely where 'capital's power appears most dominant, we see how deeply it is penetrated by this menace, this threat of the working class',[53] Dougal embodies this threat by foregrounding the extent to which, under capitalism, 'the concept does not exhaust the thing conceived' (Adorno 1990, p.5). Dougal undermines the very logic of class compromise as beneficial for all the parts involved by simultaneously working for two firms in competition with one another, Meadows, Meade & Grindley and Drover Willis. This both speaks to the autonomist conviction that 'the interests of the sellers and buyers of labour are not the same. Their civilized conduct is a political matter' (Bonefeld, p.222), and is reflected at the level of subject constitution, as suggested by Dougal's use of different names for different firms: he employs 'Dougal Dougals at Meadows, Meade & Grindley and Douglas Dougal at Willis's', as he tells his friend and former colleague at Meadows, Meade & Grindley Elaine,

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[51] Gerard Carruthers, '"Fully to Savour Her Position": Muriel Spark and Scottish Identity' in *Muriel Spark: Twenty-First Century Perspectives* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2010), p.31
[52] David Herman, 'Introduction: "A Salutary Scar": Muriel Spark's Desegregated Art in the Twenty-First Century' in *Muriel Spark: Twenty-First Century Perspectives* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2010), p.6
[53] Mario Tronti, 'Lenin In England', first published in *Classe Operaia* Vol.1, (January 1964) https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/it/tronti.htm

prompting her to conclude 'I better call you Doug, and be done with it' (*Ballad*, p.70).

If *The Ballad* challenges the limits of identity thinking, *Lanark* dramatises those of rational identity thinking. Adorno's '*utopian* aspect' of identifying is realised in conditions of rational identity when 'the particular object would have to have all the properties of the ideal state' (Rose, p.57). This condition of rational identity thinking is represented when Lanark enters a red wooden hut 'covered with posters saying YOU HAVEN'T MUCH TIME – PROTEST NOW' because 'the words [seem] meant for him'. However, Lanark is unable to connect his experience to what the activists tell him (*Lanark*, p.42) in ways that validate Adorno's scepticism over the possibility to match 'correct class consciousness with the subjective viewpoint of a collective revolutionary class' (Buck-Morss, p.47). *Lanark* also engages with the dangers rational identity thinking generates in the specific context of work. The oracle's testimony relates the consequences of a work existence defined by the logic of rational identity thinking where ideal concept and object overlap: they recount, 'I chose to live by those numbers which are most purely a product of the mind and therefore influence it most strongly: in a word, money. I became an accountant, and later a stockbroker' (*Lanark*, p.108). As a result of their identity with work, we are told of how the world became as immaterial as numbers until the 'emptiness before and behind' the oracle was 'total and complete' (*Lanark*, p.111).

In striking opposition to this, *Lanark* also dramatises the non-identity of the subject and experience of work with their concept under capitalism through

Duncan's journey of development. This starts from a rejection of the value of work that the education system inculcates in ways that recall Bonefeld's Adornian critique of how 'the time of value and the time of human purposes belong to different worlds', and the means of human existence under capitalism are organised on the order of the former (Bonefeld, p.219). This spirit is conveyed by Duncan's rejection of examinations at school on the grounds that 'it's all examinations! Must everything we do satisfy someone *else* before it's worthwhile' (*Lanark*, p.174), and by his retreat to an imaginary world in which those human needs he cannot satisfy while leading a life of non-identity at school can find fulfilment. We learn that Duncan accepts schools 'as a sort of bad weather… Doing well in some subjects, learning to do badly in others without offending the teachers' while 'his energy [has] withdrawn into imaginary worlds and he [has] none to waste on reality' (*Lanark*, p.157). This is in line with Miller's argument that 'the overall pattern of the first two books [of *Lanark*] is one of an escape from human relations' and a search for a dimension which can accommodate 'the protagonist's spontaneous life'.[54] This unfolds against the backdrop of 'a skewed, wrong Glasgow'[55] that is dreadful precisely because it is defined by capitalist relations.

Indeed, Duncan encounters and challenges the art school as the embodiment of those very capitalist relations that organise all activity for profit and in total disregard of human purposes. In Trontian manner, this 'confounds the

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[54] Gavin Miller, *Alasdair Gray: The Fiction of Communion* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2005), p.21

[55] Moira Burgess, *Imagine a City: Glasgow in Fiction* (Glendaruel: Scottish Arts Council, 1998), p.256

terms of Hegel's dialectic' by tracing a process whereby workers first become a 'class for itself' during the initial 'moments of direct confrontation with the individual employer' through the refusal of work, whether 'collective, mass, expressed in passive forms', and only later become 'a class against capital' through political organisation.[56] On his first day of art school Duncan glimpses, through the window, the nightmarish world of work as 'ten-to-eight factory horns [mourn] over the city roofs and he [curls] more tightly into the nest of warmth his body [has] made in the mattress', while 'hundreds of thousands of men in dirty coats and heavy boots [are] tramping along gray streets to the gates of forges and machine shops'(*Lanark*, p.223). As he thinks 'of the energy needed to keep up a civilization, of the implacable routines which [start] drawing it from the factory worker daily at eight, from the clerk and shopkeeper at nine', fantasies of refusal of work overcome him as he sets immediate needs against systemic necessity. He asks 'Why didn't everyone decide to stay in bed one morning? It would mean the end of civilization, but in spite of two world wars the end of civilization [is] still an idea, while bed [is] a warm immediate fact' (*Lanark*, p.223).

Narratives of non-identity with respect to work shade into representations of outright refusals of work in both Spark's and Gray's novels. Of these, in *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* most converge on Dougal's encouragement and practice of absenteeism. This is crucially reminiscent of Tronti's theorisation of the refusal of work as a 'momentary blockage of the work-process' which 'appears as a recurring threat' (Tronti 1966). At a time in which the commitment to full

[56] Mario Tronti, 'The strategy of refusal' in *Operai e Capitale* (Turin: Einaudi, 1966) https://libcom.org/library/strategy-refusal-mario-tronti

employment had emerged 'as a central ideological pillar of the post-war consensus' (Hay, p.52), Dougal embodies the logic of non-identity thinking in relation to work, which underpins his characterisation as a force that refuses to 'sanction things as they are' (Adorno 1990, p.xix). When Mr Druce, Dougal's boss at Meadows, Meade & Grindley tells him 'you have to bridge the gap' as 'our absenteeism… is a problem', we gain an insight into Dougal's perspective - an event that is unique in the novel, which throughout leaves us at the mercy of Dougal's inscrutable machinations: 'they must be bored with their jobs', we hear Dougal say 'in a split second of absent-mindedness, then correcting himself "Industry is by now… a great tradition. Is that not so? The staff must be made conscious of that tradition"' (*Ballad*, p.18).

Dougal is indeed concerned to protect his freedom not to work in ways that speak to the operaist principle that 'if the capitalists [want] to obtain more with less, the workers should aim to give them less for more – more money, that is, for less work' (Aureli, p.36). At the interview with Mr Willis, Dougal listens to the requirements of the job 'only interrupting when Mr Willis [says], "The hours are nine to five-thirty"' to make the point 'I would need time off for research' (*Ballad*, p.69). Ironically, this time off is required to research the very absenteeism Dougal wants to be able to perform: researching, 'the psychological factors behind the absenteeism… would need the best part of [Dougal's] day for at least two months' (*Ballad*, p.69). At the same time, Dougal continually encourages staff to take time off; for example, when Merle, the secretary at Meadows, Meade & Grindley, refuses Dougal's invitation to go for a walk by

saying 'I'll be down to work, not like you', Dougal retorts 'take Monday off, my girl… Just take Monday off'' (*Ballad*, p.34). This yields results opposite to those Dougal is supposed to achieve and it is 'with embarrassment' that Mr Druce informs Dougal that 'absenteeism has increased in the six weeks [he has] been [at Meadows, Meade & Grindley]. Eight per cent to be precise' (*Ballad*, p.64).

Dougal's friend Humphrey's rejection of absenteeism confirms the operaist insight that the process of liberation from the myth of work 'could be attained only through a dissolution of pre-existing thought' (Aureli, p.38), including that which still informs the principles of the traditional labour movement: when Humphrey's fiancé Dixie complains about Merle trying to have her go without her tea-break to complete a series of estimates, Humphrey suggests 'you should have reported her to Personnel… That was your correct procedure' (*Ballad*, p.35). When Dixie notes that Merle is 'covered' due to Merle's relationship with Mr Druce, Dougal suggests to her to 'take Monday off… Take Tuesday off as well. Have a holiday', drawing condemnation from Humphrey, who says 'No, I don't agree to that… Absenteeism is downright immoral. Give a fair week's work for a fair week's pay' (*Ballad*, p.35). When, on another occasion, Dougal declares 'everyone should take Mondays off', Humphreys expands on the reasons behind his opposition to absenteeism: 'once you start absenting yourself you lose your self-respect. *And* you lose the support of your unions; they won't back you' (*Ballad*, p.49). Dixie will eventually decide to absent herself out of frustration for not getting an increment like her colleague Connie (*Ballad*, p.55).

*Lanark*'s dramatisation of practices of refusal of work foregrounds these as paramount to the preservation of the human dignity that wage labour denies. It conveys how the operaist concept of refusal of work chimes with the logic undergirding critical theory as a theory of the negative which 'denies that bourgeois society contains within itself the necessity of human emancipation' (Bonefeld, p.221). If, for Tronti, 'stopping work' should not be conceived of in terms of 'a refusal to give capital the use of one's labour power, since it has already been given to capital once the contract for this particular commodity has been signed' (Tronti 1966), in *Lanark* the refusal of work takes either the form of a refusal to take up employment whatsoever, or that of resentment of the violence underpinning the constraint to do otherwise. These assumptions underpin Duncan's father's need to 'be footloose' and his decision to leave his job as a costing clerk and find one 'with the Scottish Youth Hostels or the Camping Club'. He explains, 'the money's poor but I'd be among hills and able to walk and climb and mix with the sort of folk I like' (*Lanark*, p.324). Tellingly, Duncan is 'disconcerted, for he had never expected his father to become a man who lived by doing what he liked' (*Lanark*, p.324). His school friend Coulter's experience reinforces Duncan's view of work as a straitjacket. Coulter comments on the time he has spent at a machine shop as a voluntary form of imprisonment, highlighting the responsibility involved in taking up the job: he tells Duncan, 'you realise you'll be spending more of your life in this place than anywhere, excepting mibby bed. It's worse than school… But engineering isnae compulsory. I chose it' (*Lanark*, p.216).

Crucially, in *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* it is Dougal's disability that facilitates the performing of his non-identity with respect to work by animating a negative commentary on any work-related interaction and, in this way, confirming 'as ideology' the thesis that, under capitalism, 'society is subject to natural laws' (Adorno 1990, p.335). During Dougal's interview with Mr Druce at Meadows, Meade & Grindley, dramatics and disability come together to foreground both Dougal's non-identity with the role he is applying for, and the power this can generate. When Mr Druce explains 'we feel the time has come to take on an Arts man', Dougal dwells 'with a dark glow on Mr Druce, he [raises] his right shoulder, which [is] already highly crooked by nature, and [leans] on his elbow with a becoming twist of the body', to the extent that 'Mr Druce [can] not keep his eyes off [him]' (*Ballad*, p.15). At the second interview, Dougal sits 'like a monkey-puzzle tree, only moving his eyes to follow Mr Druce' as he paces the floor; when Mr Druce tells him 'you'll find the world of Industry a tough one,' Dougal changes 'his shape and [becomes] a professor'; when Mr Druce explains 'we need a man with vision', Dougal turns 'sideways in his chair and [gazes] out of the window at the railway bridge; he [is] now a man of vision with a deformed shoulder' (*Ballad*, p.18). And when Dougal later meets Mr Druce to ask about his increase in salary and his boss replies 'it's going through… since Weedin's breakdown, a great deal of extra work falls on your shoulders', Dougal massages 'both his shoulders, first his high one, then his low one' (*Ballad*, p.117). Finally, at the interview with Mr Willis, we learn that Dougal goes on talking 'reasonably,

like a solid steady Edinburgh boy, all the steadier for the lump on his shoulder' (*Ballad*, p.69).

Dougal's disability is tellingly invested with supernatural connotations which increase the elusiveness and effectiveness of his refusal of work, evoking the power of the working class, theorised by operaism, to drive the development of capitalism. This speaks to Tronti's argument for a reversal of polarity in the analysis of capitalist development, according to which 'it is the specific, present, political situation of the working class that both necessitates and directs the given forms of capital's development' (Tronti 1964). If 'cognition of non-identity… seeks to say what something is, while identity thinking says under what something falls' (Adorno, 1990, p.149), perception of the former leads Dougal's colleagues and acquaintances to try to determine the latter, and Dougal encourages the pursuit. Mr Weedin tells Merle 'it may surprise you… coming from me. But it's my belief that Dougal Douglas is a diabolical agent, if not in fact the Devil'. He points to Dougal's bodily difference as evidence, saying 'I felt those bumps with these very hands. Have you looked, have you ever properly looked at his eyes? That shoulder … He's bewitched' (*Ballad*, p.82). Indeed, we see Dougal guiding the hands of his informer Nelly 'to the two small bumps among his curls'. He tells her 'I had a pair of horns like a goat when I was born. I lost them in a fight at a later date' (*Ballad*, p.114). Dougal is thus in total control of the narrative of his supernatural crip otherness in ways that make it impossible for others to catch him out: when he tells Merle 'I have powers of exorcism… The ability to drive devils out of people', and she replies 'I thought you said you were a devil yourself',

Dougal significantly responds 'The two states are not incompatible' (*Ballad*, p.102).

In *Lanark*, too, narratives of work and disability intersect to represent the latter as providing a position from which to reject the world of work, buttressing the voluntariness of the refusal with recognition of its necessity on medical grounds. Duncan's story exemplifies this as from the start he is defined by failing health: he reflects, 'sufficient health [is] like thin ice on an infinite sea of pain. Love, work, art, science and law [are] dangerous games played on the ice; all homes and cities were built on it' (*Lanark*, p.160). Crucially, 'The ice [is] frail. A tiny shrinkage of the bronchial tubes [can] put him under it and a single split atom [can] sink a city' (*Lanark*, p.160). If it is his illness that prevents Duncan from going to school, this is coupled with reluctance. And indeed, when he says 'I don't want to go to school today', his mother challenges him 'are you trying to tell me you *can't* go to school? You weren't well yesterday but you were well enough to go to the library. You've always enough breath for what you want to do; none for what's important' (*Lanark*, p.161).

As in *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*, in *Lanark* too narratives of work and disability intersect to represent the latter as pervasive in society and as incompatible with work. Somewhat differently, however, their intersection is grounded in the non-productivity of disabled bodies in a context where, as operaist thinking unpacks, 'in spite of all the bourgeois mystifications, production [is]… the structure of society' (Aureli, p.34). The relationship between work, disability, and belonging within society under capitalism is underlined in *Lanark*,

implying that it is work that makes individuals fit for human society, and disability excludes from it in proportion as it excludes from productivity. This lends support to the idea that there is a slippage between the idea of universalist Keynesian welfare or welfare capitalism (Hay, p.49) and the reality of how relief is given only on the basis of specific eligibility defined through the occupational role (Piven and Cloward, p.xvii), within a framework in which relief-giving is 'designed to enforce work' (Piven and Cloward, p.xix). This emerges through an exchange between Duncan and his father. When his father says 'my God, Duncan, if I could take your damned illness myself I would! I would!', Duncan replies 'what good would that do? Who would support us then?' (*Lanark*, p.298). And indeed, this becomes a problem when Duncan's father wants to leave work but cannot do so because Duncan is not self-sufficient. In the ensuing altercation, disability metaphors and its materiality intersect as Duncan's father accuses him of being a 'social cripple', but Duncan justifies his dependence on the grounds of being ill: his father says 'I'm nearly sixty but thank God I have my health. I expected you to get a job at the art school… Instead you've chosen to become a social cripple'. Duncan retorts 'if I've recently eaten your food or slept under your roof it's because I was sick' (*Lanark*, p.324).

Non-identity in both novels is also thematised in relation to the slippage between the concept and the reality of disability. When *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* is considered, in approaching Dougal other characters work under the assumption that what disability means is 'to be less able, to be at a disadvantage in

earning one's living or in the ordinary activities of daily life'.[57] How Dougal

cannot be further from fitting this typology is constantly marked in the novel.

First, when factory girl Annette giggles at Dougal's crying because he has lost his

girl, another factory girl, Dawn, slaps her face and says 'you're ignorant. Can't

you see he's handicapped?' (*Ballad*, p.42). Fittingly, when to the question 'How

did you lose your girl?' Dougal replies 'I've got a fatal flaw', meaning his

aversion to illness, 'Dawn [assumes] this to be his deformed shoulder' (*Ballad*,

p.42). Secondly, when a fight with Trevor breaks out and factory girl Elaine

pushes Trevor saying 'Can't you see he's deformed? […] Making game of a chap

like that, it's ignorant', we learn that 'Dougal, whose deformed shoulder [has]

actually endowed him with a curious specialty in the art of fighting, in that he [is]

able to turn his right wrist at an extraordinary back-hand outward angle and to get

a man by the throat as with a claw, [does] not at [this] moment boast of the fact'

but declares 'Cripple as I am… I'll knock his mean wee sex-starved conceited low

and lying L.C.C. electrician's head off' (*Ballad*, p.45). Finally, at a dance with

Elaine, when he performs a crazy version of the Highland Fling until the manager

asks him to leave, Elaine shouts 'Don't you get rough with him… Can't you see

he's deformed?'; however, Dougal needs no defending and asks the manager both

'have you got a fatal flaw?' and to replace the bin lid he had been using in his

dance (*Ballad*, p.60).

    Finally, Dougal's aversion to illness and his related refusal of care

ultimately discloses his non-identity with the concept whereby there obtains a

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[57] Mildred Blaxter, *The Meaning of Disability* (London: Heinemann, 1976), no page numbers

privileged relationship between disability and practices of care. Dougal's inability to provide care is presented as a fatal flaw in ways that invest with supernatural and crip connotations Dougal's non-identity at a metaphorical level. The theme of Dougal's 'fatal flaw' runs throughout *The Ballad* and, if 'most people are impaired at some time or to some degree: like health and sickness, disability and "normality" form a continuum' (Blaxter, unnumbered), the fatal flaw of not standing illness is experienced by Dougal as his only impairment. We encounter Dougal's fatal flaw when he threatens his third employer, Mrs Cheeseman, not to visit her after she informs him that she is not well. Dougal says 'I can't bear anyone off colour' (*Ballad*, p.90). A similar exchange occurs with Merle after she mentions her being on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Douglas responds 'if you do… I won't come near you. I can't bear sickness of any sort' (*Ballad*, p.98). Most importantly, Dougal's inability to provide care destroys his relationship with his girlfriend Jinny, from the moment she falls ill. Dougal remembers 'one day in their final year, at Leith docks, watching the boats, she had said: "I must bend over the rails. I've got that indigestion." Already, at this first stage in her illness, he had shown no sympathy'. While at the beginning he would visit her in hospital, when she asks him to visit her before leaving for an operation in Middlesex Hospital he replies 'no, quite honestly, I won't… You know how I feel about places of sickness'. When she gets out of hospital, Jinny refuses to meet Dougal, despite his pleading 'try to understand my fatal flaw. Everybody has one' (*Ballad*, p.24).

Gray's representation of disability in relation to issues of care is different from Spark's, despite sharing the interweaving of narratives of illness and the supernatural that characterises *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*. In *Lanark*, as in *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*, the proliferation of disability in society is framed by supernatural imagery in ways that make it impossible to define the conditions represented in medical terms. This too speaks to the difficult development of disability classification (Borsay, p.10). Both Rima and Lanark have dragonhide, while Duncan is obsessed with imagining a society defined by disease. He explains 'I'm thinking things I don't like to think about and I can't stop… Diseases, mostly. Skin diseases and cancers and insects that live in people's bodies. Some of them are real but I've been inventing new ones. I can't stop' (*Lanark*, p.232). Amongst these is 'a maggot called the Flealouse', which spreads 'through bodies without upsetting them at first', only to start 'feeding on the brain… the main bodily organs', until infected people die. And, we learn, 'in less than a century the Flealouse [has infected and eaten] every other sort of life on the globe' (*Lanark*, p.233). When the Unthank world is considered, all the members of the company Lanark frequents have a disease, minus Sludden; however, for Lanark 'he [has] no disease because he [*is*] a disease. He [*is*] a cancer afflicting everyone who [knows] him' (*Lanark*, p.361).

At the same time, in *Lanark* the focus on disability as a pervasive phenomenon in society spawns a variety of narratives of care that, in turn, are caught up in the dramatisation of non-identity between the concept and the reality of care and work under welfare capitalism. If, as Vasilis Grollios notes, negativity

'carries two meanings. First, that of human suffering, and second, our reaction against that suffering',[58] the negative dialectics that informs the representation of care in *Lanark* illuminates the pain and abuse on which medical institutions thrive, and patients' refusal of care as inadequate, if not exploitative. The conversation between Duncan and his father about his childhood wish to become a doctor epitomises this. When his father asks him 'have you any notion of what you would like to be?', Duncan replies 'a doctor'. This incurs his father's approval on the grounds that 'a doctor gives his life to helping others. A doctor is always, and will always be, respected and needed by the community, no matter what social changes take place' (*Lanark*, p.148). How the whole novel is a reversal of the concept whereby a relationship of mutual respect exists between doctor and patient becomes obvious when Lanark reaches the Institute, is cured of his disease, and becomes a doctor himself. *Lanark* gives voice to a non-identity impulse on the patient's side which, through refusal of care as inadequate or exploitative, ultimately exposes the 'technocracy, managerialism and paternalism' that 'characterised the post-war elite "mindset"' (Hay, p.57).When Rima becomes Lanark's patient, she shows no gratitude to him, only resentment: she addresses Lanark by saying 'what filthy tricks do you play on the sick?' (*Lanark*, p.73). On being about to turn salamander, she mocks Lanark's concern over her wellbeing by saying 'are you angry that you'll have nobody to read to, Thaw? But I've spread my wings, I'll fly everywhere and you can't come' (*Lanark*, p.95).

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[58] Vasilis Grollios, *Negativity and Democracy: Marxism and the Critical Theory Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 2017), p.5

The non-identity between both receiver and provider of care with their concepts is also apparent when Duncan is hospitalised, and both his illness and its treatment are impossible to pin down. The pills Lanark is forced to take are useless, so that Duncan is 'wholly occupied by the disease now. He [feels] it in him like civil war sabotaging his breathing and allowing only enough oxygen to feel pain, helplessness and self-disgust' (*Lanark*, p.297). Duncan is convinced that his illness 'does not have a fundamental root cause' that hospitals can discover (*Lanark*, p.299), and goes through the motions of being a good patient without recognising himself as such. Consequently, he feels 'slightly anxious and flat, like an actor whose performance has been neither applauded nor booed' (*Lanark*, p.302) in ways reminiscent of his strategies for surviving school. Failure of care through inadequate expertise is apparent when Duncan is thrown out of hospital. The doctor tells him that he has not got better in hospital because he is suffering from 'adaption', a concept he relates to the process whereby the 'hardworking man' who loses his job and goes on the dole 'grows slovenly and depressed. A year or two passes, he's offered a job at last and refuses it. Unemployment has become his way of life. He's adapted to it' (*Lanark*, p.311). The adaption of the employed has a counterpart in that of hospital patients. As the doctor explains to Duncan, some patients 'after an initial improvement, stop responding to treatment. Why? In the absence of other factors we must assume that the patient has adapted to the *hospital itself*' (*Lanark*, p.312). In line with this, the doctor discharges Duncan.

Non-identity defines the act of care itself, which becomes exposed as one of exploitation. Dr Ozenfant makes it clear that the Institute is a machine for exploitation. Through a negative dialectics that illuminates 'the human content that lies hidden inside fetish-forms' such as the state, capital and the wage (Grollios, p.2), *Lanark* dramatises the violence that colours relationships under welfare capitalism, in relation first to the medical establishment and then to the benefit system. When the former is considered, Lanark discovers that patients are practised upon by staff when he is informed by Dr Ozenfant that Rima is 'an impossible case', assigned to him so that he can gain experience (*Lanark*, p.85). And it becomes clear how the Institute exploits its patients when a big girl in khaki overalls communicates to Lanark that what she dislikes most about the Institute is 'the hypocrisy. The way [staff] pretend to care while using the patients up'; in fact, 'nobody is ever cured' and 'the treatment only keeps the bodies fresh until we need fuel or clothes or food' (*Lanark*, p.89). In shock, Lanark informs Rima that 'the Institute gets light and heat from people with [their] kind of sickness', while 'the food is made from people with a different sickness' (*Lanark*, p.98). And when Lanark realises that patients turning salamander are used to provide the Institute with heat, he exclaims 'that is atrocious! [...] I knew people deteriorate. That is dismal but not surprising. But for the cheerful healthy folk to profit by it is atrocious!' (*Lanark*, p.69). This highlights the non-identity Lanark perceives between the concept of care he cherishes and the reality that is played out in the Institute.

The benefit system reproduces the failure of care and its metamorphosis into outright exploitation that is proper to the medical institutions that feature in *Lanark* – whether the Institute or Duncan's hospital. Borsay contrasts the citizenship of contribution that became the favourite option from the 1960s, when 'confidence in the public sector was stalling' and prescribed 'the obligations of citizenship. The duty to work, and hence avoid the curse of state dependency' (Borsay, p.4), with the immediate post-war citizenship of entitlement, when 'it was citizenship that conferred [the] right' to welfare (Borsay, p.5). *Lanark* dramatises the horror of the former, showing the non-identity between the concept of a universalist welfare state (Hay, p.49) and its reality. When Lanark enters the benefit place saying 'I'm looking for work', he is directed to a lift to the fifth floor which is 'like a metal wardrobe and packed with poorly dressed people' and carries him to a 'dingy expanse tiled with grey rubber and covered by men of all ages crowded together on benches'. This space materialises the denial of Bonefeld's society of human purposes. As Lanark feels the need to declare his right to dignity as a human being, calling out the non-identity he experiences with respect to the concept of him the benefit place implies, he says 'I… am not… an animal' (*Lanark*, p.435). At this point he is transported to a floor where a job in the benefit place itself is offered to him. Lanark thus acquires an insider's perspective on the workings of the bureaucracy of the welfare state. He learns that staff actually consider claimants animals. His colleague Pettigrew explains to him 'we deal with animals here. The scruff. The scum, the lowest of the low' (*Lanark*, p.438). Moreover, Lanark finds out that his job 'does nothing but postpone'

(*Lanark*, p.439). It consists in noting down claimants' details with the only aim not to confront their anger as they learn they are not going to receive any support. Crucially, Lanark would want not to take the job. He says 'feebly, "I don't *want* this job"', but accepts it in the end (*Lanark*, p.440), under pressure from the violence of the expropriation of any means of subsistence effected by capitalism (Bonefeld, p.221).

**Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the ways in which Scottish writing produced in the post-war period dramatises processes whereby disability functions as a prism, intensifier and originator of non-identity between the concept and the experience of subjects of work and care, providing a trenchant critique of the logics of post-war compromise and settlement. Autonomist narratives of disability in the novels that this chapter has considered powerfully validate Adorno's idea that 'as a critical theory of society, the critique of political economy is devoid of affirmative traits' (Bonefeld, p.221) because, under capitalism, its task is 'to break out of the context from within' (Adorno 2008, p.407). *The Cone-Gatherers*, more than *Memoirs of a Spacewoman*, is organised around a critique of war through a double dramatisation of the exclusions inherent in a collective sense of national identity, and of the essentially divided nature of society along class lines. Mitchison's novel focuses on the diversity inherent in society and on the technocratic processes tasked with its management. Both conduct a thoughtful contestation of

the eugenicist practices and rationales underpinning post-war contexts. As for *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* and *Lanark*, the autonomist narratives of disability that focus Spark's and Gray's novels counter the ideological underpinnings of Marshall's 1950 declaration that 'the basic civil right is the right to work' (Marshall, p.10), as well as claims around the universalist and fair nature of the welfare state. What organises both Spark's and Gray's novels is 'the workers' rebellious initiative against their work' (Aureli, p.9), in striking contrast to 'the workers' integration within the capitalist process' (Aureli, p.15) and its reproduction at the level of care-giving relations that define the spirit of the post-war welfare state regime.

**Chapter Five**

**Crip Trash**

**Dysgenic Logics and Disability in Scottish Writing**

**from the First Half of the Twentieth-Century**

This chapter explores the ways in which selected Scottish writing produced in the first half of the twentieth century dramatises disability as belonging within the trash of capitalism and, as part of it, as powering dysgenic processes. Taking my cue from Walter Benjamin, by 'trash' I intend the constituency of those subjects who are recalcitrant to capitalist progress. This is a constituency that features disabled people centrally as both the literary works I will consider and the historical accounts I will draw on will illuminate. It will argue that these representations animate what can be called autonomist narratives of disability on the basis of their fusion of a critique of capitalist progress and eugenics with a portrayal of disability as thwarting the former. These narratives are concerned with the disposable bodies that the commodifying force of capitalism and the internal exclusion it fosters create, both through exploitation and through structures of social reproduction precursors to those tasked to maintain a productive labour force under welfare capitalism that we have seen in previous chapters. My analysis will consider novels produced from the start of the twenty-first century to the end of the Second World War as a time when 'an early absorbing mutual interest' characterised the relationship between eugenics and

society, until 'an abrupt disenchantment and apparent divorce' set in with the start of the Second World War.[1]

A plethora of narratives of disability exist in Scottish writing produced in the first half of the twentieth century. For instance, Violet Jacob's *The Lum Hat* and Edwin Muir's *The Marionette* were published in the very decades - the first three of the twentieth-century - over which, as James W. Trent examines, 'mental retardation was reconstructed as the "menace of the feebleminded"' and its changing meaning became inseparable from 'policies, programs, and practices' tasked to contain the threat it posed to the reproduction of a fit society.[2] *The Lum Hat* tells the story of Christina, the daughter of a bank manager in Montrose, characterised as feebleminded, as she becomes overwhelmed by random encounters which stimulate her into leaving the security of her home to marry Captain Baird and leave with him for the Southern Seas; however, she will flee back to Montrose after being exposed to the violence of newly-wed husband and sea alike. *The Marionette* tells the story of Hans, feeble-minded, and his father's attempts to introduce him to society through the use of marionettes. Both stories dramatise how normalising projects are botched by the resistant power of disability and the precarious state of normalcy is constantly threatened by the deficiencies of the unfit.

The novels I will engage with, however, are specifically focused through representations of disability which communicate logics and politics that are made illegible by those of nationalism, capitalism, and eugenics. My analysis of how

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[1] Troy Duster, *Backdoor to Eugenics* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.164

[2] James W. Trent, *Inventing the Feeble Mind: A History of Mental Retardation in the United States* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), p.4

these autonomist narratives of disability craft a form of counter-imagination in Scottish writing will follow a tripartite structure. I will start by delineating the contexts which the novels under consideration refract. A second section will consider how Edwin Muir's *Poor Tom* (1932)[3] and James Barke's *A Major Operation* (1936)[4] trouble narratives that establish links between biology, medicine and the health of the national society through representations of disability and class as constituting the 'Revolutionary Trash of Progress', flush with revolutionary potential to challenge hierarchies in a context of class struggle. The third section will explore how Lorna Moon's *Dark Star* (1929)[5] and John Buchan's *Sick Heart River* (1941)[6] engage with the relationship between the role assigned to heredity to determine which moral, psychological and physical traits are passed on from generation to generation in a context defined by anxiety over the future of those 'Crippled by Hereditary Trash'.

**Autonomist Narratives of Disability and the Politics of Eugenics**

With regard to the class context relevant to the autonomist narratives of disability I will consider, the start of the twentieth century was a time of division within the labour movement between skilled and unskilled workers in Scotland. Sydney and Olive Checkland note that while the labour movement 'contained a powerful

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[3] Edwin Muir, *Poor Tom* in *Growing Up in The West* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2003)
[4] James Barke, *A Major Operation* (London: Collins, 1955)
[5] Lorna Moon, *Dark Star* in *The Collected Works of Lorna Moon*, ed. by Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Black and White Publishing, 2002)
[6] John Buchan, *Sick Heart River* (1941) in *The Leithen Stories* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2000)

elitist craft element'[7] that impeded revolutionary movement building (Checkland and Checkland, p.189), increased unemployment shifted the balance towards more radical alternatives (Checkland and Checkland, p.186). While only *A Major Operation* and *Poor Tom* are specifically preoccupied with the condition of the industrial working class in Scotland, all the novels under consideration represent the violence disabled characters experience during the pursuit of progress under capitalist normalcy. If Thomas Johnston argues that the only way for 'labouring folk all down the ages' to survive has always been to cling to 'communist practices and customs' as 'without them social life was impossible',[8] these novels dramatise the possibility both for these practices and customs to lapse as the forces of progress prevail, and for the very trash that progress creates to expose its limits.

The first half of the twentieth century was also a time when nationalism had become a philosophy under the pressure of political events. As Sir Reginald Coupland maintained, 'the cardinal importance of nationalism in the politics of Europe forced men to think more about it than they had thought before; and the discussion thus raised gave it a theoretical content it had previously lacked'.[9] In a Scottish context, Checkland and Checkland argue that a 'Scottish sense of distinctiveness by 1914 was embodied in nature, in culture and in institutions' (Checkland and Checkland, p.198). Liam Connell concurs and suggests 'the inter-

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[7] Sydney and Olive Checkland, *Industry and Ethos: Scotland 1832 – 1914* (London: Edward Arnold, 1984), p.188

[8] Thomas Johnston, *The History of the Working Classes in Scotland* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1974), p.394

[9] Sir Reginald Coupland, *Welsh and Scottish Nationalism: A Study* (London: Collins, 1954), p.xviii

war years 'witnessed the emergence of a genuine political nationalism in Scotland', as part of a more general process of ´ecossification by which Scottishness took on a political significance that had rarely been available to it for some 150 years'.[10] While Michael Keating and David Bleiman suggest that the 1930s were not fruitful years for Scottish nationalism,[11] according to Coupland political nationalism experienced a resurgence between the wars as an offshoot of the class discontent that had mounted during the depression due to higher levels of unemployment in Scotland than in the rest of the UK (Coupland, p.381). Richard Finlay agrees with Coupland by noting that the central government was troubled by how 'the depression was driving more and more Scots towards nationalism'.[12] James Young sheds further light on the relationship between labour and nationalist politics that facilitated this, arguing that from the start of the twentieth-century the struggle for democracy and a Scottish Parliament became intertwined with class struggle.[13] Only the coming of the Second World War achieved the retreat of political nationalism as 're-armament revived the basic Scottish industries' and the war 'revivified the consciousness of British solidarity' (Coupland, p.382). These shifts of fortune experienced by nationalist politics in Scotland thus revolve around the inequalities created by capitalism and the state deemed responsible for guaranteeing social reproduction. This confirms

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[10] Liam Connell, 'The Scottishness of the Scottish press: 1918–39' in *Media, Culture & Society*, Vol. 25 (2003), p.189

[11] Michael Keating and David Bleiman, *Labour and Scottish Nationalism* (London and Basingstoke: the Macmillan Press Ltd, 1979), p.11

[12] Richard J. Finlay, 'Continuity and Change: Scottish Politics 1900-1945' in *Scotland in the 20th Century*, ed. by T.M. Devine and R.J. Finlay (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p.79

[13] James D. Young, *The Rousing of the Scottish Working Class* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), p.135

Coupland's contention that national traditions cannot 'be forgotten or discarded…

the only practical question is whether they need a political framework to make the

best of what is in them' (Coupland, p.xxii). The stories under consideration do not

thematise reflections on the connection between welfare and the political

framework within which it can be best administered. Instead, they powerfully put

across the entrenched nature of eugenicist rationales at multiple levels -

community, society, nation, and institutions – with only rare references to the

nation or the state (mostly in Buchan's *Sick Heart River*). What emerges as

relevant for an autonomist disability perspective is the eugenicist framework

within which social relations are captured.

However, contextualising these novels in relation to a national frame of

analysis is useful on two counts. Firstly, reflecting on the relationship between

eugenics, trash, disability and class, and the nation in the novels will allow us to

place the autonomist narratives of disability and the dysgenic logics they

foreground within the national context presupposed by Scottish literature as a

field of enquiry. The tension between nationalist and other politics, including

those of the labour movement, characterised the phenomenon of the Scottish

Renaissance, which still dominates critical discussion of the period considered in

this chapter. The belief held by the movement that 'that there could be no

regeneration of the nation's artistic culture which did not also involve the

regeneration of the social, economic and political life of the nation'[14] evinces a

preeminent grounding in nationalist politics. And indeed, its lack of fit with class

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[14] Margery Palmer McCulloch, 'Introduction' in *Modernism and Nationalism: Literature and Society in Scotland 1918-1939, Source Documents for the Scottish Renaissance* (Glasgow: ASLS, 2004), p.xiii

politics is suggested by Young's argument that, rhetorics apart, a rift obtained

between representatives of the Scottish Renaissance and the Scottish labour

movement. Major figures in the former, including Hugh MacDiarmid, were in the

1920s alienated by the latter's 'obsessive preoccupation with "economistic",

bread-and-butter questions' while, in turn, MacDiarmid's maintained 'elitism and

aloofness from the day-to-day struggle in the factories, workshops and industrial

communities' (Young, p.209). However, this chapter will take as its starting point

the contention that in order to contest the nationalist framework that much

Scottish literary theory assumed at the time and is still, to some extent,

reproducing, it is useful to set narratives which clash with nationalist ones against,

rather than as enriching, the national(ist) framework of Scottish literature.

Autonomist narratives of disability demand such an approach through their

contestation of all progress (capitalist and national alike).

Secondly, contextualising these narratives in relation to a national frame of

analysis that does not feature in the stories themselves is warranted by how 'the

link between biology, medicine and the health of the nation' is relevant to any

conversation that discusses eugenics within a national framework because

eugenics 'served, and was served by, nationalism. Anointed guardian of national

health and character', it was tasked to pass 'verdict on what constituted sound and

unsound bodies … as both contaminated and contaminators of the body politic'.[15]

For Roger Griffin too there obtained a link between biology and the health of the

nation, which connected 'national strength, demographic growth, and the physical

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[15] Nancy Ordover, *American Eugenics: Race, Queer Anatomy, and the Science of Nationalism*
(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), p.xiv

fitness of youth'.[16] Marius Turda confirms that 'the pursuit of a healthy national body was… central to eugenic discourses across Europe'.[17] If this is what constituted the 'political and cultural imagining of bodies and nations'[18] in the eugenics decades, the autonomist narratives of disability that will be the object of analysis in this chapter can be approached as performing a counter-imagination of the nation and its bodies that values as revolutionary the dysgenic processes by which both are threatened. They do so by denouncing structures of production and social reproduction devised to eliminate disabled bodies as long as they cannot be productively exploited as part of the labour force. This will be the common ground shared by competitive welfare state nationalisms in later decades.

Turda argues for the need to examine 'the important connections between eugenics and population policies, as well as its relationship with a number of political ideologies' (Turda, p.1). Sensitivity to these interconnections will inform my analysis; responding to Lene Koch's call to treat eugenics not as 'a fixed, well-defined ontological entity with one definite purpose' but as 'a social practice that constituted a complex array of goals and viewpoints',[19] I will approach the novels under consideration not as informed by eugenics as an ideology but as dramatising it as a social practice performed by the communities represented. For Turda, eugenicist practices shared three principles between 1870 and 1940, when

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[16] Roger Griffin, 'Bio-Nomic Man (and Woman): Fantasies of Anthropological Revolution as a Reaction to Modernity's Nomic Crisis' in *Crafting Human: From Genetics to Eugenics and Beyond*, ed. by Marius Turda (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2013), p.79

[17] Marius Turda, *Modernism and Eugenics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.4

[18] Alison Bashford, *Imperial Hygiene: A Critical History of Colonialism, Nationalism and Public Health* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.5

[19] Lene Koch, 'Eugenic Sterilisation in Scandinavia' in *The European Legacy*, Vol.11, No.3 (2006)

'eugenics [was] an "emergent property" of the prevailing structure of reproduction':[20] the 'role of heredity in determining the individual's physical condition', the 'link between biology, medicine and the health of the nation', and the politicisation of science (Turda, p.7). Turda's three principles are refracted in the novels that will be the focus of my investigation. In these, autonomist narratives of disability encounter and clash with eugenicist ones. This is hardly surprising as 'the science of human heredity is unavoidably tied to social politics',[21] and even more so within a context in which 'social Darwinism was indeed often used as a tool against relatively powerless people'.[22] If, as Peter Hawkins argues, social Darwinism is 'an abstract configuration of interlinked ideas about time, nature, human nature and social reality',[23] the novels I will consider are all concerned with the threats posed to progress by the trash excluded from such progress.

The subversive potential of this can be appreciated when considered alongside contemporary anxieties around 'the economy of the body and the social effects of its reproduction'.[24] The stories this chapter will examine speak to this mood through their preoccupation with dysgenic processes in society, as much as through their focus on the eugenicist practices and attitudes fear of these processes

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[20] Anne Kerr and Tom Shakespeare, *Genetic Politics: From Eugenics to Genome* (Cheltenham: New Clarion Press, 2002), p.6
[21] Gunner Broberg and Nils Roll-Hansen, 'Preface to the 2005 edition' in *Eugenics and the Welfare State: Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2005), p.ix
[22] Peter Dickens, *Social Darwinism: Linking Evolutionary Thought to Social Theory* (Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2000), p.6
[23] Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and European Thought 1860-1945: Nature as a Model and as a Threat* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.17
[24] Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c.1848-c.1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.6

stimulates. Indeed, anxieties over degeneration were inseparable from eugenics as a practice capable of allaying fears that 'civilized societies now kept alive the physically and mentally weak', with the result that 'the defectives were reproducing at a much faster rate than were the strong and smart'[25] and 'in greater proportions than ever before'.[26] Eugenicists thus were concerned to stop the tide of '"dysgenic" inherited physiological and mental properties' responsible for society's deterioration (Griffin, p.80). It is this very tide that functions as the driving force in the plot of the novels I will be examining.

Those simultaneously feared and marginalised as responsible for degeneration included disabled people as much as a high percentage of the working class; how the two categories intersect will be at the core of my analysis of autonomist narratives of disability in relation to the dramatisation of dysgenic processes. Disability studies scholars have explored how disability provides a key lens through which to map eugenicist thinking and practices tasked to achieve the 'eugenic selection of worthy citizens' through institutionalisation, sterilization, or restrictive immigration policies.[27] Until the conclusion of World War II, 'bodies designated as defective became the focal point of Europeans and American efforts to engineer a "healthy" body politic'.[28] This occurred as part of a *predictive discourse* the primary impetus for which came from 'the anticipatory

[25] Diane B. Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity: 1865 to the Present* (New York: Humanity Books, 1995), p.4

[26] Richard A Soloway, *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), p.18

[27] Douglas C. Baynton, *Defectives in the Land: Disability and Immigration in the Age of Eugenics* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), p.6

[28] Sharon Snyder and David Mitchell, *Cultural Locations of Disability*, ed. by Sharon Snyder and David Mitchell (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), p.101

identification of aberrancies that should eradicated from the face of the Earth'
(Snyder and Mitchell, p.71). Class was crucially deemed to intersect with
disability as one such aberrancy. Ordover highlights the connection between
eugenics and class by noting how 'Any examination of eugenic agitation
underscores the inseverability of racism, xenophobia, and profound class bias.
Eugenics was, after all, a response to both internal and external "perils"' and
'class divisions were, and continue to be, validated by eugenic explanations'
(Ordover, p.4). Pick lends support to Nancy Ordover's contention by registering
the perceived concentration of degenerates amongst the urban poor (Pick, p.5). So
does Edwin Black in relating how 'the victims of eugenics were poor urban
dwellers and rural "white trash"' as much as immigrants and 'epileptics,
alcoholics, petty criminals, the mentally ill'.[29]

The extent to which this defective constituency lends itself to
dramatisation as dysgenic – as powering and coalescing processes of degeneration
– is suggested by the connection between eugenics and progress.  As Pick notes,
'civilisation, science and economic progress might be the catalyst of, as much as
the defence against, physical and social pathology', but 'industry, capitalism and
social mobility appeared to produce a feverish political and physical unrest' (Pick,
p.10).  For Pick, 'theories of progress always seem to involve the implication of
potential inversions, recalcitrant forces, subversive "others", necessarily to be
excluded from the polity' (Pick, p.20). And indeed, fears over degeneration and
the related aversion towards classed and disabled defective populations has been

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[29] Edwin Black, *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America's Campaign to Create a Master Race* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2003), p.xvi

related to the pursuit of progress under capitalism. As Douglas Baynton explains, it was 'the growth of a market economy and industrial production', coupled with evolutionary theory and scientific discoveries, that changed 'perceptions of everyday time'. These, in turn, resulted in 'a redefining of disabled people as socially and economically "inefficient", drags on evolutionary and economic progress who were unable to keep up or successfully compete in the "race for life"' (Baynton, p.6). Thus, for Baynton, the growing aversion to disability was related to the ways in which disabled people were perceived to diminish the possibility to create a fit, productive society. With this in mind, my investigation will focus on representations of disability and class informed by a concern with the troubled path of progress under capitalism as core to unpacking the rationale behind fears of degeneration and eugenicist practices.

If, for Pick, 'it is important to consider what constitutes progress, what is excluded from it, what is deemed recalcitrant, backward, primitive to it' (Pick, p.22), this call can be best responded to through an approach that brings out the revolutionary potential of the trash feared by the eugenicists as this is represented in literature. One way of doing this is by drawing on critical theory that explicitly theorises and names 'trash' as what is recalcitrant to capitalist progress. Critical theory has theorised trash under capitalism as endowed with the revolutionary power to halt capitalist progress. In his 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', Walter Benjamin delineates what Carlo Salzani calls 'the final figure of the

Benjaminian "theory of trash"'.[30] This is the angel of history, turned towards the past, as they witness, in horror, a growing pile of wreckage produced by capitalist progress. This rubble in the stories under consideration is made up of classed and disabled subjects considered defective by the society they live in. Because there does not exist an official 'document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism', Benjamin's theory of history suggests that the revolutionary potential of trash is possible to uncover only through a materialist historiography that takes it as its project to 'brush history against the grain'[31] and 'fight against the spirit of the times rather than join it'.[32] This is precisely what autonomist narratives of disability in the novels I will discuss encourage us to do, so that they can become legible against eugenicist discourses of progress.

## Edwin Muir's *Poor Tom* and James Barke's *A Major Operation*: The Revolutionary Trash of Progress

This section will consider how Edwin Muir's *Poor Tom* and James Barke's *A Major Operation* dramatise the creation of dysgenic processes and trash under capitalism through autonomist narratives of disability. *A Major Operation*, set in Glasgow during the Depression, tells the story of how George Anderson, a coal broker, ends up in a charity hospital and propertyless because of a duodenal ulcer.

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[30]Carlo Salzani, *Constellations of Reading: Walter Benjamin in Figures of Actuality* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009), p.199

[31] Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the philosophy of history', in *Illuminations,* ed. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 256

[32] Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt Institute* (New York: The Free Press, 1977), p.48

Here he encounters Jock MacKelvie, leader of the unemployed workers'
movement. Through MacKelvie, Anderson will become involved in the class
struggle. *Poor Tom* explores life in industrial Glasgow by recounting the story of
two brothers, Mansie and Tom. Mansie and Tom fall out over a girl, Helen, and
become closer again through the caring relationship that develops when Tom has
an incident with a tramcar that damages his brain, causing his premature death. I
will start by contextualising these plots in relation both to contemporary fears of
degeneration and political unrest and to Benjamin's theory of trash as a way of
introducing the main themes that run through Muir's and Barke's work. My
analysis will continue by examining how trash and dysgenic processes are
delineated in the context of divided societies under capitalism and conclude by
exploring how the onset of illness works to disrupt class positions, assumptions,
and trajectories of capitalist progress, making trash into a subversive anti-
capitalist force.

While *A Major Operation* has been criticised for its overly politicised
perspective, it has been the bleak scenario of industrial Glasgow depicted by *Poor
Tom* that has been critically remarked upon. On the one hand, for Christopher
Whyte, *A Major Operation* is too 'schematic, didactic, doctrinaire'[33] – a
judgement that echoes Edward Sculler's contemporary criticism whereby Barke's
book is 'too long, it is at times verbose and offensive in its propaganda' and
'betrays a lamentable lack of tolerance that hampers a politician and cripples an

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[33] Christopher Whyte, 'Imagining the City: the Glasgow Novel' in *Studies in Scottish Fiction:
Twentieth Century, 1900-50* (Frankfurt, 1990), 193-205

artist'.[34] Moira Burgess concurs in critiquing *A Major Operation* for the excessive space given over to MacKelvie's lessons of historical materialism. For her, the merits of the book lie in 'Barke's technique of interlacing his narrative with striking, often impressionistic sections of description or evocation of Glasgow'.[35] At the same time, *A Major Operation* 'was enthusiastically received on publication' (Burgess, p.159), and the very same critics that criticise Barke recognise how his approach was demanded by the subject matter he was addressing and the context he was writing in. For Sculler, Barke exemplifies the contemporary Scottish novelist who has 'a dogged spiritual integrity that drives him on to write about the sort of life that in his opinion matters'[36] and for Whyte the material treated 'could make a preoccupation with stylistic factors appear indecent' (Whyte, p.193). As for *Poor Tom*, Burgess argues that in the novel Muir had projected 'his own vision of Glasgow as hell', in places reminiscent of Muir's *An Autobiography* (1954) (Burgess, p.175), and Roderick Watson interprets this as constituting one of the 'darker paradoxes within the so-called Renaissance, pointing out how soon the prevailing spirit of cultural renewal and rebirth changed to one of acute pessimism' (Watson, p.76). My analysis will suggest that Barke's unashamedly political take and Muir's pessimism are both necessitated by their engagement with the issues of degeneration and social criticism that organise the novels.

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[34] Edward Sculler, 'So This Is Glasgow!' In *Outlook*, Vol.1, No.8 (November 1936)

[35] Moira Burgess, *Imagine a City: Glasgow in Fiction* (Glendaruel: Scottish Arts Council, 1998), p.159

[36] Edward Sculler, 'My View of the Scots Novel' in *Scotland*, Vol.3, No.4 (Winter 1938)

As anticipated in the introduction to this chapter, well into the first decades of the twentieth century there abounded fears about dysgenic processes overwhelming society. Griffin suggests that by the eve of the First World War 'the latent criminality and immorality attributed to the increasing population of urban poor was the product not of desperate poverty and social deprivation, but of "dysgenic" inherited physiological and mental properties' (Griffin, p.80). Both *Poor Tom* and *A Major Operation* dramatise these dysgenic processes and take as their protagonist individuals who, as a result of these, have been catapulted into the trash of the unfit. Degeneration in the stories thus connects the 'individual (specific cretins, criminals, the insane and so on) and even the family… to society itself – crowds, masses, cities, modernity' (Pick, p.4) as this is rocked by the 'feverish political and physical unrest' (Pick, p.10) that disrupts all trajectories of progress.

When physical unrest is considered, the first three decades of the twentieth century witnessed a restructuring of the relationship between citizen and state in terms of welfare and medical provision: while at the beginning of the twentieth century the state 'had little involvement with the delivery and organisation of medical care',[37] now 'a new set of ideological attitudes took shape in Britain which shifted emphasis away from individual freedom and towards collective responsibility of the state for its citizens', as witnessed by the 1911 National Insurance Act which provided health and unemployment insurance (Porter, p.207). Dorothy Porter also notes that as the 'economic recession deepened, the

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[37] Dorothy Porter, *Health, Civilization and the State: A History of Public Health from Ancient to Modern Times* (London: Routledge, 1999), p.197

need for comprehensive health cover increased' (Porter, p.213). This is precisely the moment captured by the encounter with the Glasgow Eastern Infirmary and the unemployed workers' movement in *A Major Operation*, and with doctors and the prospect of hospital commitment in *Poor Tom*.

As for political unrest, on the one hand both novels dramatise the division within the labour movement between skilled and unskilled workers, which grounded a tension between 'the brotherhood of all workers' and 'a powerful elitist craft element' (Checkland and Checkland, p.188), and the potential of the latter to disrupt the former. On the other hand, in *Poor Tom* and *A Major Operation* revolution is carried by those who stop the movement of progress in which the working class is caught. This is reminiscent of how Benjamin argues that revolution is about interrupting rather than contributing to progress and involves going further than realising that the current state of things is not second nature. As Buck-Morss notes, for Benjamin 'by 1940, it was less the static appearance of reality that needed demystifying than the appearance of historical progress' (Buck-Morss 1977, p.60). Against this background, representations of illness and class in Barke's and Muir's novels encourage reflection on how it is material needs that push the working class to say no to capitalism that are to be recognised as the motor force of class struggle. This conception underpins Werner Bonefeld's call for 'a realistic conception of the struggle for the society of human purposes'[38] and Benjamin's insight that this struggle is a struggle for those 'crude and material things without which no refined and spiritual things could exist'

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[38] Werner Bonefeld, *Critical Theory and the Critique of Political Economy: On Subversion and Negative Reason* (New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p.226

(Benjamin 1999, p.246). These ideas crucially entail conceiving of the concept of the economy as 'an experienced concept, and economic consciousness as an experienced consciousness… of the struggle for access to the means of subsistence' (Bonefeld, p.226). In the stories considered in this section it is precisely economy as an experienced concept that powers a narrative of 'feverish political and physical unrest' (Pick, p.10).

Muir's *Poor Tom* dramatises the contrast between those participating in, and contributing to, progress under capitalism and those acting as brakes on, and being excluded from, its pursuit. How these subject positions are embodied in brothers Mansie and Tom, pitted by the main narrative against each other, can be grasped through Max Weber's idea of subject constitution, which illuminates how 'every society must, in order to reproduce itself, bring forth appropriate subjects and subjectivities'.[39] According to Weber, the 'bourgeois personality' in the 'formal psychological sense of the term' emerged out of practices of self-control.[40] These saw Luther's 'humble sinners' being succeeded by 'self-confident saints' in the form of 'the hard Puritan merchants of the heroic age of capitalism' (Weber, 2015, p.112). Mansie is portrayed as a consciously 'self-confident saint' that functions well and is rewarded within capitalist society thanks to his constant desire to better himself. This is epitomised by how Mansie decides to join the Baptist Chapel when he arrives in Glasgow because he is 'afraid that he might be missing an opportunity of bettering himself' (*Poor*, p.19). Thus, he goes to a

[39] Jan Rehmann, *Max Weber: Modernisation as Passive Revolution, A Gramscian Analysis* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015), p.xiv
[40] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by Talcott Parsons (New York: Scribner, 1950), p.119

church meeting and is 'quietly saved' (*Poor*, p.19). This in turn guarantees Mansie good luck, in line with the Weberian idea that an 'amazingly good, we may even say a pharisically good conscience in the acquisition of money' was afforded to those possessing the bourgeois personality by the 'comforting assurance that the unequal distribution of the goods of this world was a special dispensation of Divine Providence' (Weber, 2015, pp.176-7): aptly, we read that 'the thing that puzzled [Mansie] most was how he had got on so well in life' (*Poor*, p.18).

In line with the Weberian idea that it is clear separation from 'depraved humanity', or society's lower strata, that justifies unequal distribution of resources and fortunes (Rehmann, p.xiv), Mansie is defined by his virtues as much as by his difference and separation from individuals devoid of these – starting with Tom. Mansie is presented as 'A young man, good-looking and neatly dressed, who sets out conspicuously to be decent to everybody'; he 'will be greeted with decency on every side; the world surrounding him will obediently turn into the world of his imagination' (*Poor*, p.20). Only 'an occasional harsh echo from the tremendous world outside' disturbs him and Tom, as 'the most constant jarring presence' in Mansie's life (*Poor*, p.20), is both located within 'the tremendous world outside' and endowed with the power to intensify its threat. The opposition between Tom and Mansie extends to their bad and good fortunes respectively as Tom's illness is represented as a continuation of, rather than departure from, his earlier life defined by lack of moral worth and by bad luck. The unworthy and unlucky counterpart of Mansie, when Tom sees his brother walking with his girlfriend Helen, he realises

he has been unfairly deprived of the possibility to have a romantic relationship in the same way as he was denied the possibility of going off to sea when he was sixteen (*Poor*, p.7). As he nears death, his exclusion from a history of progress is marked by how Mansie notices that after acknowledging 'cinemas going up all over the show', Tom seems to be 'profoundly dejected all at once'. Mansie reflects on how Tom hadn't been in a cinema for a long time, poor chap. Would never see the inside of one again' (*Poor*, p.117).

*A Major Operation* too is a novel about contrasts and division. The division here lies between classes and is organised around the power that the trash of capitalism, in the form of the unemployed workers' movement, together with the dysgenic processes that create trash, possesses to undermine its progress. At the start of the novel, the divided nature of society under capitalism is captured through the portrayal of the encounter between Anderson and the unemployed workers' movement, when the former runs into the latter's demonstration. For Weber, classes consist of individuals pursuing a common economic interest and individuals share the same class situation according to the probability, which 'derives from the relative control over goods and skills and from their income-producing uses within a given economic order',[41] of 'procuring goods, gaining a position in life and deriving inner satisfaction'.[42] Anderson is at this point safely on the bourgeoisie side of the class divide, and unable to make sense of the protest: he thinks, 'unemployed demonstration. Hadn't seen anything about that in

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[41] Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, Vol.1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), p.302
[42] Simon Clarke, *Marx, Marginalism and Modern Sociology: From Adam Smith to Max Weber* (Basingstoke: Macmillan 1982), p.218

the papers. Unemployed becoming a menace. Silly of them demonstrating during business hours. Hadn't they got the dole? Want jam on it' (*Major*, p.128). Juxtaposed with Anderson's worldview is that of Jock MacKelvie, leader of the unemployed. We learn that MacKelvie is 'proud to lead the contingent from the Partick district', and confident because 'the workers were on the move: on the march. The workers weren't to be satisfied, fobbed off with talk any more' (*Major*, p.131). The two opposed worldviews are crucially framed by the *super partes* consideration that 'the general feeling the unemployed demonstrators aroused in the breasts of the Second City business men was the feeling of fear… that the day was uncomfortably near when their privileges, their powers and their rule would be challenged – seriously challenged' (*Major*, p.134).

The scenario of a divided society under capitalism similarly provides the backdrop for *Poor Tom*, which renders Glasgow as the urban locus of degeneration in ways that speak to Soloway's contention that in Edwardian times, to those anxious about degeneration, its 'cause and cure were primarily environmental', not hereditary (Soloway, p.28). It was within this framework, for Pick, that 'the perception of urban "pathology" was powerfully enhanced' (Pick, p.5). To Mansie's eyes, Glasgow is a city where the trash of capitalism, made up of the poorest inhabitants of the city, dominates. Once Mansie walks home through the slums instead of taking the tram, he registers an 'astonishing' number 'of dirty squalling children that were down here, down here the whole time by all appearances, for you never saw them anywhere else, perhaps they never got up at all, poor little beggars'. This trash is not human to Mansie, as 'the way they yelled

and screamed was enough to scare you; it wasn't like a human sound at all' (*Poor*, p.48). This trash is beyond reformation too, as suggested by the unchangeable quality Mansie associates with a red-haired woman that stands 'at the end of the close… keeping [some girls] from escaping', and resembling 'a fixed obstacle that could never be removed' (*Poor*, p.48). Finally, this trash is judged by Mansie according to the deserving / undeserving dichotomy: while the squalling children are victims deserving of compassion as 'poor little beggars… crying to the heavens', Mansie also encounters what he calls hooligans, whom he sees as '[flourishing] in the slums'; while the latter justifies Mansie's declaration 'it was time to put an end to these plague spots', the thought of the squalling children prompts him to add 'but those other poor beggars at the bottom of the street, it was no joke for them' (*Poor*, p.49). The defining poverty of the trash Mansie dreads points to the connection between eugenics and class bias pinpointed by Ordover (Ordover, p.4), among others.

Glasgow becomes a locus of degeneration for Tom himself as in it he becomes disabled and part of the city's trash. His degeneration via illness confirms Baynton's contention that the growing aversion to disability was related to its discomforting contemporary optimism about the possibility of creating a fit society (Baynton, p.7). Once Tom has become ill, Mansie associates him with the trash that populates Glasgow's slums, in line with the contemporary medicalization of social ills that reproduced the relationship established by eugenicists between these and undesirable body variations. As Snyder and Mitchell explain, 'according to early practitioners, social ills, such as

unemployment, alcoholism, social unrest, prostitution, indigence, and sexual

deviances, could largely be attributed to human "defects" causing the

degeneration of more upstanding forms of citizenship' (Snyder and Mitchell,

p.68), within a framework in which it was 'not possible to demarcate disease form

social deviance, as diseases [were] defined according to social attitudes about

acceptable behaviour and physical and mental aptitudes' (Kerr and Shakespeare,

p.3).

The association between Tom and Glasgow's trash is indexed by how

Mansie associates Tom with the unchanging and inescapable trash of the slums:

just as he tells himself 'well, there was no good in burking the fact; Tom was out

of the hospital now and waiting for him' (*Poor*, p.76), he looks 'to see if the great

red-haired woman was standing in the next close as usual, with her arms wrapped

round her over-flowing breasts. Yes, she was there… she would always be there,

nothing could shift her' (*Poor*, p.77). Also, when Mansie remembers a noseless

beggar he would always see in the slums, he tries to 'fix his mind on something

more cheerful; but instead it flew forward to Tom waiting at home, as though the

beggar had been cunningly leading him there' (*Poor*, p.76). The relationship

between Tom and the noseless beggar is profound as both work to upset Mansie's

Weberian 'pharisically good conscience' by inducing feelings of guilt into him

(*Poor*, p.20). The disturbance they cause is major as 'the only serious threat to

Mansie's happiness camed from those moments, and they were infrequent, when

he found himself morally in the wrong' (*Poor*, p.20). Mansie remembers how he

'had always given [the beggar] a few coppers, though he had had to overcome a

physical repulsion first; and now sitting on the tramcar he remembered that he had been offended at the man for not seeming to be aware of it' (*Poor*, p.76). Similarly, Tom's illness impacts Mansie precisely by making him feel guilty of Tom's misfortunes for having taken Helen from him.

The beggar without a nose (presumably syphilitic) also forces the reader to reflect on the possibility, rejected by both brothers, that the doctors' suggestion that Tom's illness has been caused by neurosyphilis contracted through sexual intercourse with prostitutes, rather than by a brain tumour sparked by a blow to the head, may hold some truth. The first doctor Mansie encounters asks him 'What sort of life your brother led… Did he go about with women a lot?'. The impact this question has on Mansie is dramatic as 'Mansie's face grew red. He looked at the people passing as though he were afraid they had heard'. However, his answer 'No. He had a girl once, but they haven't been keeping company for some time now' (*Poor*, p.73) confirms the reader's perception that Helen is the only lover Tom has ever had. This is further validated when Mansie responds 'My brother would never do such a thing!' and feels relieved thinking 'if the doctor connected Tom's headache with that he was quite off the track' (*Poor*, p.74). Indeed, we know that Tom 'was betrayed by a kiss' (*Poor*, p.12) as while in the world which Tom had known 'an ardent kiss was only the prelude to a more intimate caress, to Helen it seemed to be the end' (*Poor*, p.13). We are indeed left to speculate as to what 'a more intimate caress' could have involved, but there is no direct reference to Tom frequenting prostitutes in the novel. The specialist doctor Tom encounters as he comes close to the end of his life again enquires into Tom's sexual experiences

and his questions are rejected by both brothers as preposterous and offensive. Tom tells Mansie 'Do you know what he asked me? Asked me if I had gone with loose women!', to which Mansie retorts, 'He had no right to ask you that!', thinking 'It was going a bit too far, and the fellow dying!' (*Poor*, p.117).

Conversely, in *A Major Operation* Glasgow functions both metaphorically and materially as a referent for the economic and health hardship produced by capitalism. In sections such as 'Pain in the Second City' we read that 'there were nights of pain, there were days of pain in the Second City. Men, women and children withered and wasted with disease' (*Major*, p.207), while 'hunger, want, destitution and despair: all of them reap a rich harvest of pain in the Second City of the Empire' (*Major*, p.109).  As if to mock the eugenicists' anxieties over degeneration and dysgenic processes, it is class inequality rather than environmental or hereditary 'defects' that is presented by Barke as responsible for creating trash in Glasgow. This is intimated by the shift of focus in the narration to portray the bourgeois side: 'let the banquet guzzlers uphold the progress and dignity  of the Second City while, from behind the frames of lithographs of King William and the Blessed Virgin, ten billion bed-bugs sallied forth in the fetid darkness of slumdom, to suck the impoverished blood of ten thousand slum infants' (*Major*, p.207). At a metaphorical level, Glasgow too is rendered as an ill city as we learn that the crisis continues 'to eat into the economic life, the basic structure, of the Second City. The once red, pulsating blood of the City was impoverished: it dripped grey like the rain' and 'the social reflection of the crisis

was equally grey. There was many surgeons round the bedside of the City… But nothing could stem the grey blood from dripping' (*Major*, p.228).

Significantly, Glasgow is a city of trash in which a parallel development associates the economic crisis with the bodily ones of its inhabitants. This is reproduced by Anderson's own operation, which leads him through ruin to transformation, in physical and mental as much as in economic and political terms. In both Glasgow's and Anderson's case, the depression triggers this development in ways that speak to Benjamin's insight that 'with the upheaval of the market economy, we begin to recognise the monuments of the bourgeoisie as ruins even before they have crumbled'.[43] The fate of Glasgow, synecdochical for that of its working class, and Anderson's fate intertwine: while Anderson is undergoing surgery, we learn about Glasgow that 'the patient, the monstrous hermaphrodite, was in labour… The necessary obstetric force would be recruited from the million mass of the monster's suffering victims' (*Major*, p.230). And after Anderson's operation, his ward mate Thomson reflects that 'if Anderson would live, despite his present condition, then the tenacity of life was beyond his understanding'; in the same passage, we read that 'the City's heart beat irregularly. But it did beat' (*Major*, p.230). Finally, we are confronted with the prospect of recovery for Glasgow which prefigures Anderson's. Both can only be achieved through class struggle: 'beneath the surface, off the main streets, there was the wanes and despair of death' but 'beneath this was the stirring of new life and new hope. There was seething anger and discontent', while 'deeper and

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[43] Walter Benjamin, 'Paris – The Capital of the Nineteenth Century' (1935) in *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (London: NLB, 1973), p.176

deeper, sharper ad sharper cut the scalpel of class. Dividing, separating, removing all masks' (*Major*, p.230).

In both Muir's and Barke's novels the attitude of the medical establishment towards illness encapsulates the connection between disability, class and trash that the stories convey. In *Poor Tom*, there obtains a medicalization of social deviance and association of disability with social and attitudinal defects that recalls Anne Kerr and Tom Shakespeare's examination of how 'diseases [were] defined according to social attitudes about acceptable behaviour and physical and mental aptitudes' (Kerr and Shakespeare, p.3). To this speaks the already mentioned doctors' conviction that Tom's illness is due to his frequenting prostitutes (*Poor*, pp.73, 116). In *A Major Operation*, patients are treated differently according to their station in life by doctors. To MacKelvie, Dodds, the surgeon, expresses hostility and refusal to take his political status seriously: in inquiring into MacKelvie's occupation, he mocks his reply to the effect that he is a red leader and is now an unemployed leader by saying 'unemployed leader. From red-leader to red leader. Interesting! Well: you won't lead the unemployed for some time'. But to Anderson, Dodds shows deference after realising he is faced with a member of the bourgeoisie and remembering that 'George Tait Anderson had been liberal to charities in his day' (*Major*, p.185).

In *A Major Operation* voice is effectively given back to the patients to discuss doctors and to tell their own individual and collective stories, in line with Benjamin's idea that brushing official narratives against the grain is necessary as 'there is never a document of civilization which is not at the same time a

document of barbarism' (Benjamin, 1969, p.256). These counter-narratives delineate the community of trash that develops at the Eastern in the form of the patient constituency. On the one hand, this is a working-class community divided along occupational lines which includes school teacher Hugh MacGonachan, railway clerk Robert Gloag, farm labourer Peter MacGeechan, and Charles Duff, painter and burglar. The collectivity of existence that defines the ward is shown throughout as we are offered glimpses of how 'the ward was washed and shaved and breakfasted' (*Major*, p.167) and patients share problems and responsibilities: 'each has his problem. Outside they had responsibilities … Many were not sure they would get out' (*Major*, p.168). On the other hand, this is a community of solidarity beyond and against doctors, as epitomised by how 'the ward breathed freely when the surgeon had gone and a hum of conversation arose' (*Major*, p.188) and by the advice patients exchange about how to survive the hospital experience.

In both novels, the dysgenic processes whereby protagonists become ill and join the Glasgow trash, be this constituted by the unemployed or by the inhabitants of the slums, are articulated with issues of work, class, and capitalist progress. *Poor Tom* captures contemporary anxieties over the 'paradox that civilisation, science and economic progress might be the catalyst of, as much as the defense against, physical and social pathology' (Pick, p.10) as it connects Tom's degeneration to his pre-existent incompatibility with machinery and capitalism. This culminates with Tom's incident with a tramcar, at a time in which, as Weber's own research examined, the Taylorist capitalist formation

involved a novel 'linking of the workplace to the machine' (Rehmann, p.24). We learn that worse than any other is Tom's mother's 'fear of all the machinery, machinery she did not understand, and with which Tom was so unavoidably associated' (*Poor*, p.53). We learn that 'Tom had now more accidents than ever; his hands were perpetually in bandages', and that the cause of this is that Tom has 'always been reckless; he was now indifferent as well' (*Poor*, p.53). Tom is positioned by his recklessness and indifference in his dealings with machines outwith the course of a capitalist progress built on 'a Taylorist division of the work process into elementary and repetitive motions' within the framework of a technology-dominated workplace (Rehmann, p.24). What exposes Tom 'to accidents was the fact that, feeling shut out from everything, he felt shut out too from the very work he was doing every day'; and as Tom 'remained outside… this made him irritated with his tools, and in his irritation he began to treat them disrespectfully' (*Poor*, p.54). Powerfully, Tom's accident is thus framed as an accident on the order of the ones he incurs by treating his tools disrespectfully at work: as nothing 'pushes disrespect more promptly and ruthlessly than machinery', when Tom is brought home 'with his head bandaged and his blue serge suit covered with mud, it was because he had treated a tramcar with insufficient deference' (*Poor*, p.54). In light of this, Tom is initially held responsible for his accident by Mansie, who thinks, angrily, 'a fine way to behave, the fool would break his neck some time yet!' (*Poor*, p.55).

Illness introduces an element of temporal otherness into Tom's pre-existent incompatibility with work and with a capitalist progress grounded in a

'powerful tendency toward uniformity of life', and reliant upon the Puritan rejection of the 'idolatry of the flesh' (Weber, 1950, p.169). It is through the invasiveness of his disabled flesh that the Taylorist uniformisation of life becomes impossible for Tom to embrace: 'the first few weeks after Tom's return from hospital passed in a Sabbath calm', and all the life in the house slows down 'with the slowing down of Tom's bodily movements, bringing a compulsory relaxation' (*Poor*, p.89). This alternative temporal order is invested with aristocratic connotations on the basis of how it relieves Tom of the pressures and constraints workers are subjected to: 'the days of a sick man who is able to walk about, dress carefully and attend to his appearance, have something of an aristocratic seclusion and spaciousness'. This involves 'instead of madly rushing through the far-stretching temporal vista represented by a day – in a fury to reach the end of it', the possibility to travel 'at one's leisure and by easy stages'. As a result, this 'is a form of luxury, a privilege that one cherishes, an aristocratic privilege' (*Poor*, p.90). However, soon the language of aristocratic privilege gives way to imagery of defect. Once Tom's attacks have become frequent, his 'slowness would no longer obediently translate itself into a pleasant leisurely deliberation; it was a palpable defect that he had to struggle hard to overcome' (*Poor*, p.92). This validates Baynton's contention that the growing aversion to disability was related to its incompatibility with capitalism at a time when 'the growth of a market economy and industrial production were accelerating', inevitably leading to the redefinition of disabled people as 'socially and economically "inefficient", drags on evolutionary and economic progress' (Baynton, p.6).

If it is 'important to consider what constitutes progress, what is excluded from it, what is deemed recalcitrant, backward, primitive to it' (Pick, p.22), Tom's extraneous place in capitalist progress, and the ways in which this extraneity extends to the family who cares for him, is core to our understanding of the social and political power trash possesses to animate and illuminate dysgenic processes that undo capitalist progress. On the one hand, towards the end of *Poor Tom*, Tom takes stock of his life as one marked by unrealised dreams: he tells Mansie 'I've wasted my whole life, Mansie... I've made a complete mess of it. And now I'm done for [...] I might have gone to the Colonies and made good long ago. Might have had a wife and kids by this time. A home of my own' (*Poor*, p.112). As Tom says this, the effects of degeneration as a process which 'could usurp all boundaries of discernible identity, threatening the very overthrow of civilisation and progress' (Pick, p.9) become visible in his appearance. Tom, with 'his red unshaven chin quivered like an old woman's' as 'with trembling hands he tried to fasten the buttons on the front of his trousers', in vain (*Poor*, p.112).

A similar descent in the capitalist pecking order from bourgeois to unemployed following the encounter with illness organises *A Major Operation*. If class situation 'refers to a common economic interest that derives from a common economic situation' in terms of the possession of property or the type of economic activity pursued (Weber, 1968, p.302), in the Eastern, for Anderson, the class boundary becomes temporarily suspended on the basis of the loss of his class situation and his separation from his economic activity after his company is sold off. This loss allows a process to start whereby Anderson gains insight into the

life of the working class by lying next to working-class men in the hospital ward: as Anderson listens to Thomson talking about his canaries, his time at the Men's Guild and his wife, he realises that 'he had never known the mind and habit of the working class'(*Major*, p.193). Thus, while Anderson 'had always instinctively recognised the gulf that lay between the classes' now, as he lies 'helpless in a charitable hospital between a Private in the Black Watch and a heavy transport driver', he finds himself listening, 'with something approaching modified rapture, to the disjointed discourse of the latter!' (*Major*, p.193).

The process whereby Anderson moves from a state of fear of the working class to one in which he is committed to joining its ranks is likened to a major operation being performed on Anderson at two levels: one is the medical level at which Anderson's illness is cured; the other is the mental dimension in which Anderson achieves class consciousness, within a framework in which the former is conducive to the latter. In the final subsection of the novel, entitled 'Extracts from a Graveside Oration', MacKelvie makes this explicit in commemorating Anderson, who has laid down his life to save him from a horsed policeman's attack during the Hunger march. MacKelvie recounts: 'recently [Anderson] underwent a serious major operation. As he went through that operation his business, due to the stress of the crisis, went bankrupt [...] The petty bourgeois George Anderson was reduced to financial beggary while his physical health was seriously undermined' (*Major*, p.491). However, as 'he was crushed down into the ranks of the dispossessed… he turned towards the organised movement of the unemployed' (*Major*, p.491). This process culminates in Anderson's sacrifice,

proving that 'a major operation had been performed on his mind. And now nothing mattered, could ever matter to Anderson' (*Major*, p.494) but the fortunes of the movement.

Major operations in *A Major Operation* thus change existences. Immediately after Anderson's medical operation, it becomes clear to Anderson that the crisis in his health is fused with the pre-existent crisis in his business and, together, these bring about the crisis of his belonging within the bourgeoisie. As a result, Anderson is forced to become, having lost everything he had and was, Benjamin's historian-as-destructive-character, 'whose deepest emotion is an insuperable mistrust of the course of things and a readiness at all times to recognise that everything can go wrong'.[44] We learn that the world is 'slipping beneath [Anderson]: nothing was solid, fixed any more. Everything was chaos: whirling chaos' (*Major*, p.149). He realises that he has 'no world now. He [is] between two worlds, MacKelvie's two worlds: the world of the Haves and the world of the Have-nots', and 'he [supposes] he [belongs] to the world of the have-nots for he [has] nothing – literally nothing' (*Major*, p.329). Anderson is reduced to a situation in which he has no choice but to reduce everything to rubble, 'not for the sake of the rubble, but for that of the way leading through it' (Benjamin 1997-2003, p.542). This way is provided by MacKelvie. When Anderson asks the momentous question 'I suppose I must regard myself as one of the unemployed?', the red leader responds 'Wouldn't be a bad idea' (*Major*, p.337) and takes it upon himself to persuade Anderson that he needs to assume his new class situation by

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[44] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, vol.2, ed. by Michael Jennings (Cambridge: Belknap, 1997-2003), pp.541-2

joining the class struggle, as if aware of Weber's insight that 'there is no reason why individuals should necessarily be aware of their common class situation and still less why they should necessarily establish class organisations on that basis' (Clarke, p.218). MacKelvie explains to Anderson 'once you're unemployed… You'll find yourself an outcast and a pariah unless you get into the ranks of the organised unemployed and fight there, shoulder to shoulder, with your unemployed comrades' (*Major*, p.338). MacKelvie sees Anderson's loss of class situation as opening up the possibility of a transformation through education and the encounter with a different take on history from the bourgeois one. Prophetically, he tells Anderson, 'this spell of unemployment you're going to come through will be a good experience for you. It'll maybe knock a lot of the damned phoney ideas out of your head' (*Major*, p.338).

In *Poor Tom* and *A Major Operation* revolution is carried by those who stop the movement of progress in which the working class is caught, at a time of division within the labour movement between skilled and unskilled workers. *Poor Tom* engages with the role of the former, *A Major Operation* with that of the latter. In *Poor Tom* the socialist movement is portrayed as functioning as a channel through which care in the here and now is deferred in the spirit of the pursuit of a revolution that lies in the future. This speaks to the condition of the traditional labour movement in Scotland in the first decades of the twentieth century, in which the skilled membership brought together moralism and 'a considerable element of romanticism of the William Morris sort' (Checkland and Checkland, p.190). This was a 'brotherly utopianism' that came to resemble a

religion and which Checkland and Checkland see as 'ultimately a block to revolutionary thinking' (Checkland and Checkland, p.190). Mansie's Marxism is explicitly related to Calvinism in ways reminiscent of how *The Protestant Ethic* provided an account of the development of a bourgeois 'type of *human being* that was created out of the confluence of… religious and economic components',[45] while being defined by a profound ignorance of the private experience of death: we learn that, after Mansie joins the socialist movement, 'the new creed he had embraced was different from all the older faiths of mankind in one startling respect': that it takes 'death so little into account that it could comfortably transform death into a mere moment in the process of life towards its Utopian goal' (*Poor*, p.132). The materiality of Tom's illness and his approaching death painfully show to Mansie the limitations of the workers' movement.  On the basis of this, Mansie denounces the socialist vision as ignoring the suffering and pain that exist on earth: 'like the visions of the saints, the Socialist vision is one of purification, and arises from man's need to rid himself of his uncleanness'; however, 'the Socialist does not get rid of them in the fires of death… but rather by a painless vaporisation of all that is urgent and painful in a future which is just as earthly as the present' (*Poor*, p.109).

Muir's take on the labour movement in relation to socialism could not clash more profoundly with Barke's in *A Major Operation.* Anderson's journey is one that is dramatically opposite to Mansie's. It points to the materiality of struggle driving the unemployed movement through the representation of 'a

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[45] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic Debate, Max Weber Replies to His Critics, 1907-1910*, ed. by David J. Chalcraft and Austin Harrington (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), p.106

realistic conception of the struggle for the society of human purposes' (Bonefeld, p.225) and for the 'crude and material things without which no refined and spiritual things could exist' (Benjamin, 1969, p.246). Anderson's dilemma, as he moves from bourgeois to unemployed, to bar-tender, to unemployed, unfolds on the order delineated by Bonefeld whereby 'the "no" to capitalism is not external to but operates within that same society that it opposes' (Bonefeld, p.225). As an unemployed worker, Anderson is ineffectual in the struggle. At his first demonstration, the other workers 'just could not believe in Anderson. He just didn't look the part. And when they spoke to him he didn't sound it either' (*Major*, p.396). Anderson also strains against the need to wait for the revolution in the midst of material discomfort. We learn that 'in the spring and early summer Anderson [goes] through hell' as he has 'nothing but the Public Assistance relief on which to subsist' (*Major*, p.404). He comes to resent the very structure of classes that excludes him from all classes, as he cannot fully belong within any: he tells Sister McLean, 'I know only too well where I am. *I'm in no-man's land…* And I've got to find my way back into the trenches or I may get bumped off from either side' (*Major*, p.414). And in a fit of rage he exclaims 'to hell with everybody and everything. Yes: to hell with MacKelvie and the working class. To hell with the middle class, the upper class – all classes' (*Major*, p.450). The end of the story, however, proves Anderson's belonging within the organised unemployed movement when he gives his life for MacKelvie's; the fact that he sacrifices himself for the movement and the class within which he now belongs is suggested by how immediately after the police horse plunges its iron hoof on his

chest, 'from fifty thousand proletarian throats a roar of anger and rage shakes the second City', while Anderson's hands 'still clutched the banner in a death grip', and the crowd chants 'Roll along, revolution, Roll along…' (*Major*, p.490).

While *Poor Tom* and *A Major Operation* depict crip trash as created by, and thwarting the progress of, capitalism, Lorna Moon's *Dark Star* and John Buchan's *Sick Heart River* relate its genesis to hereditary processes which threaten to mar the possibility for characters to progress towards a successful future in society, while endowing disabled characters at the centre of these narratives with the potential to subvert the very narratives they organise.

## Lorna Moon's *Dark Star* and John Buchan's *Sick Heart River*: Crippled by Hereditary Trash

Lorna Moon's *Dark Star* and John Buchan's *Sick Heart River* are driven by a concern with genetic heredity as haunting present generations, and by a focus on attempts at vanquishing this threat. *Sick Heart River* tells the story of how Sir Edward Leithen, diagnosed with tuberculosis, undertakes a journey through the Canadian north to find Francis Galliard, husband to his friend John S. Blenkiron's niece, after he abandons a successful life in America to flee to his Canadian homeland. *Dark Star* tells the story of Nancy's attempts to prove to herself and to the local community that she is the daughter of the local lord, Ramsey Gordon Fassefern, instead of the daughter of Willie Weams, a groom, and that she is able to escape the influence of the immoral traits she fears she has inherited from her

mother, Bella Pringle, who escaped with a medicine-man encountered at the local fair when Nancy was little. In order to examine how these stories dramatise issues of heritability and degeneration through autonomist narratives of disability, my analysis will explore the centrality of representations of the disabled body and their intersection with work narratives in both novels in relation to issues of heritability and charismatic politics. While *Sick Heart River* circulates around the question of Leithen's illness as both the obstacle and the catalyst to the completion of his journey, in *Dark Star* Moon's 'willingness to tackle subjects on the edges of respectability'[46] culminates in the metaphorical association between the blemished status of the local disabled librarian and of Nancy's heredity.

Moon's and Buchan's concern with the influence heredity can have on present and future generations is rooted in the context of production of *Dark Star* and *Sick Heart River*. Thoughts about heritability, or 'the crucial role of heredity in determining the individual's physical condition', were 'unavoidably tied to social politics', according to Broberg and Roll-Hansen (p.ix). In Moon's and Buchan's works, the spectre of hereditary influence is specifically related to processes of degeneration. We have already seen that Pick suggests that in the first half of the twentieth century degeneration stopped being associated with 'the individual (specific cretins, criminals, the insane and so on) and even the family' and became located with 'society itself – crowds, masses, cities, modernity' (Pick, p.4). *Dark Star* refracts the former moment, as the plot is driven by speculations about the influence of Nancy's heredity on her personality and her future, in

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[46] Glenda Norquay, 'The Far Side of Lorna Moon' in *ScotLit*, Vol.27 (Autumn 2002) http://asls.arts.gla.ac.uk/Lorna_Moon.html

tension with narratives of disability where disability simultaneously functions as a metaphor for the dysgenic impact of human heredity, and resists its metaphorical function by mocking heritability-related hopes and fears; instead, *Sick Heart River* speaks to the shift itself through the dramatisation of dysgenic processes and the ways in which it is the very trash these produce that is endowed with the most potential to care for, and save, others, in a world apart from that of capitalism. In both novels, processes of redemption function as quests for arbitrary reconstruction and recomposition of possible pasts, presents, or futures which do not fit traditional narratives of progress, while still committed to its pursuit.

The dramatisation of dysgenic processes and resistance to these in *Sick Heart River* is contained within a Weberian framework made explicit from the start through the portrayal of Leithen's response to the onset of illness, informed by the Calvinistic ethics beloved of Weber. We learn that Leithen has been 'brought up in a Calvinistic household' (*Sick*, p.12) and his world-view reproduces the Weberian ethos of Puritan Calvinism whereby it is separation from 'depraved humanity' that provides a 'comforting assurance that the unequal distribution of the goods of this world was a special dispensation of Divine Providence' (Weber 1950, p.176). Like Mansie in *Poor Tom*, Leithen reflects on how 'fortune had been ludicrously kind to him': it has afforded him 'fifty-eight years of health and wealth' and allowed him to be 'amazingly successful in his profession', with honours falling to him 'out of all proportion to his merits' (*Sick*, p.12). Leithen's reaction to the news that he is suffering from a terminal illness is marked by the traits of a profoundly Weberian bourgeois personality, evinced by a

characteristic 'restless activity', 'consistently implemented rationalisation of life praxis', and 'active self-control and the control of one's affects' (Rehmann, p.xiv). Leithen realises that 'soon he must think things out, but not at once. He must first make some necessary arrangements about his affairs which would keep him from brooding. That should be the task of the morrow' (*Sick*, p.12). In line with this, the next day he visits his bankers, solicitors and clerk (*Sick*, p.5).

The Weberian framework of Leithen's narrative might seem to be undermined by the emphasis on his deteriorating body as Weber, in tracing 'the uniformisation of lifestyles back to an "ideal foundation"', validates the Puritan rejection of the 'idolatry of the flesh' (Rehmann, p.25). Instead, for the terminally ill Leithen, 'the body! – that was the rub. It was failing him, that body which had once been a mettled horse quickly responding to bridle or spur. Now he must be aware every hour of its ignoble frailty' (*Sick*, p.15). It is illness that forces bodily limitations centre-stage in *Sick Heart River*, leading it to share as central the 'preoccupation with the economy of the body and the social effects of its reproduction' (Pick, p.6) that existed at the time. On the one hand, this is rendered graphically by how, in having a bath, Leithen catches 'a glimpse of himself naked in the long mirror, and was shocked anew by his leanness' (*Sick*, p.8). On the other hand, Leithen's body is portrayed as reluctant to be mastered, and managed, as part of the 'powerful tendency toward uniformity of life' crucial to the 'capitalistic interest in the standardization of production' (Weber 1950, p.169) that used to be a feature of Leithen's life: 'he had been proud of [his body], not like an

athlete who guards a treasure, but like a master proud of an adequate servant' (*Sick*, p.15).

However, if anything, the Weberian perspective is reinforced by the centrality assigned to Leithen's disabled body, as Leithen's development consists primarily in attempts to bring under control his failing body so as to make it even more productive still: 'only now that his body was failing' is he able to 'realise how little he had used it', and how he 'never, except in the War, staked his body in the struggle'. Terminal illness allows him the opportunity to rectify this: in asking himself 'was it still possible to meet that test of manhood with a failing body?', he decides he will not 'sit down and twiddle his thumbs and await death. His ship, since it is doomed, should go down in action with every flag flying' (*Sick*, p.15). This is in line with how Leithen's illness originates within the sphere of national progress under capitalism, rather than as a threat to it. Not only does Leithen's degeneration derive from his contribution to the nation as 'the dose of gas he got in the War had probably not exhausted its effect' (*Sick*, p.11). Most importantly, Leithen's illness occasions the opportunity for Leithen to make a further contribution to his race in agreeing to find Galliard despite, and because, he is a 'dying man' (*Sick*, p.18).

In *Dark Star*, the most important character apart from Nancy is her friend and fellow librarian Andrew Morrison, who has two wooden boxes in place of legs and, through his disability, functions as a constant reminder of the diminished life opportunities Nancy's heredity might afford her, if found to connect her to undesirable members of the local community. Andrew's story proves different

from Leithen's as it exemplifies the exclusion from an intolerant society that pushed disabled people away from public life (Baynton, p.4). We learn of how 'at nineteen he had won the bursary and was the highest rated scholar of his class in all the length of Scotland', which earned him a university place in Aberdeen (*Dark*, p.148). Significantly, his disability ceases to be relevant at the moment of entry into public life as Andrew 'walked along narrow bustling Broad Street to the University, [with] swinging legs that were long and lithe, legs that responded to the high singing of his heart, though they were but legs of his imagining' (*Dark*, p.148). Once in the classroom, Andrew's fantasy of belonging is brought to an end when the professor asks him a question from behind the lectern, becoming enraged at Andrew's perceived failure to stand up, without realising he is actually standing up on his wooden boxes (*Dark*, p.148). Andrew's disability crucially becomes visible again as he exits both the classroom and the social sphere he had hoped to have become a full member of: 'Andrew Morrison moved into the aisle, the wooden boxes clattering loudly…. out of the classroom, out of the University, out of Aberdeen, out of the glory of his life, back to Pitouie, never to leave it again' (*Dark Star*, p.150).

The same combination of strength and suffering caused by social exclusion on the basis of disability that characterises Andrew also colours the representation of Jean Sclessor in Moon's 'Wantin' A Hand'.[47] This recounts the consequences of the accident with a threshing machine that deprives Jean of her hand during the harvesting season: we witness how 'the crunching mouth' of the

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[47] Lorna Moon, 'Wantin' A Hand' (1925) in *The Collected Works of Lorna Moon*, ed. by Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Black and White Publishing, 2002)

machine 'reached for [Jean's] fingers – drew them onwards with the wheat – seized them, pulled them in – the hand, the arm, up, up, the arm' ('Hand', p.25). Jean's lover Sandy Morrison will refuse to go cottering with Jean after she loses her hand, and will marry another woman, explaining 'I've nae use for a wife wantin' a hand', while looking at Jean's stump ('Hand', p.25). The image we are left with is on the one hand that of an all-powerful Jean washing clothes: 'there was no hint of age or decay in the square tower of her body, no thought of handicap in her actions as she squeezed and rubbed the clothes upon the board with her one powerful hand', while 'the small stump of her missing arm jerked vigorously from the shoulder in time to the hand upon the board' ('Hand', p.23). On the other hand, it is that of Jean disfigured by pain, drinking, with 'her purple lips forming the silent words twisted in a half-forgotten pain, and then her voice meaningless as a wind in a hollow place [taking] up the dirge: "Nae use for a wife wantin' a hand, wantin' a hand…"' ('Hand', p.27).

The powerful relationship that unites Nancy to Andrew is rendered through the narrative about heritability and the wish for controlled reproduction that organises *Dark Star*. For Duster, the 'prism of heritability' afforded a way of relating traits and behaviours to biological inheritance (Duster, p.164). In Moon's novel, this intersects with the contemporary belief that warranted eugenicist practices, whereby 'everything from intellect to sexuality to poverty to crime' (Ordover, p.xii), and any 'human mental, temperamental, and moral traits' (Paul, p.1), was attributable to heredity. Consequences of this were concerns about the need to control social reproduction and the belief that 'society ought to foster the

breeding of those who possessed favourable traits ("positive" or "constructive"

eugenics) and discourage or prevent the breeding of those who did not ("negative

eugenics")' (Paul, p.1). These assumptions pervade *Dark Star*, in which the main

narrative is provided by speculations about, and anxiety over, Nancy's heredity.

Nancy yearns for a clue that would prove 'for ever, beyond all reach of further

doubting, that she was not the daughter of a squat-bodied, pock-marked groom'

but 'a child of the Fasseferns', so that 'well might she walk high-headed, knowing

the grandeur and the pride of that wild blood' (*Dark*, p.93).

Nancy's need to achieve clarity about her heredity is introduced at the very

start through the rendition of her desire to access her Grandmother's walnut box:

'always she had believed that revelation and grandeur waited for her in the walnut

box' (*Dark*, p.81). Once the walnut box is found to be empty, Nancy can only

reconstruct her heredity through 'half-told tales and pregnant pauses', and it is by

'piecing the tattered ends together [that] she learned the story' (*Dark*, p.86). The

whole novel turns on Nancy's attempts to manage the threat of a defective

heredity through a Benjaminian practice of re-collecting, engaged in not to 'retain

the new but to renew the old. And to renew the old – in such a way that [the

collector], the newcomer, would make what was old [their] own', in Benjamin's

words.[48] Nancy's re-collection occurs on the order of Benjamin's constellations as

'ever-changing "force fields"' which 'combine representation with what is not

representable and put into dialectical relationship things and history, thought and

desire' (Salzani, p.32). The first memory Nancy latches onto and makes her own

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[48] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, vol.3, ed. by Michael Jennings (Cambridge: Belknap, 1997-2003), p.403

is that of her first encounter with the Fassefern family and their tragic ending when she was a child, related in ways that suggest a profound connection between herself and the Fasseferns. As she witnesses the suicide of the last Fassefern, suicide is connected to the Fassefern lineage by the villagers screaming 'another Fassefern gone to his death. Suicide Fasseferns! Suicide Fasseferns!' and so is Nancy, as she recalls hearing the Rossorty inhabitants saying 'her name, and then her mother's name' (*Dark*, p.86).

Amidst all the uncertainty, a spectre haunts Nancy's re-collecting process through certainty: that of how heredity ties her to Bella Pringle as her mother. Bella is firmly located within the world of a fair that approximates that of a freak show, as 'the earliest thing that Nancy [can] recall [is] the feeing market on a sunny day' which she attended with her mother (*Dark*, p.81). Bella shares with 'monsters' and 'freaks' the capacity to 'defy the ordinary and mock the predictable, exciting anxiety and speculation among [her] more banal brethren'[49] within Nancy's fantasy of abandonment: Nancy remembers how 'the hand gripping [her] slackened; she found herself alone in the crowd, and saw her yellow-haired mother mounting the platform of the medicine-man', and disappear from her life (*Dark*, p.83). It will be Divot Meg, the owner of the local hostel, together with Nancy's final act of suicide, that will enact collecting as 'a form of practical memory' (Benjamin, 1999, p.2) and decide the truth about Nancy's heredity. As Salzani explains, for Benjamin 'in the collection, the collector

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[49] Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, 'From Wonder to Error: Monsters from Antiquity to Modernity' in *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires*, ed. by Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Blancel, Gilles Boetsch, Eric Deroo and Sandrine Lemaire (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), p.11

"salvages" particular items by recording them, by assimilating them into a new, meaningful wholeness' (Salzani, p.206). The information that Divot Meg provides to Nancy about her heredity is carefully selected so as to provide a picture that will allow Nancy to 'walk high-headed, knowing the grandeur and the pride of that wild blood' (*Dark*, p.93). And when Bella comes back and threatens to tell Nancy that 'she's a bairn of Willie Weams' (*Dark*, p.230), Divot Meg kills Bella. It is Nancy's own suicide that sanctions her belonging within the Fassefern family: humiliated by her lover Harvey, who proposes to send her money rather than marry her, Nancy feels like she has inherited the traits of her mother, a bad woman (*Dark*, p.247). However, at the very moment she throws herself off the cliff, she realises that the very act inserts her in the lineage of the suicide Fasseferns (*Dark*, p.247).

Like in *Dark Star*, in *Sick Heart River* Benjamin's practice of re-collection, whereby the collection becomes 'a new, expressly devised historical system' (Benjamin, 1999, p.2), entirely shaped by the collector's selection of 'particular items by recording them, by assimilating them into a new, meaningful wholeness' (Salzani, p.206), colours narratives of heritability and reconstruction of individual stories necessary to make sense of past, present and future. The importance of ideas of heritability in *Sick Heart River* is evinced by how investigation into Galliard's ancestry is core to Leithen's recovery of the reasons behind his disappearance, which organises the first three fourths of the novel. Not only is Galliard a French-Canadian, 'a remarkable race' by virtue of their being 'a fine European stock planted out in a new country and toughened by two centuries

of hardship and war' who 'don't give a cent for what we call progress' (*Sick*, p.24), but he specifically belongs within the Galliards, a family who by themselves constituted 'a stirring race' (*Sick*, p.44). It is within this scenario than Leithen will situate Galliard's disappearance as rooted in processes of degeneration, able to 'usurp all boundaries of discernible identity, threatening the very overthrow of civilisation and progress' (Pick, p.9). Aware that progress always seems 'to involve the implication of potential inversions' (Pick, p.20), after discovering that Galliard had interrupted all contact with the Galliards, that 'that door is closed and bolted. He has never been back to Canada. He's a naturalised American citizen', the doubt arises in Leithen that Galliard 'has adopted the externals of [the American] life' without having 'changed inside' (*Sick*, p.25). In particular, for Leithen, place intersects with heritability as key to reconstructing Galliard's story, in line with Soloway's contention that as far as degeneration was concerned, 'cause and cure were [deemed to be] primarily environmental' (Soloway, p.28). Leithen remembers when 'Chateau-Galliard had been innocent of pulp mills and no more than a hamlet of painted houses and a white church' and registers how now 'all the loveliness had been butchered to enable some shoddy newspaper to debauch the public soul'; as soon as he realises this, he feels that at Chateau-Galliard he perceives Galliard 'more vividly than ever before', although he cannot 'affiliate him with the landscape, except that he also [is] a mystery' (*Sick*, p.38).

If the narratives of Leithen's journey to find Galliard and Galliard's disappearance dramatise tensions deriving from the 'apparent paradox that

civilisation, science and economic progress might be the catalyst of, as much as the defence against, physical and social pathology' (Pick, p.10), they also carry the sentiments that fed eugenics as a renomising project, namely, a project which established 'rival construction sites for a new Babel' after the loss of a world-view (Griffin, p.71). The need for a 'new Babel' to avert the danger of national degeneration is intimated by Leithen's friend Savory's analysis of the contemporary situation. As he explains:

> 'This country of ours… is up against the biggest problem in her history. It is not a single question like slavery or state rights, or the control of monopolies, or any of the straightforward things that have made a crisis before. It is a conglomeration of problems, most of which we cannot define… Everybody and everything here has to have a new deal, and the different deals have to be fitted together like a jig-saw puzzle, or there will be an infernal confusion. We're a great people, but we're only by fits and starts a nation…. Our huge population is more like a collection of pebbles in a box. It's only the containing walls of the box that keep them together" (*Sick*, p.32)

For Griffin, the eugenic renomising project, whereby life would be invested with new meaning, turned on the 'myth of the new man', which called for 'an anthropological revolution without which the socio-political one could not become a reality' (Griffin, p.71). This myth of rejuvenation through hardship

frames both Leithen's and Galliard's journeys. Leithen gradually comes to the realisation that both he and Galliard are 'facing the challenge of the North, which a man must accept and repel or submit to servitude' (*Sick*, p.176). Moreover, the renomising rationale underpinning Leithen's mission consists in the fact that in a context in which 'most men had their lives taken from them. It was his privilege to *give* his, to offer it freely and joyfully in one last effort of manhood' (*Sick*, p.176).

However, renomising projects could be 'private (and hence practically invisible) or collective and revolutionary' (Griffin, p.71), and Leithen's personal renomising journey becomes increasingly collectivised. In searching for Galliard and Lew, the brother of his guide Johnny, Leithen's motivation gradually transforms from a selfish desire to die on his feet to a concern sustained by human values. He realises that 'Galliard was no longer a mathematical symbol, a cipher in a game, but a human being and Felicity's husband, and Lew was something more, a benefactor, a friend' (*Sick*, p.121). This renomising practice of care peaks in relation to the Hares, whose plight is compared to the war as their camp has become 'a place of death' (*Sick*, p.165). This makes Leithen realise that 'the whole world was full of death' but, against this, here he is, one man who 'stood stubbornly for life' as 'the champion of life against death' (*Sick*, p.165). With the world at war again, 'it might be the twilight of the gods, the end of all things. The globe might swim in blood. Death might resume his ancient reign. But, by Heaven, he would strike his blow for life, even a pitiful flicker of it' (*Sick*, p.167). As we will see, Leithen's acts of care are dependent on the charismatic power his

status as an ill man grounds. The relationship between disability and Weber's conception of charisma will occupy the final part of this section.

In *Dark Star* disabled characters are invested with charismatic attributes that allow them to bring to the surface Nancy's anxieties about heredity, while focusing intense symbolic power through their disability within the community. For Weber, 'charismatic politics highlights the fact that the exercise of power always presupposes certain forms of substantive meanings and ethical values. It rests on a foundation of shared maxims and social imaginary significations'.[50] The symbolic potency of disabled characters defines many of Divot Meg's guests, most importantly the concertina player with a stiff leg called Braes O' Mar: 'all Pitouie loved the Braes O'Mar. Whenever he set foot across the toll-bar bridge all the children ran to meet him crying his name' and 'with his staff he would draw a circle around himself. *Outside* this circle the children must stand, and *inside* the circle the pennies must fall'; tellingly, he has 'a way with him of appearing to give up and walk on if the pennies did not fall fast enough', and Divot Meg gives him 'the front bedroom with the wooden bed at no extra charge' (*Dark*, p.129). Divot Meg's 'sick man' too holds symbolic power that translates into actual power: we learn that 'a small sore upon his tongue made by his clay pipe had turned into cancer, and now he had no tongue' (*Dark*, p.130). If Divot Meg, 'courageous with whisky… would go to her sick man's room and, standing in the doorway, cry out her drunken wish that he might be six feet below the grass before another day', in fact she is more often 'haunting the doctor's house, harrowing him with threats

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[50] Andreas Kalyvas, *Democracy and the Politics of the Extraordinary: Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, and Hannah Arendt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.26

and pleading that he find some way to cure her man' (*Dark*, p.131). Divot Meg's sick man is also the witness who reports Divot Meg to the police after she kills Bella Pringle; this comes as no surprise as when Meg kills Bella, in looking in her man's face she '*saw her enemy*' (*Dark*, p.234).

If charisma disrupts rational rule and overturns all notions of sanctity,[51] Andrew comes across as a charismatic character precisely through his overturning all notions of nobility and grotesqueness as he articulates these through his body. We learn that 'he was a figure to inspire awe. Seated behind the big table [of the library], he dominated the dingy long room' (*Dark*, p.144). This awe is communicated by his noble features as he dominates the room by 'making it his throne-room, and the high seat behind the table, his throne. His noble head was set upon the torso of a giant. So might Charlemagne have looked upon his throne. So might Caesar have looked in the day of his glory' (*Dark*, p.144). This clashes with a 'pain-moulded mouth' that has 'a terrifying bitterness, as of a wrong past all bearing' (*Dark*, p.144). This bitterness in turn derives from the grotesque features in Andrew's body, made visible when he leaves the throne and becomes only 'the torso of a man, grotesquely walking on thigh-bones. Grotesquely trailing two little wooden coffins in which lay his dead-born legs. Propelling himself apelike with arms that touched the floor'. Crucially, Andrew's power lies in how 'the wooden boxes made a cruel clatter' that reminded people of his plight (*Dark*, p.149).

The symbolic relationship between Andrew's disability and the implication that Nancy is blemished by birth in the same way as he is blemished

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[51] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, edited by Guenther Roth and Clauss Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp.1115-7

by his impairment organises the development of the plot in *Dark Star* and reflects the connection established by eugenicists between undesirable body variations and social ills: if social ills, from alcoholism to sexual deviances, 'could largely be attributed to human "defects" causing the degeneration of more upstanding forms of citizenship' (Snyder and Mitchell, p.69), Andrew's physical defects, as much as Nancy's inherited moral ones, share with social ills an imbrication with a degenerated form of citizenship. We learn that between Nancy and Andrew 'there was an impassioned current… that [is] not unlike hostility. It gave her a queer sense that part of him was her enemy' on the basis of how he appears to think that Nancy is 'blemished by her birth' (*Dark*, p.167). In line with this, Nancy realises that he accentuates the noise coming from 'his boxes clattering on the floor' so as to make her realise that 'he is [her] clattering boxes' and remind her that she too is a cripple (*Dark*, p.167). At the end of the novel, Andrew admits that he tried to deny Nancy's connection to the Fasseferns in the attempt 'to make things equal…' (*Dark*, p.195). As he returns to Pitouie, his disability is accentuated by the relief of Nancy's metaphorical one, achieved through his admission that Nancy belongs within the Fassefern lineage: we witness how 'wordlessly they went into the corridor together. Never had his boxes made such a noise' (*Dark*, p.196).

At the same time, how in a 'purely empirical and value-free sense charisma is indeed the specifically revolutionary force of history' (Weber, 1978, p.1115) plays out through Andrew's attempt to warn Nancy against the injustice that animates society's discourses and practices. Nancy asks him about the

crippling influence heredity can have, and Andrew ridicules the link between moral defect and heredity on which Nancy's existence turns. She asks 'what is meant by "for I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me… is it always a sin to be to be ashamed of?"'. Andrew does not validate her fears and replies 'it means that the Church takes a very depressing view of the act of procreation' (*Dark*, p.146). Instead, Andrew has an insight into the workings of an unjust world and advises Nancy to marry Harvey as soon as possible, taking his distance from moralising reasons: smiling 'crookedly to take away the suggestion that he was being a moral adviser', to Nancy's question 'you think that love is right or wrong because of a ceremony?' he replies 'oh, no, my dear. But it is wise or foolish because of a ceremony' (*Dark*, p.215). And indeed, Nancy will commit suicide when Harvey abandons her to pursue his career as a musician.

In *Sick Heart River* narratives of charisma and disability are intertwined with those of the pursuit of regeneration against dysgenic processes. On the one hand, if charisma 'transforms all values and breaks all traditional and rational norms' (Weber, 1978, p.1115), in Buchan's novel this is articulated with how Leithen's renomising journey is dramatised as the journey of a sick man. This is apparent when on the way to Sick Heart River 'the strength seemed to go from [Leithen's] limbs' and he collapses at the moment when he catches 'sight of the river' (*Sick*, p.96). Similarly, when he finds Lew, and Lew aims his gun at him, Leithen finds 'himself longing for [the shot] as a sick man longs for the morning' (*Sick*, p.105), only to be spared and find himself the next day 'in a state of abject decrepitude' (*Sick*, p.117). On the other hand, it is Leithen's status as a sick man

that invests him with the charismatic power that enables him to obtain 'almost at once an extraordinary influence over the Hares' minds. "Far greater than mine… though I have been living for years among them"', recounts local priest Father Duplessis. He explains that 'this was partly due to [Leithen's] great ability and the confidence he inspired, but partly to the fact that he had been a very sick man and was still regarded by the Hares as a sick man' (*Sick*, p.180). And indeed, it is as a sick man that Leithen accomplishes the renomising mission he has embarked upon: 'sick man or not, in a month Sir E. Leithen had worked little short of a miracle. He had restored a degenerating tribe to something like health. He made them want to live instead of being resigned to die', the Father relates (*Sick*, p.180). This is a powerful conclusion to a novel in which dysgenic processes are consistently dramatised alongside the ways in which it is the very trash these produce that is endowed with the greatest potential to care for, and save, others.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the ways in which Scottish writing produced from the start of the century to the end of the Second World War portrays disability as the trash of capitalism, and the latter as constantly produced by, and reproducing, dysgenic processes. All the four novels under consideration confirm Ordover's indictment of how 'class divisions were, and continue to be, validated by eugenic explanations' (Ordover, p.xix), against the background of 'unbridled optimism' about the possibility to create a fit society (Baynton, p.7) that would lubricate the

progress of capitalism. While the stories I have looked at convey the entrenched nature of eugenicist rationales at multiple levels - community, society, nation, and institutions – without any reference to a specific nation or state, contextualising these in relation to the national framework to which Scottish writing is tied is necessitated by the contemporary belief that 'the health of a nation's culture could not be separated from the health of the nation as a whole' (McCulloch, p.xiii). What the autonomist narratives of disability analysed in this chapter suggest through their refraction of issues of eugenics, heritability and trash, is the fundamental incompatibility of their perspective with one committed to the pursuit of a fairer or healthier society under capitalism, whether through the re-composition of the national community or through the re-location of state responsibilities for social reproduction.

**Conclusion**

**Crip Militancies**

**Notes Towards A New Politics for Contextualism in Scottish literature**

This thesis has explored the intersection between representations of disability and narratives of work, welfare and the nation in Scottish literature through an autonomist disability perspective that integrates Marxist autonomist theory and disability studies. There are manifold ways in which this research can be expanded. In particular, the task of recuperating and reviewing all the literary texts associated with Scottish writing that feature narratives of disability has certainly not been exhausted by this thesis. My aim has not been to provide an exhaustive overview of the narratives of disability that traverse the space of Scottish literature; rather, it has been by mapping connections between different narratives through a specific theoretical optic that I have sought to draw attention to their pervasiveness and to the reasons behind their neglect in Scottish literary studies. I have focused on autonomist narratives of disability as these directly clash with the nationed framework of Scottish studies in ways that yield up patterns of articulations between narratives of disability, class, and contemporaneous contexts and disciplinary discourses that are specific to Scottish literature. More specificities defining literary and cultural engagements with disability in Scottish studies can be made visible through the combination of different texts, contexts, theories and disciplinary frameworks from the ones I

have selected. It is uncovering these specificities that, for me, holds the key to developing a disability studies approach in Scottish literature.

In this thesis, an autonomist disability perspective and a post-indyref perspective have been necessary for delineating the ways in which class and disability are dramatised in Scottish writing not as identities calling for unproblematic inclusion within the framework of Scottish literature, but as interconnected categories of struggle that clash with the default nationalist politics of the field, whenever their relationship is considered. This approach has allowed me to foreground the disablist discourses that inform Scottish cultural and literary studies, arguing that these make a disability studies perspective impossible in the field, and narratives of disability in Scottish writing illegible. Homi Bhabha suggests that an 'ambivalent, antagonistic perspective of nation as narration' has the potential to 'establish the cultural boundaries of the nation so that they may be acknowledged as "containing" thresholds of meaning that must be crossed, erased, and translated in the process of cultural production'.[1] I disagree with Bhabha because the acknowledgment, through rejection, of the nationed framework of Scottish studies responsible for occluding the presence of disability in Scottish writing is preliminary to any practice of cripping Scottish literature.

I have attempted to crip Scottish literature in two ways. On the one hand, by focusing my investigation through the logic and presence of disability, drawing on disability studies to make it visible. On the other hand, I have organised this thesis in an inverse chronological order, taking as a starting point the 2014

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[1] Homi Bhabha, 'Introduction: Narrating the Nation' in *Nation and Narration*, ed. by H. Bhabha (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p.4

referendum debate, which brought together nationed root metaphors of disability specific to earlier theorisations in Scottish studies and culture. My intent here has been for the structure of my thesis to mimic the intertwined processes of unpicking the accumulation of derogatory narratives of disability in Scottish studies, of unearthing the plethora of (autonomist) narratives of disability in Scottish writing, and of foregrounding the clashing logics by which the two are animated. I have also deployed the indyref conjuncture as a prism through which to illuminate, in intensified form, the nationed discourses that have contributed to the devaluation of disability in Scottish culture and studies, as well as their continuing influence. I therefore agree with Scott Hames that, post-indyref, 'the opportunity to revisit the political self-constitution of "Scottish literature" as a subject' that the post-indyref scenario creates 'should be welcomed'.[2] Thus, mine has certainly not been a departure from 'the methodological predisposition of reading literature for social analysis'. If literature has a unique power to disclose 'the subtle processes and contradictions that coalesce around particular figures, expressions, or even events' which 'in their turn might be taken as refracting similar factors in reality',[3] my analysis has been concerned to examine the ways in which the literary texts I have considered do so specifically through the anchor the narratives of disability they feature provide into the materiality of human experience.

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[2] Scott Hames, 'Narrating Devolution: Politics and/as Scottish Fiction' in *C21 Literature: Journal of 21st-century Writings*, Vol.5, No.2 (2017), p.20

[3] Ato Quayson, *Calibrations: Reading for the Social* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), p.99

However, from this does not follow a devaluation of the aesthetic autonomy of literary texts. Rather, my project takes 'as its starting point an understanding of politics, ethics and aesthetics as fundamentally intertwined'.[4] From this perspective the interpretative complexities generated by disability representation in texts reliant on strategies of unreliability or undecidability, as well as in those belonging within non-realist narrative modes, can be read positively in the service of Marxist disabilities studies committed to connecting the social, economic and aesthetic domains. This is the case because this set of narratives communicates and sharpens a skewed and embodied perspective on vulnerability. Nationed metaphors of disability too fuse with narratives of undecidability in *The Mile* and narratives of unreliability in *Poor Things* and increase the power disabled characters possess to disrupt the structures of the national society.

The ways in which any discussion of aesthetic autonomy in Scottish studies must, however, take on the disciplinary contextualism of the field will be the subject of discussion of the rest of this conclusion, which has a two-fold aim. First, to reflect on the ways in which a militant kind of literary criticism can be imagined that is specifically rooted in the nationed critical framework that defines Scottish literature but entertains an antagonistic relationship to its overdetermination by nationalist politics. My aim will be to raise questions about the possibility to make legible for actualisation texts and contexts informed by politics incompatible with nationalist ones, such as those enshrined in the

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[4] Alice Hall, *Literature and Disability* (London and New Work: Routledge, 2016), p.1

autonomist narratives of disability I have considered. This will lead me to the second aim of this conclusion. Having argued in my introduction and later chapters that a disability studies approach in Scottish literary studies draws attention to the exclusions deriving from its nationed contextualist framework, I will now discuss what disability studies can learn from its encounter with Scottish studies. I will argue that this comes ultimately down to the need to acknowledge the pressure that both the specificity of national contexts and of nationed disciplinary frameworks, and the contextualist framings of different branches of literary studies (disability studies included) place on the reception and theorisation of narratives of disability. A Scottish studies perspective foregrounds the position both itself and disability studies occupy on the continuum between a Lukacsian aesthetics which grasps the work of art as one of the 'various forms in which men organize those actions and reactions of the external world, to which they are always exposed'[5] and an Adornian aesthetics according to which because the image is not a copy of reality it 'emancipates the elements of reality from reification from the fixed functions in a social cultural system';[6] both Scottish studies and disability studies struggle to move towards the latter pole, bound as they are to the former by the communities to which they aim to contribute and by the contexts which are read as relevant to the writing they study.

The difficulty in disconnecting context from literary criticism in a Scottish context, and the impossibility of detaching contextualism from a nationalist

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[5] Georg Lukács, *Conversations with Lukács*, ed. by Theo Pirkus, trans. by David Fernbach (London: Merlin Press, 1974), p. 14

[6] Taek-Gwang Lee, 'An Artwork as a Critique: Adorno against Lukács' in *Comparative Literature*, Vol.71 (2017), p.69

context have been traditionally noted in Scottish literature. When the former is considered, John Speirs, in his 1940 *The Scots Literary Tradition: An Essay in Criticism*, noted that because his book was 'an attempt to focus as a whole and with regard to its bearing on our present problems (as far as that may be possible without distortion) the literary tradition in Scots', it was inevitably haunted by a sociological bias which constituted a 'deflection from pure "literary" criticism'.[7] Allan Massie, in his 1982 introduction to Edwin Muir's *Scott and Scotland*, admitted as much in arguing that the work of literary criticism that endures 'is as often as much a piece of propaganda as of criticism'.[8] Along these lines, David McCrone argues that 'academic debate is also political debate at a crucial conjuncture in Scotland's history'.[9]

As for the latter, if the nationed framework of Scottish literature has constrained theorisation of critical approaches relevant to the writing it studies, similar constraints pertain to the contexts that can be related to Scottish writing. Nationalist politics persist in providing the default referent that was entrenched by the culturalist discourse on devolution. Cairns Craig suggested that 'in the stalemate of British politicians' refusal to acknowledge it as constituting a *political* problem, Scotland posed to its writers and artists a fundamental *cultural* question – what could constitute the unconstituted nation they had inherited?'.[10] Similarly, Liam McIlvanney argued that 'the "post-British" Scotland to which the

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[7] John Speirs, *The Scots Literary Tradition: An Essay in Criticism* (London: Chatto&Windus, 1940), p.viii

[8] Allan Massie, 'Introduction' in *Scott and Scotland: The Predicament of the Scottish Writer* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1982), p.i

[9] David McCrone, Stephen Kendrick and Pat Straw eds., *The Making of Scotland: Nation, Culture and Social Change* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989), p.3

[10] Cairns Craig, 'Constituting Scotland' in *The Irish Review*, No.28 (Winter 2001), p.6

Edinburgh Parliament was a laggard response had long been taking shape in the pages of Scottish novels'.[11] In line with this, for Caroline McCracken-Flesher's 'Scotland's new Parliament (1999) certainly [was] a creation of laws, politics, and economics' but 'the forces underpinning it [were] also cultural'[12] and for Robert Crawford 'the (re-)establishment of a Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh was part of a sometimes confident, sometimes anxious political reassertion of Scottish national identity' contributed to by literary works.[13]

Eleanor Bell and Hames' solution to the problem posed by the hegemony of nationalist contextualism was to move beyond contextualism to theory so as to remedy a situation in which 'by positioning theory as *inhering* in Scottish literature – smuggled under the kilt in a gesture of recuperation – the need to engage with theory at the level of critique [was] passed over in silence'.[14] Instead, a response to their call can also be located in the move towards an alternative contextualism, grounded in contestation of the default nationalist contextualism that defines Scottish studies. I will now turn to the generative potential of contextualism in Scottish literature, suggesting ways in which resistance to reading novels as deploying 'complex strategies of cultural identification and discursive address that function in the name of "the people" or "the nation"',[15] and

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[11] Liam McIlvanney, 'The Politics of Narrative in the Post-war Scottish Novel' in *Modern British Fiction*, ed. by Zachary Leader (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.185

[12] Caroline McCracken-Flesher, 'Introduction' in *Culture, Nation, and the New Scottish Parliament*, ed. by Caroline McCracken-Flesher (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007), p.9

[13] Robert Crawford, *Scotland's Books: The Penguin History of Scottish literature* (London: Penguin, 2007), p.7

[14] Eleanor Bell and Scott Hames, 'Editorial: Theory and Scottish Exceptionalism' in *International Journal of Scottish Literature*, Vol. 3 (Autumn/Winter 2007), p.3

[15] Homi Bhabha, 'DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation' in *Nation and Narration*, ed. by H. Bhabha (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p.292

thus as reproducing nationalism, can spawn contrasting forms of contextualism in Scottish literature.

Rather than retreat from context to avoid the nationalist framework that attends contextualism in Scottish studies, an autonomist disability perspective grounds an encounter with the nationed framework of Scottish literature through reflection that positions itself within alternative traditions of contextualism and militant theorisation. Two avenues can be taken by a Scottish literary studies approach concerned to retain a militant ethos: as practitioners in the field, we can either endorse the default nationalist militancy of Scottish studies and reaffirm the connection this traces between nationalist context and literary texts and criticism. This option, in a post-indyref context, can be taken to have re-occupied the hegemonic position it held before the post-devolution moment overtook Scottish literary studies. Or, we can draw on theory antagonistic to nation-state and capitalism alike and connect not only its principles, but the contexts these principles speak to, to narratives in Scottish writing. The former option entrenches nationalist hegemony over all forms of militant investigation in Scottish studies; the latter undercuts its naturalness while encouraging consideration of the antagonistic politicity of Scottish writing beyond nationalist categories - but also beyond the abstract theory and political principles that tend to inform Scottish literature when the hold of nationalism becomes loosened. Arguing for the latter course, I will now discuss the contribution disability studies and autonomist Marxism can make to render visible contexts and literary narratives incompatible

with the nationed framework of Scottish literature as a discipline, in the direction

of a new politics of contextualism in Scottish studies.

Both fields are driven by a strong contextualist and interventionist

rationale which clashes in politics if not form with the privileged relationship with

nationalist contexts that characterises Scottish studies. Autonomist Marxism and

disability studies share a commitment to intervene in, and escalate, contemporary

struggles. Not only has disability studies, since its flourishing in the 1980s and

1990s, been committed to foregrounding the connection between its development

as an academic discipline and 'the remarkable growth of disabled people's

organisations';[16] it was also determined to remain part of the disabled people's

movement. For Tom Shakespeare, it is important to consider theoretical

developments in disability studies 'as examples of praxis, the unity of theory and

practice within struggle'.[17] Intellectuals' contribution is still perceived to be

relevant to the experience of disabled people through the definitions of disability

it provides and crucial in providing theory to strengthen resistance to 'disablist

assumptions and discriminatory practices'.[18] From a cultural perspective, from the

start there was a feeling that disabled artists and writers have a duty to contribute

to the disability movement by reclaiming impairment 'away from a social flaw'

while shifting the attention to 'the interface between people with impairments and

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[16] Penny Germon, 'Activists and Academics: Part of the Same or a World Apart?' in *The Disability Reader: Social Science Perspectives*, ed. by Tom Shakespeare (London and New York: Cassell, 1998), p.245

[17] Tom Shakespeare, 'Disabled People's Self-organisation: A New Social Movement?' in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, Vol.8, No.3 (1993), p.250

[18] Len Barton, 'Sociology and Disability: Some Emerging Issues' in *Disability & Society: Emerging Issues and Insights*, ed. by Len Barton (London and New York: Longman 1996), p.8

socially disabling conditions' through artworks.[19] This is because the success of a

disability counter-culture is dependent on disabled people's 'ability to position

meaning'.[20] Along similar lines, autonomist Marxists of all shades have been

driven by the conviction that 'the point of philosophy is not that of interpreting the

world but of changing it'[21] through theory that can 'help us recognise and increase

our power'.[22]

Two conclusions can be drawn from the above. On the one hand, that

bringing together these insights and militant commitments, a crip militancy in

Scottish literature would work towards realising Walter Benjamin's materialist

historiography in its brushing against the grain of a nationed literary history that

disqualifies narratives of disability in proportion as these have become devalued

at the cultural and political levels. Benjamin's idea of the historian as ragpicker

has been explored by critics as a way of rescuing specific histories in order to

make these actual, bearing in mind how Benjamin set great store by the idea of

images as relevant for political praxis. This is suggested by Irving Wohlfarth's

analysis of how the ragpicker, in collecting and putting together materials

salvaged from the trash of history, allegorizes the materialist historian,[23] and by

Sigrid Weigel's contention that Benjamin's is not a metaphorical politics but one

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[19] David Hevey, 'From Self-love to the Picket Line: Strategies for Change in Disability Representation' in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, Vol.8, No.4 (1993), p.427
[20] David Hevey, 'The Tragedy Principle: Strategies for Change in the Representation of Disabled People' in *Disabling Barriers – Enabling Environments*, ed. by John Swain, Vic Finkelstein, Sally French and Mike Oliver (London and New Delhi: Sage, 1993), p.120
[21] Werner Bonefeld, 'The Communist Manifesto 1848-1998 150 Years Old: Looking Back in Anger' in *Common Sense*, Vol.23 (1998), p.83
[22] John Holloway, 'The Politics of Debt' in *Common Sense*, No. 9 (April 1990), p.52
[23] Irving Wohlfarth, 'Et Cetera? The Historian as Chiffonnier' in *New German Critique*, no.39 (Fall 1986), pp.142-68

of images.[24] Firstly, if there is a 'a continual discursive tension between the construction of political identities and the designation of the pathological and insidious outsider',[25] the only way to tell the history of classed disability oppression in relation to nationed frameworks of analysis is to interrogate the influence of nationalist contexts on critical narratives which neglect or devalue as 'a discordant expression of a "natural" process gone awry' bodily variations that are deployed as literary devices or represented as 'a feature of biological elasticity'[26] in literary texts.

Secondly, a crip militancy in Scottish literature on the order of Benjamin's materialist historiography would connect autonomist narratives of disability in Scottish writing, approached as images, to contemporary contexts dominated by politics incompatible with nationalist ones. In particular, Benjamin explores practices of making images, things, and histories actual via the notion of constellation, according to which 'an image attains legibility only at a particular time, when other images synchronic with it enter a constellation of *recognisability*' (Salzani, p.29). In our case, the question can be formulated as an inquiry into the histories that Scottish studies tends to make actual, and into how the narratives made visible by the analysis carried out in this thesis from an autonomist disability perspective can be actualized alongside, if not against, the former. Baynton suggests that 'disability matters everywhere in history' and it

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[24] Sigrid Weigel, *Body- and Image-Space: Re-Reading Walter Benjamin* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996)

[25] Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c.1848-c.1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.20

[26] Sharon L. Snyder, and David T. Mitchell, 'Introduction: Ablenationalism and the Geo-Politics of Disability' in *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies*, Vol.4, No.2 (2010), p.70

does so because 'everyone is defined in some way by disability, by its presence or ostensible absence', and because 'the concept of disability is used to quantify inequality for not only disabled people but virtually every other group that has faced stigma or oppression'.[27] The autonomist narratives of disability considered in this thesis confirm Baynton's insights because they depict disability as both pervasive in society and as crucially connected to class as a sister category around which exclusionary processes, as well as resistance, converge.  If, heeding Benjamin, 'images, severed from all earlier associations… stand – like precious fragments or torsos in a collector's gallery – in the sober room of our later insights',[28] the intersection of representations of class and disability with narratives of work and welfare may offer insights into to the place of disability in our present contexts of welfare state nationalism. Especially so if these fail to acknowledge the extent to which disability, under capitalism, will always constitute an obstacle on the path of national emancipation.

The second conclusion that can be drawn from the analysis of the militant commitments of Scottish and disability studies concerns the possibility for literary critics working in either discipline to overcome said contextualism and perform a literary analysis informed by the principles underpinning an Adornian aesthetics. The irreconcilable conflict between Adorno's take on art and contextualism are rooted in Adorno's thinking around non-identity and the relationship between theory and praxis. For Buck-Morss, 'Adorno's theory never squarely faced the problem of the relationship between cultural revolt and political revolution' because 'These things were, after all,

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[27] Douglas C. Baynton, *Defectives in the Land: Disability and Immigration in the Age of Eugenics* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), p.3
[28] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, ed. by Michael Jennings (Cambridge: Belknap, 1997-2003), p.611

nonidentical' (Buck-Morss, p.84). Lanning agrees that 'for Adorno, the *unifying* relation of theory and practice constitutes an "identity" and, therefore, an example of identity-thinking' to avoid,[29] and so does Rose in suggesting that 'Adorno continually challenges new attempts to make theory into an instrument. Such theory necessarily misconceives the relation between the subject and social objectivity. It is therefore inefficacious and regressive, exacerbating the very conditions it seeks to overthrow' (Rose, p.191). From this derives Adorno's diminished his capacity to address a specific milieu of struggle. In failing 'to articulate the connecting link between the individual experience of intellectual revolt and the transformation of social reality, Adorno here again leaves us with the question, precisely whom were the *avant-garde* leading?'(Buck-Morss, p.85). Lanning addresses similar issues in reflecting on Adorno's idea of critical theory as a 'message in a bottle' stuck in the mud,[30]the intended recipients of which remain unclear. He reflects 'If the message in a bottle is a form of communication why cast about for a different audience, except to argue that the nearest one, the working class outside Adorno's door, was either uninterested or incapable?' (Lanning, p.17). Scottish studies holds the opposite position, taking it for granted that most of the audience it addresses shares its nation-centred framework or, at least, is not hostile to it in ways that open up an avenue for impact in a nationalist political context. Disability studies similarly addresses a very specific community of disabled people, alongside their families and allies.

It is precisely a persistent interrogation of these disciplinary procedures that constitutes the contribution Scottish studies can make to disability studies. On the one hand, the imperative to scrutinise claims that the overcoming of contextualism is possible is what Scottish studies has always contended with. It is

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[29] Robert Lanning, *In the Hotel Abyss: An Hegelian-Marxist Critique of Adorno* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2014), p.24
[30]Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (London: Verso, 2005), p.209

thus uniquely placed to introduce the engagement with, and the interrogation of, this imperative into other fields of study as fruitful practices. This project has examined how Scottish studies has been concerned to recover and connect, valorise and theorise texts either speaking directly to the history of the nation or functioning as building blocks through which to reconstruct its culture and history. It has focused on how this occurs in a framework in which the connection cultural representation and political efficacy is entrenched by the political constitution of the field of Scottish literature. Disability studies operates in a similar fashion but taking the disabled rather than national community as its referent. It is precisely this that makes it impossible for either field to admit Adorno's theory of the autonomy of art. A Scottish studies perspective in disability studies can encourage reflection on how and why this is the case.

On the other hand, because the contextualism that bedevils Scottish studies is inseparable from its national context and its nationed disciplinary framework, Scottish studies foregrounds the extent to which unless the pressure of national contexts and related nationed disciplinary frameworks is acknowledged, the delineation of the derogatory associations with which disability is invested will be impossible to accomplish. Taking these insights as its starting point, my work has worked in a similar spirit to that informing Claire Barker's examination of representations of disability produced in postcolonial contexts.[31] Barker both acknowledges national specificities at the level of fictional representations and connects these to their national contexts. It is on this basis that she argues that

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[31] Clare Barker, *Postcolonial Fiction and Disability: Exceptional Children, Metaphor and Materiality* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)

'postcolonial disability representations' should be read 'with attention to both "metaphorical content" and material "reality"' (Barker, p.3). From a Scottish studies perspective I have had to develop the analysis of nationed cultural contexts in which Barker engages in a direction more critical of nationed disciplinary frameworks, arguing that these complicate the possibility to read disability as a sociopolitical phenomenon and as a legitimate presence in the national culture. This is the second contribution that a Scottish studies perspective can make to disability studies; namely, to draw attention to the need for constant attention to, and investigation of, the specificities that attend the representation of disability in different national literatures. The heuristic power of this lies in the ways in which it opens up avenues for investigation of the constraining and generative effects of different disciplinary frameworks, and the contextualist dynamics running through these, which are usually overlooked in other disciplines.

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