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TESIS DOCTORAL

MASCULINE SPACES OF SOLIDARITY IN THE FICTION OF ALASDAIR GRAY
AND JAMES KELMAN

Autora: Paula Argüeso San Martín

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Directora: Dra. Carla Rodríguez González

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RESUMEN DEL CONTENIDO DE TESIS DOCTORAL

1.- Título de la Tesis	
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RESUMEN (en español)

Esta tesis pretende contribuir al estudio de la obra narrativa de Alasdair Gray y James Kelman mediante el estudio de las dinámicas espaciales de género representadas en una selección de sus novelas y cómo éstas influyen en la articulación de la solidaridad por parte de sus personajes. La línea de investigación que propone, situada en la intersección entre las teorías del espacio, las masculinidades y la solidaridad, se nutre de estudios previos sobre la representación y el potencial de la comunidad en la obra de Alasdair Gray (Miller 2005, Walker Churchman 2019) y James Kelman (Craig 1993, Kirk 1999, Hames 2016), así como del análisis de la ficción de ambos autores desde la perspectiva de las masculinidades (Schoene 2000, McMillan 2002, Jones 2009a), tratando de ampliarla de dos maneras. En primer lugar, toma como objeto de estudio el concepto de solidaridad, un tema que aún no había sido explorado en relación con Gray y Kelman. En segundo lugar, pretende incorporar al análisis literario las ideas políticas que ambos autores han expresado en ensayos y campañas políticas y considerar la interrelación entre estas ideas y las que ambos autores expresan en su ficción en relación con su visión de la solidaridad. El análisis literario ofrecido en esta tesis se centra en las novelas *Lanark* (1981) y *1982, Janine* (1984), de Alasdair Gray, y *The Busconductor Hines* (1984), *A Chancer* (1985) y *A Disaffection* (1989), de James Kelman. La selección de las fuentes primarias atiende tanto a criterios de género literario como temáticos y cronológicos. Los cinco textos son novelas publicadas en Escocia en los primeros años de gobierno de Margaret Thatcher (1981-1989) y tienen protagonistas masculinos con tendencias individualistas y dificultades para encajar en la sociedad. En relación con el tema de la solidaridad, el individualismo que comparten estos protagonistas masculinos es especialmente significativo para examinar en qué medida sus dificultades para relacionarse con los demás afectan a su capacidad para ser solidarios. Además, el hecho de que las novelas se publicaran durante el Thatcherismo me permite examinar cómo en la solidaridad influyen las circunstancias de crisis económica, desindustrialización y la creciente agenda neoliberal que caracterizan este periodo. Metodológicamente, el análisis literario, basado en técnicas de *close reading*, adopta un enfoque interdisciplinario fundamentado en teorías espaciales procedentes de los campos de la filosofía y la geografía social, teorías sobre masculinidades y espacio, así como estudios filosóficos y sociológicos sobre la solidaridad.

Tras la Introducción, la tesis presenta dos capítulos de contextualización. El capítulo 2 se centra en la obra de Alasdair Gray y James Kelman dentro de la tradición de la novela de Glasgow. El capítulo 3 estudia la agenda política de estos autores tal y como aparece en su obra de ficción y en sus ensayos, teniendo en cuenta su participación política, así como las dinámicas de género representadas en sus novelas. El capítulo 4 desarrolla los tres ejes que constituyen el marco teórico de la tesis. La primera sección analiza teorías marxistas sobre el espacio como dimensión sociopolítica sujeta a las fuerzas del capitalismo, la clase y el género (Harvey 1989, Soja 1989, Massey 1994), la teoría de las capacidades (Sen 1992, Nussbaum 2000, Sassen



2012), así como teorías sobre movilidad en el espacio (De Certeau 1984, Edensor 2000, Lefebvre 2004). En la segunda sección se examina la relación entre masculinidades y espacio (Berg y Longhurst 2003, van Hoven y Hörschelmann 2005) y se revisan estudios anteriores sobre masculinidades escocesas y de Glasgow, además de las masculinidades en conexión con la dimensión laboral. La tercera sección ilustra estudios filosóficos y sociológicos sobre las definiciones y los contextos de la solidaridad (Bayertz 1999, Scholz 2008), así como sobre los factores personales y sociopolíticos que pueden impedirla (Lindenberg 2014, Juul 2017). Teniendo en cuenta el desarraigo social de los personajes masculinos de Gray y Kelman en las novelas seleccionadas, esta tesis se centra especialmente en explorar los elementos que limitan o impiden la solidaridad. En consecuencia, propone el término *solidaridad precaria* para explicar la naturaleza temporal e inestable de la solidaridad cuando se encuentra en una relación de tensión con valores como el neoliberalismo, el individualismo y el elitismo.

A partir del concepto de solidaridad precaria, los capítulos 5 y 6 analizan los elementos que la configuran en las novelas de Gray y Kelman. De esta manera, el capítulo 5 estudia los obstáculos a la solidaridad en *Lanark* (1981) y *1982 Janine* (1984) de Alasdair Gray considerando la política humanista socialista del autor. En ambos textos la búsqueda de poder individual o las políticas corruptas y desiguales son dimensiones poderosas que debilitan el potencial de la solidaridad. Las estructuras que precarizan la solidaridad incluso contribuyendo a su desaparición en ambas novelas están ligadas tanto al poder del capital, desde una perspectiva neoliberal, como al poder patriarcal y Gray critica los efectos negativos contra la solidaridad de ambas esferas. No obstante, aunque Gray identifica el individualismo o las ansias de poder como características de la masculinidad, su representación positiva de la cooperación muestra que una sociedad en común es solo sostenible en combinación con acciones de solidaridad precaria.

Asimismo, el capítulo 6 investiga la solidaridad en *The Busconductor Hines* (1984), *A Chancer* (1985) y *A Disaffection* (1989), de James Kelman, desde la perspectiva antisistema y existencialista que caracteriza la política ficcional del autor. Las tres novelas muestran que la resistencia contra el sistema aísla a los personajes principales de la sociedad y obstaculiza su solidaridad. La consideración del espacio como una dimensión mediada por jerarquías de poder en las novelas de Kelman me ha permitido demostrar que, en su desafío del sistema, los personajes de estas tres novelas no participan en ritmos colectivos de pertenencia al grupo o buscan una pertenencia alejada de los ritmos lineales (Lefebvre 2004) capitalistas y, por lo tanto, de un sentido de solidaridad. En sus novelas, Kelman presenta una visión crítica de los lazos solidarios que, como el sindicalismo, están alineados con los intereses del sistema y tampoco es optimista con la posibilidad de que sus protagonistas puedan encontrar redes de solidaridad en sus comunidades y organizaciones de base.

Las conclusiones resumen los resultados de la investigación y los análisis literarios desarrollados en los capítulos anteriores y evalúan la importancia de las ideas sobre la precariedad de la solidaridad observadas en la obra de Gray y Kelman.

RESUMEN (en Inglés)

This thesis aims to contribute to the study of Alasdair Gray's and James Kelman's fiction by investigating the spatial gender dynamics portrayed in a selection of their novels and how these influence the articulation of solidarity by their characters. The line of research it proposes, rooted in the intersection among theories of space, masculinities and solidarity, draws from previous scholarship on the representation and potential for community in the work of Alasdair Gray (Miller 2005, Walker Churchman 2019) and James Kelman (Craig 1993, Kirk 1999, Hames 2016), as well as on the analysis of the fiction of both authors from the perspective of masculinities (Schoene 2000, McMillan 2002, Jones 2009a), seeking to expand it in two manners. First, it takes the concept of solidarity, a subject that had not yet been explored in relation with Gray and Kelman, as its subject matter. Second, it intends to incorporate the political ideas that both authors have expressed in essays and political campaigns to the literary



analysis and consider the interrelation between their fictional and off the page political ideas concerning their views on solidarity. The literary analysis offered in this thesis focuses on the novels *Lanark* (1981) and *1982, Janine* (1984) by Alasdair Gray and *The Busconductor Hines* (1984), *A Chancer* (1985) and *A Disaffection* (1989) by James Kelman. The selection of primary sources attends to genre as well as to thematic and chronological criteria. The five texts are novels published in Scotland in the early years of Thatcherism (1981-1989) and they have male protagonists with individualistic tendencies who struggle to engage with society. Regarding the topic of solidarity, the individualism these male protagonists share is particularly significant to examine to what extent their difficulties to interact with others affect their ability to be solidary. Moreover, the fact that the novels were published during Thatcherism allows me to examine how solidarity is shaped by the circumstances of economic crisis, deindustrialisation and the increasing neoliberal agenda that characterise this period. Methodologically, the literary analysis, based on close reading techniques, takes an interdisciplinary approach grounded in spatial theories from the fields of philosophy and social geography, theories on masculinities and space, as well as philosophical and sociological studies on solidarity.

After the Introduction, the thesis begins with two chapters of contextualisation. Chapter 2 focuses on the work of Alasdair Gray and James Kelman within the Glasgow fiction tradition. Chapter 3 studies these authors' political agenda as it appears in their fictional work and their essays, taking into consideration their political participation, as well as the gender dynamics depicted in their novels. Chapter 4 develops the three axes that constitute the theoretical framework of my thesis. Its first section discusses Marxist theories on space as a socio-political dimension subject to the forces of capitalism, class and gender (Harvey 1989, Soja 1989, Massey 1994), capabilities theory (Sen 1992, Nussbaum 2000, Sassen 2012), as well as theories of urban mobilities (De Certeau 1984 Edensor 2000, Lefebvre 2004). The second section examines the interrelation between masculinities and space (Berg and Longhurst 2003, van Hoven and Hörschelmann 2005) and reviews previous studies on Scottish and Glaswegian masculinities and masculinities at the workplace. The third section illustrates philosophical and sociological studies on the definitions and contexts of solidarity (Bayertz 1999, Scholz 2008), as well as on the personal and socio-political factors that can prevent solidarity (Lindenberg 2014, Juul 2017). In fact, considering the social detachment of Gray's and Kelman's male characters in the selected novels, this thesis is particularly interested in exploring the elements that limit their solidarity. Accordingly, it proposes the term *precarious solidarity* to explicate the temporary and unstable nature of solidarity when it is in a relationship of tension with values like neoliberalism, individualism and elitism.

Drawing from the concept of precarious solidarity, Chapters 5 and 6 analyse the elements that shape it in Gray and Kelman's novels. In this vein, Chapter 5 studies the obstacles to solidarity in *Lanark* (1981) and *1982, Janine* (1984) by Alasdair Gray, considering the author's socialist humanist politics. In both texts the pursuit for individual power or corrupt and unequal politics are extremely strong forces that destabilise the potential for solidarity. The structures that make solidarity precarious and even contribute to its demise in both novels are linked both to the power of capital, from a neoliberal perspective, and to patriarchal power, and Gray criticises the negative effects against solidarity of both spheres. Although Gray identifies individualism or lust for power as characteristics of heteronormative masculinity, his positive representation of cooperation shows how it is only in combination with precarious solidarity actions that a peaceful society is sustainable.

Similarly, Chapter 6 investigates solidarity in *The Busconductor Hines* (1984), *A Chancer* (1985) and *A Disaffection* (1989) by James Kelman, from the anti-establishment and existentialist perspective that characterises the author's fictional politics. All three novels show that resistance against the system isolates the main characters from society and hinders their solidarity. The consideration of space as a dimension mediated by hierarchies of power in Kelman's novels has allowed me to demonstrate that, in their defiance of the system, the characters in these three novels do not participate in collective rhythms of group membership or seek a membership away from linear (Lefebvre 2004) capitalist rhythms and thus from a sense of solidarity. In his novels, Kelman presents a critical view of solidarity bonds that, like trade unionism, are aligned with the interests of the system. In addition, he is pessimistic about the



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possibility of his protagonists' finding solidarity networks in their communities and grassroots organisations.

The conclusions summarise the results of the research and literary analyses developed in the previous chapters and evaluate the significance of the ideas on the precariousness of solidarity observed in Gray and Kelman's work.

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EN GÉNERO Y DIVERSIDAD**

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A PhD is a long, hard and lonely process in which we need of the company of others more than ever and where we realise the importance that interdependence has for the human experience. The topic of the research I here present is solidarity. During these years of work the actions of solidarity around me are what have kept me afloat when my self-confidence failed. These solidarities have come from academia, family and friends.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to contribute to the study of Alasdair Gray's and James Kelman's fiction by investigating the spatial gender dynamics portrayed in a selection of their novels and how these influence the articulation of solidarity by their characters. In order to do so, the literary analysis, based on close reading techniques, takes an interdisciplinary approach grounded in spatial theories from the fields of philosophy and social geography, theories on masculinities and space, as well as philosophical and sociological studies on solidarity. Both Gray and Kelman have been central figures in the field of Scottish literary studies since the 1980s and their work has been recognised not only for its impact on the visibility of Scottish working-class masculine identities, but also for its left-wing anti-authoritarian agenda, as well as for its portrayal of Glaswegian lives and spaces. Their leftist leanings are also developed in their political writings. Alasdair Gray published four pamphlets where he presented his ideas in favour of an independent and socialist Scotland freed from the growingly neoliberal policies of Westminster. Similarly, James Kelman has published three essay collections where he situates his aesthetics and personal politics in the marginal resistance to the political establishment and advocates for solidarity towards class and racial minorities whose existence, he claims, is under attack by the state. Gray's support of the welfare state and Kelman's solidarity towards the working classes, racial minorities, Palestinian people or the Kurds show that a sense of both civic and political solidarity is fundamental to their individual agenda.

Due to the reflections on the complex and tense relationship between the individual and society found in their fiction, there have been previous studies that evaluate the representation and potential for community in the work of Gray (Miller 2005, Walker Churchman 2019) and Kelman (Craig 1993, Kirk 1999, Hames 2016a). Yet, the scholarly production on this topic is scant —the only complete monograph devoted to a similar topic is Gavin Miller's *Alasdair Gray and the Fiction of Communion* (2005)— and although Miller's book and the aforementioned book chapters and articles discuss concepts like “communion,” “community” and even mention “solidarity” in passing, none of them take solidarity as their theoretical focus. Accordingly, this thesis aims to fill in this research gap in two manners. First, it analyses how solidarity is represented in the novels of each author. Second, it intends to incorporate the political ideas that both authors have expressed in their essays and activism to the literary analyses and consider the interrelation between their fictional and off the page political ideas concerning their views on solidarity.

The selection of primary sources attends to genre as well as to thematic and chronological criteria. First of all, among all the works that encompass Gray's and Kelman's literary production, I have chosen to focus on their novels rather than on their short stories because the novels, given their more elaborate exploration of issues of solidarity, allow me to offer extensive analyses of the tensions associated with this concept. Secondly, due to the recurrent representation of the struggle of male protagonists to engage with society in Glasgow fiction, my thesis aims to further explore this trope from the perspective of solidarity in Gray's and Kelman's novels. Accordingly, I have selected those novels that share a male protagonist with individualistic tendencies who tends to escape and isolate from society. Regarding the topic of solidarity, the individualism these male protagonists share is particularly significant to examine to what extent their difficulties to interact with others affect their ability to be solidary. Thirdly, the temporal framework of the selected primary sources spans from 1981 to 1989. Historically, the 1981-1989 timeframe coincides with Margaret Thatcher's first government and with the negative impact that economic crisis, deindustrialisation and the increasing neoliberal agenda that characterised British and Western politics had on the Scottish and Glaswegian working classes. In this vein, considering this common socio-political and historical background allows me to examine how solidarities were shaped by these circumstances. Finally, the spatial setting of the majority of the novels is Glasgow, with one exception: Alasdair Gray's *1982, Janine* (1984). Although the location of Jock McLeish, the protagonist of *1982, Janine*, is an unspecified Scottish town, through his stream-of-consciousness Jock remembers flashbacks of his life in Glasgow as a student. As such, although this novel is not completely located in Glasgow, it does have a connection to the city. I have also included *1982, Janine* in the primary corpus due to the relevance of its reflections on Scottish masculinities and capitalism for the study of solidarity. While the Glaswegian novels take the spatial focus of the thesis closer to a local perspective, *1982, Janine* allows also for a national perspective. As such, in this thesis I examine Alasdair Gray's *Lanark* (1981) and *1982, Janine* (1984), as well as James Kelman's *The Busconductor Hines* (1984), *A Chancer* (1985) and *A Disaffection* (1989).

As I have explained, aiming to trace the parallelisms and oppositions between the ideas on solidarity expressed by Gray and Kelman, this thesis provides an analysis of the authors' political ideas as expressed outside their fiction. I examine Gray's political thought mainly in relation to his fiction (Crawford 1991, Walker 1991, Harvie 1991). The critical attention his personal politics have received comes mainly from the perspective

of Scottish nationalism. For instance, in the book chapter “The ‘Settlers and Colonists’ Affair,” included in the volume *Alasdair Gray: Ink for Worlds* (2014), edited by Camille Manfredi, Scott Hames examines the controversy around Gray’s pro-Scottish views in the essay “Settlers and Colonists,” first published in the volume *Unstated: Writers on Scottish Independence* (2012), edited by Hames himself, which collected essays by various Scottish authors on the independence question two years before the Independence referendum. However, the ties between Gray’s pro-independence stance, his socialism and his humanist beliefs have not been sufficiently examined. Consequently, my thesis provides a first thorough investigation of the key ramifications of Gray’s political agenda seeking to expand the potential to analyse his fiction from a political perspective.

Kelman’s commitment with radical anti-establishment philosophy has been paid more critical attention than the socialist views Gray expresses in his pamphlets. While there are various book chapters and articles on Kelman’s polemical writing (Nicoll 2000, Freeman 2002, Carter 2010), Mitch Miller and Johnny Rodger’s *The Red Cockatoo: James Kelman and the Art of Commitment* (2011) is the sole study on the author’s ideas and activism. Miller and Rodger’s research contextualises the key principles of Kelman’s philosophy artistically and traces his connections with the grassroots collectives and campaigns he has participated in. Yet, this monograph does not consider Kelman’s political ideas from the perspective of solidarity. As such, my thesis seeks to expand previous analyses of Kelman’s political agenda taking solidarity as its subject matter.

The interdisciplinary theoretical framework and methodology of this thesis considers solidarity as an *action* that is socially and politically situated. Indeed, one of the crucial challenges of investigating the dimensions of solidarity is its context-based characteristics and the lack of theoretical agreement on what exactly counts as solidarity (Pensky 2008, Featherstone 2012, Laitinen and Pessi 2014, Prieto López 2023). In line with Barbara Prainsack and Alena Buyx’s (2017) theories, this thesis considers solidarity to be an action of support towards a singular or a plural other that may be mobilised between people who do not share particular ties, as well as between people who do belong to the same group. As such, the reasons that motivate the mobilisation of a solidary action can be rooted in social ties —*social solidarity*—, shared citizenship —*civic solidarity*—, joint political motivation against a perceived injustice —*political solidarity*— or common humanity —*human solidarity*— (Bayertz 1999, Scholz 2008). My understanding of the social, civic, political and human contexts where solidarity can emerge draws from literary scholar Paola Prieto López’s analysis of the typologies of solidarity, initiated in

her PhD thesis *Black Women Centre Stage: Diasporic Solidarity in Contemporary British Theatre* (2021), where she addresses the concept of solidarity in relation to the potential that a selection of plays by contemporary Black British women playwrights has for the promotion of solidarity towards Black women. Yet, as the topic of my thesis differs from the subject matter of Prieto López's study, I have had to rethink the theoretical tools to assess solidarity in the Scottish masculine context of the selected novels.

Hence, I have chosen space and masculinities studies to be the main parameters to evaluate Gray's and Kelman's portrayal of solidarity in their fiction. Understanding space as a socio-political dimension subject to the forces of capitalism, class and gender (Harvey 1989, Soja 1989, Massey 1994), this thesis aims to comprehend how the spatial dynamics of the protagonists of the selected novels place them closer or further from solidarity. Moreover, the inclusion of critical men's studies in the theoretical framework attends to two objectives. On the one hand, it aims to contribute to previous studies on Gray's and Kelman's work from the perspective of masculinities (Schoene 2000, McMillan 2002, Jones 2009a). On the other hand, it intends to complement the analysis of spatial practices considering how gender dynamics intersect with space as two intertwined elements that intervene in the articulation of solidarity. In combination with space and masculinities, class is a transversal dimension in this thesis, due to the authors' working-class background and their political support of working-class rights.

Furthermore, the selected novels depict scenarios where solidarity is hindered by the actions of the main characters as well as by their socio-political circumstances. As Douglas Gifford contends: "Kelman and Gray, very different in so many ways, leave unanswered the questions as to whether their protagonists are victims of a Scottish, deprived post-war and grey environment and upbringing, or whether the faults lie essentially in themselves" (1991, 5). Consequently, my analysis focuses on both individual and contextual obstacles to solidarity. Having in mind that in these novels the elements that undermine a strong sense of solidarity are central to the narrative, this thesis proposes the term *precarious solidarity* to explore how solidarity is prevented in these novels and why. In addition, it aims to examine the instances where a fragile and temporary sense of solidarity remains, despite the limitations encountered by the different characters.

Structurally, the thesis is divided into seven chapters. After the Introduction, Chapter 2 traces how urban space and social relationships marked by gender and class dynamics have permeated Glasgow fiction from the early nineteenth century to the

present, evaluating how Gray and Kelman reinterpret these representations. as well as their contribution to the contemporary fictionalisation of Glasgow. This chapter has two sections. Section 2.1. provides a definition of “Glasgow fiction” and introduces the main topics that characterise the literary production set in the city. Section 2.2. is made up of five chronologically arranged subsections that offer a deeper discussion of the main themes that comprise Glasgow fiction. As such, in 2.2.1. I illustrate how Glasgow fiction from the early nineteenth century and the Victorian era was concerned with the city’s key role as a commercial hub before industrialisation. I discuss how John Galt’s novels, as well as social realistic Glasgow novels of the late nineteenth century, depicted the class-based relationships connected to the city’s main economic activities and anticipated the association between Glasgow’s massive industrial growth and its representation as a wretched and deprived place in the following years.

Section 2.2.2. covers Glasgow fiction from the 1920s and 1930s and reviews three key tropes of this tradition that are reappropriated by Gray and Kelman. The first one is the image of Glasgow as a creatively and intellectually alienating city represented in novels like Catherine Carswell’s *Open the Door!* (1920) and Edwin Muir’s *Poor Tom* (1932). The second theme is the portrayal of the problems of the Glaswegian working classes from a committed left-wing perspective as it appears in 1930s novels *Hunger March* (1934) by Dot Allan, *The Shipbuilders* (1935) by George Blake and *Major Operation* (1936) by James Barke. Finally, the third one is the hard man archetype epitomised by the 1930s gang novel *No Mean City* (1935). The hard man presents an image that is simultaneously weak and hypermasculine, whose influence in Gray’s and Kelman’s gender representations is highly significant.

Next, in 2.2.3., I focus on the themes and novels that characterise post-war Glasgow fiction. While the depiction of its urban spaces as stifling and the need to escape them continues to be a key theme in novels like Archie Hind’s *The Dear Green Place* (1966), linguistic and formal innovations, as well as the use of fantasy, were introduced in George Friel’s *Mr Alfred M.A.* (1972), anticipating the experimental turn of the 1980s. In section 2.2.4., I examine Glasgow fiction published between 1979 and 1997, the period when Alasdair Gray and James Kelman started publishing. After discussing their work in connection with their portrayal of the city, their class and gender representations and their formal innovations in their 1980s writing, I analyse how the novels by 1990s authors Janice Galloway, A.L. Kennedy and Agnes Owens explore similar ideas and techniques and how they also differ from previous models by incorporating a feminist perspective.

In order to trace the state of Glasgow fiction after 1997 and in the 2000s, what Berthold Schone calls “Post-devolution Scottish Writing” (2007a, 1), in 2.2.5. I discuss novels such as Jackie Kay’s *Trumpet* (1998), Louise Welsh’s *The Cutting Room* (2002) and Suhayl Saadi’s *Psychoraag* (2004), which represent the city’s transition from an industrial to a business and shopping centre and capture the racial, gender, cultural and linguistic diversity of Glasgow at the turn of the century, and look at how they reproduce aspects of Gray’s and Kelman’s work or challenge them.

Next, Chapter 3 studies Gray’s and Kelman’s political agenda as it appears in their fictional work and essays, taking into consideration their political participation as well as the gender dynamics depicted in their novels. It comprises three sections. The first one introduces a discussion on the much-debated potential for Scottish authors, Gray and Kelman included, to enable national political change, especially during the devolutionary period. Although this thesis aims to look beyond the cultural and political agenda of nationalism, due to the political significance of solidarity and the relevance of this discussion in Scottish literary studies, this section examines the ideas of literary scholars like Cairns Craig (1996, 1999), Robert Crawford (2000) and Scott Hames (2020), as well as historians like T.M. Devine (2012) on this issue.

Section 3.2. examines the politics and gender dynamics of Alasdair Gray in four parts. The first two focus on Gray’s fictional politics. In 3.2.1., I specifically examine the author’s thematic obsession with escapism from repressive mental and socio-political structures tracing its connection with Gray’s anti-authoritarian ideas. In 3.2.2., I analyse Gray’s socialist humanist ideas drawing on the literary analyses of Gavin Miller (2005), Markéta Gregorová (2015) and Georgia Walker-Churchman (2019) to highlight Gray’s defence of communal peaceful living against the individualism and megalomania portrayed in his fiction. In order to explain the origins of Gray’s politics, in 3.2.3. I explore the interrelation between his support of Scottish independence and his socialist protest against the neoliberalism of the Conservative Party and New Labour since 1979, providing an analysis of his pamphlets. The next section, 3.2.4., is devoted to the discussion of Gray’s gender dynamics as portrayed in his fiction and is divided into three parts. In the first one, I examine how Gray’s representation of masculinities in *Lanark* and *1982, Janine* shows the tensions between a vulnerable masculine subjecthood and the expectations to adapt to a dominant patriarchal role. In the second one, 3.2.4.2., I examine the critical analyses that have been published around Gray’s controversial use of pornography in the novels *1982, Janine* and *Something Leather* (1990). While some

scholars have described the use of pornography in these novels as a political metaphor for the exploitation the author condemns (Crawford 1991, Walker 1991), this section considers, in line with Stephen J. Boyd's (1991), how Gray's pornographic imagery may risk reproducing a vision of women as sexual objects. Then, in 3.2.4.3., I pay attention to Gray's use of the woman-as-nation trope in *Poor Things* (1992) and to the ideas revealed in his combination of national and gender discourses.

Section 3.3. contextualises James Kelman's political ideas and gender representations in three subsections. The first one, 3.3.1., focuses on the author's fictional politics studying his portrayal of the working classes, his choice of setting and his linguistic, narrative and formal techniques and what they reveal about his aesthetic connections with existentialist philosophy and anti-establishment beliefs. Seeking to dissect another side of his political thought, subsection 3.3.2. addresses Kelman's activism and participation in radical grassroots organisations, tracing the parallelisms and differences between his political commitment and his literary ideas. Subsection 3.3.3. critically addresses previous research on Kelman's work from a gender perspective. It is divided into three parts. In the first one, I examine how Kelman has developed complex and neurotic subjectivities that challenge the rationality of traditional masculinity. Then, in 3.3.3.2., I analyse how Kelman's defiance of a rational and strong masculinity is also visible in his representation of emotionally vulnerable and inactive male bodies. In addition, in 3.3.3.3., I revise how scholars Ben Knights (1999), Neil McMillan (2001) and Carole Jones (2009a, 2010) diagnose an exchange of traditional gender roles in Kelman's work according to which males occupy spaces of identity crisis and weakness while women appear as more rational and driven.

In order to provide a theoretically grounded analysis of solidarity, Chapter 4 develops the three main axes that constitute the framework of this thesis: space, masculinities and solidarity. As such, Section 4.1. begins with an introduction to urban studies from the nineteenth-century metropolis (Benjamin 2002, Simmel 2010) to the capitalist, global and postmodern city, including a revision of urban space from the perspective of gender (Bondi 1998, Grosz 2002) and mobilities (Edensor 2000, Cresswell 2006). In order to address the Marxist and capitalist analysis of the city as well as the study of urban mobilities in depth, Section 4.1. breaks into two subsections. In the first one, I discuss the ideas of Henri Lefebvre (1991), David Harvey (1989), Manuel Castells (1977) and Edward Soja (1989), emphasising the importance that a view of space as socially and economically produced has for this thesis. Here, I also explain the capabilities

approach as theorised by Amartya Sen (1992), Martha Nussbaum (2000) and Saskia Sassen (2012). My understanding of the capabilities approach draws from Carla Rodríguez González's use of it in the article "Resilience and Urban Capabilities in Denise Mina's Garnethill Trilogy" (2019) to analyse the socio-economic unprotection of the main character of Mina's novels. Taking Nussbaum's basic capabilities as an indicator of well-being, I assess how a lack of capabilities may influence spatial practices and intervene in the promotion or hampering of solidarities in Gray's and Kelman's selected novels. In 4.1.2., I revise theories on spatial mobilities produced by Michel de Certeau (1984), Henri Lefebvre's theory of *rhythmanalysis* (2004), as well as Tim Edensor's studies on mobilities (2000, 2010). Moreover, here I also cover the Marxist-rooted concepts of *time-space compression* (Harvey 1989) and *power-geometry* (Massey 1994), tracing a connection between the study of space as governed by class and gender parameters and mobilities.

Section 4.2. situates my thesis in the field of critical men's studies and introduces an understanding of masculinities as plural, relational and mediated by space (Berg and Longhurst 2003), explaining how the "Geographies of Masculinities" (van Hoven and Hörschelmann 2005) have been examined to date. Then, it divides into two subsections that situate the heterosexual masculinities I will be analysing in a working-class Scottish and Glaswegian context. As such, subsection 4.2.1. illustrates previous discussions of Scottish and Glaswegian masculinities (Whyte 1995, Abrams and Ewan 2017), showing to what extent most studies focus on the dimension of the Glasgow gang and the hard man (Bartie and Fraser 2017, Rafanell, McLean and Poole 2017), whereas vulnerable and less active masculinities are mainly studied from a literary perspective (Whyte 1998; Schoene 2002; Hames 2007; Jones 2009a, 2010, 2015). Subsection 4.2.2. deals with the association between masculinity and work (Jackson 2001, McDowell 2005). It particularly addresses how the workplace was a space for the promotion of masculine solidarities around a shared working-class consciousness particularly in the Glasgow and Clydeside area during industrial times (McIvor 2013) and how these solidarities declined since the late 1970s with deindustrialisation (Lever 1991) and neoliberal cuts (Rieger 2021). It is in this particular scenario, where employment and trade union membership is in a state of decay, that the novels this thesis studies were published.

As a transition from the previous discussion of decreasing working-class solidarities in the 1980s and a deeper study of the concept of solidarity itself, Section 4.3. delves into philosophical and sociological studies on the dimensions of solidarity. This

section is divided into two parts. After an introduction that acknowledges how solidarity is an undertheorised term whose precise meaning is difficult to grasp, subsection 4.3.1. provides definitions of solidarity that vary depending on the context where it arises. Here, I explain the meanings of social solidarity, civic solidarity, political solidarity and human solidarity drawing from the studies by Kurt Bayertz (1999) and Sally Scholz (2008). The majority of definitions of solidarity are based on a sense of equality among members of a group and feelings of belonging (May 1996, Wildt 1999, Laitinen and Pessi 2014). However, as I have explained above, Gray's and Kelman's novels portray scenarios of inequality and social alienation where the basic principles that ensure a strong solidarity fail. As such, in this subsection I explain that, in order to be able to find examples of solidarity in these contexts, I classify as solidary some asymmetrical actions of support that do not rely on reciprocity, drawing from Barbara Prainsack and Alena Buyx's concept of *interpersonal solidarity* (2017). In subsection 4.3.2., I discuss the more negative aspects of solidarity, its connection to group homogenisation and discrimination (Dean 1996), as well as its potential to promote authoritarian values of social obedience when solidary actions are not aligned with liberty and equality (Spicker 2006). Moreover, I also address the personal and socio-political factors that can prevent solidarity drawing from the theories of Siegwart Lindenberg (2014) and Søren Juul (2017). Most importantly, at the end of subsection 3.3.2., I elaborate on the concept of *precarious solidarity* that will guide the literary analyses of Chapters 4 and 5. This concept is based on Lindenberg's definition of solidarity as a *precarious action* (2014) as well as on Judith Butler's understanding of *precariousness* (2009) as an inherently human as well as politically reinforced condition that places certain human lives at risk. Due to the contexts of poverty and inequality, as well as the values of individualism and extreme neoliberalism represented in the novels, I propose to use the term precarious solidarity to explicate the temporary and unstable nature of solidarity when it is in tension with anti-solidary values.

Drawing from the idea of precarious solidarity, Chapters 5 and 6 analyse the elements that shape it in Gray and Kelman's novels. In this vein, Chapter 5 studies the obstacles to solidarity in Alasdair Gray's novels focusing on the author's representation of individual desires for power and the political dynamics of exploitation as factors that threaten solidarity. This chapter is divided into two sections, one devoted to each novel following a chronological order. As such, Section 5.1. deals with his first novel, *Lanark*, in four parts. In the first one, 5.1.1., I investigate how the escapist spatial uses of Duncan

Thaw, the protagonist of *Lanark's* Books One and Two, influence his ability to be solidary. In 5.1.2., I explore the meaning that Thaw's objectification of women in his imagination and in real life has for his solidary engagement with them. Due to my understanding of Lanark, the protagonist of the novel's Books Three and Four, as an alter-ego of a more mature Duncan Thaw, in 5.1.3. I further deal with the relationship the main character has with women. For this purpose, I focus on the study of solidarity in the couple formed by Lanark and Rima. As a final section to the analysis of *Lanark*, subsection 5.1.4. looks at the potential for precarious social and civic solidarity in Lanark's interaction with the political structures of the fantastic and corrupt world he lives in.

Section 5.2. focuses on Gray's *1982, Janine*. In this novel Gray adopts the voice of a right-wing Tory voter, Jock McLeish, to reveal the exploitative mechanisms of the world from inside the mind of a man who defends them. The four subsections that comprise the analysis of *1982, Janine* seek to examine how McLeish's ideas on the supremacy of men and profit undermine solidarity. In 5.2.1., I view McLeish's school as a space of gender socialisation where he learns a violent and anti-solidary model of masculinity. Next, in 5.2.2., I focus on the pornographic fantasies created by McLeish assessing how these promote an anti-solidary vision of women and hinder a healthy and equal relationship with the women in his life. Subsection 5.2.3. addresses McLeish's vision of the world and humanity as inevitably exploitative, examining how a lack of belief in social change thwarts the potential for solidarity. Questioning if the novel suggests there is a potential for solidarity, subsection 5.2.4. explores Gray's proposal of what is needed to live collectively.

Chapter 6 investigates solidarity from the anti-establishment and existentialist perspective that characterises James Kelman's fictional politics looking at three of his novels and following, like in Gray's literary analysis, the texts' date of publication. Accordingly, Section 6.1. analyses Kelman's *The Busconductor Hines* in three parts. The first one, 6.1.1., brings together spatial and masculinities theories to consider social solidarity in the couple formed by the protagonist Rab Hines and his wife Sandra. In subsection 6.1.2., I take the analysis of social solidarity to Rab's work at the buses company examining both how Rab's individually interacts with the workplace and how workplace solidarities are portrayed at a contextual level. Subsection 6.1.3. continues exploring Rab's workplace from the perspective of political solidarity specifically focusing on Kelman's portrayal of an attempted strike at the bus company.

Section 6.2. deals with Kelman's second novel, *A Chancer*, considering the solidarities portrayed in the novel focusing specifically on the representation of social solidarity, due to the prominence of social relationships in the novel. Thus, in 6.2.1., I address the main protagonist's, Tammas, precarious spatial mobilities and subsequent fragile solidary engagements from the perspective of Lefebvre's *rhythmanalysis*. Then, in 6.2.2., I take a contextual approach to the impact of working-class emigration on Tammas' group of friends and their social solidarities.

The last of Kelman's novels I explore is *A Disaffection*. Section 6.3. is divided into two parts that evaluate how Pat Doyle, the alienated schoolteacher who figures as the protagonist of the third novel, finds his authoritarian vision of society to be an obstacle to solidarity. In 6.3.1., I assess how Pat's identity crisis influences his spatial dynamics and undermines solidarity with his family, whereas in 6.3.2. I deal with Pat's disaffection as a barrier to social solidarity within the school and political solidarity.

Finally, Chapter 7 presents the conclusions drawn from the research and literary analyses developed in the previous chapters. In it, I illustrate the contributions provided in each chapter and I reflect on the significance of the precariousness of solidarity as observed in Gray's and Kelman's work.

**CHAPTER 2. LOCATING ALASDAIR
GRAY AND JAMES KELMAN: A
STUDY OF GLASGOW FICTION**

Alasdair Gray and James Kelman began their literary careers in the Glasgow literary scene of the 1980s. The writers first met as members of what Philip Hobsbaum named the “Glasgow Group” (1988, 58), a meeting of fellow writers hosted by the teacher and poet in his Glasgow flat. Their work can be contextualised in what some scholars have called a “new” (Wallace 1993, 2) or “second” (Hagemann 1996, 10) twentieth-century Scottish Literary Renaissance, alongside the writing of other prominent authors such as Janice Galloway, A.L. Kennedy and Agnes Owens. Yet, in spite of their shared literary context, temporally and geographically, as Moira Burgess asserts, “no writers could be less alike than (...) Kelman and Gray” (1998, 233). In this chapter, I situate both authors, their ethics and their aesthetics, within the thematically rich Glasgow literary tradition in which they partook. In order to do so, this chapter is divided into two main sections. Section 2.1. defines the concept of “Glasgow fiction” and discusses the role and representations of Glasgow as a literary city. Section 2.2. contextualises Gray’s and Kelman’s work in this tradition by reviewing a selection of Glasgow novels chronologically arranged into five subsections from the early nineteenth century onwards.

2.1. Glasgow as a Literary City

In her comprehensive monograph *Imagine A City: Glasgow in Fiction*, Moira Burgess explains that the category “Glasgow fiction” encompasses those literary works that are “set wholly or substantially in Glasgow (or in a quasi-fictional city readily recognisable as Glasgow) or which, though perhaps containing only a short Glasgow section, convey a genuine picture of the life, character or atmosphere of the city” (1998, 39). According to Burgess’ definition, this corpus would cover all fiction portraying Glaswegian urban spaces and their city life, even if its authors are not Glasgow natives and have only spent part of their lives in the city. In order to narrow down this broad classification, this chapter will not consider as part of the city’s literary tradition those works where Glasgow appears anecdotally. Instead, the city must be crucial to the plot and serve as a defining force in the characters’ interactions. This chapter focuses on the themes that recur in Glasgow fiction as they are revised in Alasdair Gray’s and James Kelman’s work.

As Alan Bissett argues, Glasgow’s unique combination of a “sectarian divide [between Catholics and Protestants], former industrial might and subsequent affiliation

with socialist politics” set the city and its literary tradition, apart from other urban centres within Scotland, but also within Britain at large (2007, 59). This exceptional position generated specific urban myths that have been extrapolated to the literary medium. For instance, Glasgow has been culturally characterised as the epitome of the Scottish industrial city. During the industrial period, it reached unprecedented levels of industry—steel, shipyards— and commerce —sugar, tobacco— imbuing the city with a modern character that towered above the rest of the country, especially from the standpoint of a mostly and often idealised rural Scottish society. Consequently, in the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century, Glasgow acquired the designations of “Workshop of the World” and “Second City of the Empire” in celebration of its leading position in the worldwide economic ranking. Yet, according to Robert Crawford, these titles failed to anticipate, in their glorifying tone, the dramatic consequences of such an accelerated growth for the well-being of the city’s inhabitants (2013, 25). Pollution, rampant over-population —“density per acre in 1911 was about twice that of Edinburgh and Dundee” (Devine 2012, 341)— crime and acute poverty were among the issues that negatively affected the city and its reputation in the early twentieth century. In addition, Glasgow’s notorious left-wing “Red Clydeside radicalism” of the 1910s through 1930s, described by William Bolitho Ryall as a “virulently infectious” (1924, 199) disease, contributed to the perception of Glasgow as a paragon of earthly evil. In this vein, certain authors writing during the interwar period, such as George Blake, Lewis Grassie Gibbon, Hugh MacDiarmid and Edwin Muir, articulated a sentiment of “anti-urbanism,” which regarded Glasgow as “a source of contagion jeopardising a supposedly more authentic form of Scottish identity and culture” (Bryce-Wunder 2014, 86). Glasgow’s singularity, its savage expansion and its brutal industrialisation complicated its consideration as an artistic place where a cohesive literary tradition could be harboured (Whyte 1990, 318).

Indeed, one of the themes of Glasgow fiction is the absence of local fiction itself (Gifford 1985, 14). As Liam McIlvanney explains:

The very features of modern Glasgow—its crude commercial and industrial vigour, its inhuman scale, the ugliness of its slums, the coarseness of its vernacular—have suggested to many writers a basic incongruity between Glasgow and art. More than one of the novelists to grapple with Glasgow have done so in a spirit of paradox, writing novels about the impossibility of writing novels about Glasgow. (2012, 218)

The variety of reactions towards Glasgow's urban scale is at the heart of Glasgow fiction. Carla Sassi contends that, among these reactions, working-class accounts of the struggles of living in the peripheries of the city are one of Glasgow's fiction master narratives, especially since the post-war period (2021, 9). The theme of challenging and attempting to escape stifling working-class lives pervades Glasgow fiction in various periods and literary styles. In the 1930s, this sense of striving was portrayed in the fictional lives of the Gorbals gangs in H. Kingsley Long and Alexander McArthur's iconic novel *No Mean City* (1935). In the 1940s, the main genre employed to depict the deprived lives and the dreams of change of the Glasgow working classes, in novels like Edward Gaitens's *Dance of the Apprentices* (1948), was social realism. By the 1960s, Glasgow's cultural dearth was still represented as a symptom of the city's industrial scale with literary examples such as Archie Hind's *The Dear Green Place* (1966).

Despite this trend in depicting Glasgow as an unproductive and alienating space, Christopher Whyte argues that, starting in the 1970s, the city began to gain a new literary status. In that decade, the representation of Glasgow in the Scottish arts shifted from an anti-urban discourse, which portrayed Scotland as a "non-Glasgow" with an idealisation of the rural, to Glasgow's consideration as the epitome of Scottishness (1998, 278). Whyte refers to this transformation as the "hegemonic shift." Glaswegian literary tropes such as the "hard men" of gang novels, slum-dwelling and the working-class socialist agenda of Glasgow's "Red Clydeside" were elevated to a nationally representative role (1998, 278). In the 1980s, as Carla Rodríguez González argues, Glasgow's literary appeal and legitimacy was vindicated by Alasdair Gray, James Kelman and fellow "Glasgow Group" authors Liz Lochhead and Tom Leonard (2008, 125). Both the "Glasgow Group" efforts and the publication of Alasdair Gray's ground-breaking opera prima *Lanark* (1981) are, according to Jessica Homberg-Schramm, two essential factors that not only made Glasgow the most popular setting for Scottish fiction but also turned the novel into the new preferred genre (2018, 176). In what Crawford has called "a re-energized cosmopolitan sophistication in west-coast Scottish writing" (2013, 36), traditional and clichéd Glasgow tropes were replaced by a more modern vision: cross-genre texts (e.g. Gray), intertextuality and a challenge to the city's machismo (e.g. Lochhead) and experimentations with Glasgow vernacular (e.g. Kelman, Leonard) commingled with the city's bleak urbanity. Indeed, in light of this newfound prosperity, McIlvanney refers to the 1980s under the soubriquet of "Glasgow Renaissance" (2012, 218).

In the 1990s and in the early 2000s, Glasgow's prominence as a Scottish literary centre increased. Between 2004 and 2005, seventeen Glasgow novels were published in what Bissett has described as a "high tide in the history of Glasgow literature" (2007, 59). Literary richness coincided with various cultural initiatives launched by local institutions. Globalisation and the marketability of literature and culture are key in the city's contemporary rebranding as a locus of business, tourism and consumerism. In this vein, campaigns like "Glasgow's Miles Better" (1983) and the proclamation of Glasgow as "European City of Culture" in 1990 became landmarks in the path towards what Ian Spring has termed the "New Glasgow" (1990). Moreover, events that promote literature in the city, such as the Glasgow Book Festival "Aye Write!," organised by Glasgow Libraries and the charitable organisation Glasgow Life, have been running since the early 2000s.

Scepticism regarding the existence of a traceable Glasgow literary tradition still exists, with the word "tradition" suggesting that a homogenous and place-bound hermetic compendium with no external influences is somehow possible. Nevertheless, publications such as Moira Burgess' *The Glasgow Novel: A Survey and a Bibliography* (1986) and *Imagine a City: Glasgow in Fiction* (1998), Douglas Gifford's *The Dear Green Place? The Novel in the West of Scotland* (1985) or, more recently, Liam McIlvanney's article "The Glasgow Novel" (2012) offer a series of chronologically arranged titles to establish a Glasgow tradition of sorts, one that is thematically heterogeneous.¹ The Glasgows which I have described —the urban horror of the 1920s and 1930s, the place of political and artistic alienation of the 1940s and 1960s, the site of artistic revitalisation of the 1980s and a commodified and literary fruitful 2000s Glasgow— are only four among the various literary facets of a diverse city, which Burgess has referred to as "Kaleidoscope City" (1998). As Alison McCleery declares, drawing on Edward Scouller, "there are so many Glasgows, both real and imagined" (2004, 14). This chapter aims to contextualise those fictional Glasgows, each of which bears a thematic relation to Alasdair Gray and James Kelman's work. I have chosen to focus specifically on the dimensions of space, class, gender and solidarity, which this PhD thesis examines.

The contextualisation of the Glasgow novel offered in this chapter is divided into five chronological sections. Section 2.2.1. covers Glasgow fiction from the early

¹ In "Imagining the City: The Glasgow Novel," Christopher Whyte simultaneously admits there is a tradition in the title of his article while expressing his reticence to accept this category: "The Glasgow novel, if such genre exists" (1990, 317).

nineteenth century and the Victorian era. In this period, Glasgow is portrayed as a prosperous commercial city in its strategic role as “Second City of the Empire” represented in John Galt’s novels. Section 2.2.2. studies the literary representations of Glasgow from the 1920s and 1930s. In this section, I explain the anti-urban agenda of the Scottish Literary Renaissance and I contextualise a series of Glasgow novels that directly engage with the city using escapist as well as politically committed tones. At the end of this section, I turn my attention to the gang novel, a crucial genre in understanding Glasgow’s lasting cultural representation as a city of crime and violence. Section 2.2.3. examines Glasgow post-war fiction published from 1945 to the 1970s. Considering the length of this period, novels as varied as Edward Gaitens’ social realist *Dance of the Apprentices* (1948), Archie Hind’s quasi-metafictional *The Dear Green Place* (1966), George Friel’s formally experimental *Mr Alfred M.A.* (1972) and William McIlvanney’s crime fiction *Laidlaw* (1977) are included. Section 2.2.4. focuses on “devolutionary” Glasgow fiction published between the two devolution referenda. Scholars such as Schoene (2007b, 7) frame this period between 1979, the year of the first and failed devolution referendum and 1997, when the second devolution referendum was successfully passed. However, considering the positive outcome of the 1997 referendum did not materialise in the form of a Scottish parliament until two years later, academics such as Carole Jones (2009) extend the devolutionary period to 1999. As I will explain, the literary production of this period is characterised by a simultaneous repetition and reinvention of Glasgow’s old tropes as demonstrated in the work of Alasdair Gray, James Kelman, Janice Galloway, A.L. Kennedy and Agnes Owens. Finally, Section 2.2.5. reviews “Post-devolution Scottish Writing,” (Schoene 2007a, 1) a category that encompasses literary texts published after devolution. The multiple urban embodiments of Glasgow, from its status as a centre of shopping and consumerism, associated with twenty-first-century globalised capitalist economy, to its ethnic, religious and gendered aspects, are put forward in Glasgow post-devolutionary fiction by writers such as Anne Donovan, Jackie Kay, Alison Miller, Suhayl Saadi, Zoë Strachan as well as crime fiction authors Denise Mina and Louise Welsh.

2.2. Glasgow Fiction

2.2.1. Early Nineteenth-century and Victorian Glasgow Fiction

Following the popularisation of the novel in the Western world, Glasgow fiction emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As I have explained, in this period, the city became the “Second City of the Empire,” after London, due to the frantic commercial activity of its port, busy with imports from the colonies and exports out of Glaswegian factories. This circumstance is reflected in most instances of Glasgow fiction at the time. Indeed, as Robert David Elliot points out, the theme of commercial ambition recurs in early nineteenth-century and Victorian-era Glasgow fiction with an optimistic tone (1977, 20).² A pivotal figure in the literary portrayal of Glasgow’s commercial power is the character of Bailie Nicol Jarvie, a Glasgow businessman in Walter Scott’s novel *Rob Roy* (1817). According to Moira Burgess, *Rob Roy* is the first renowned work that could be labelled as a Glasgow novel. Although only some fragments are set in the city, Scott’s novel perfectly captures its atmosphere as a merchant city (Burgess 1998, 19). Its literary representation of Glasgow’s economic position within the British Empire has various functions. Along with historically documenting the socio-political shift ensuing from industrialisation, Scott praises the commercial splendour reached by Glasgow; in doing so, he reinforces a unionist political message that saw Scotland’s integration within the Union as contributing to its modernisation, transforming it from poor and rural towards a more prosperous urban nation.

The early nineteenth-century fictionalisation of Glasgow’s urban spaces appears throughout John Galt’s work. Although Scott and Galt lived in the same period, Galt’s main novels —*Annals of the Parish* (1821), *The Provost* (1822) and *The Entail* (1823), which has been considered the best Glasgow novel of the nineteenth century (Gifford 2002, 284)— differ from Scott’s in their realistic style and themes. Indeed, as Paul Barnaby and Tom Hubbard contend, Galt was a pioneer in the depiction of the urban

² The optimistic portrayal of imperial trade and Glasgow’s colonial ties has been revised in the twenty-first century. For instance, in *It Wasn’t Us: The Truth About Glasgow and Slavery* (2009), Stephen Mullen reveals the complicit role of Glasgow in slave trade during the eighteenth century and the traces of sugar and tobacco industries maintained through slavery in the city’s urbanity. Moreover, in “Host City Glasgow: Signs of Slavery and the Imperial Past are Never Far Away” (2014), Sumita Mukherjee shows that in the Legacies of British Slavery database there is evidence that in 1833 there were 77 individual slave owners in Glasgow. Both texts aim to uncover the colonial exploitation perpetrated by Glaswegian merchants during the heyday of the British Empire.

spaces in the Glasgow of pre-industrial times, as well as a model of political engagement with the city's history for the Glasgow writers that followed (2007, 38). In *The Entail* and *Annals of the Parish*, Galt deals with characters involved in commercial activities occurring amidst the industrialisation that lowland Scotland underwent showing, as Liam McIlvanney argues, "the pivotal role of Glasgow in that process" (2012, 221). Interestingly, although in the novel Galt offers a certain pre-industrial optimism, in *The Entail* he already predicted the potential negative consequences of industrialisation by surmising that "commerce, the very force that had made Glasgow flourish, could prove disastrously destructive if it was made the motor of selfish ambitions" (Witschi 1991, 8). In this vein, Galt paved the way for future Glasgow writers in the depiction of industry and accelerated urbanisation as potentially dangerous.

Despite the great significance that the city's urbanity holds in Glasgow fiction, during the Victorian era its cityscapes were mostly absent from its fiction in what Andrew Noble has termed an "urbane silence" (1985, 64). Unlike in the rest of Europe, where industrialisation and the changing social customs and hierarchies that came with it influenced literature, as seen in the work of Charles Dickens or Émile Zola, it took longer for Scottish writers to change their focus towards a thorough representation of the consequences that industrialisation had brought to the nation and especially to Glasgow. In fact, some writers avoided the city altogether, dealing instead with romanticised rural settings in a genre that has been named kailyard. As Scott Lyall defines it, classic kailyard portrays idealised close-knit communities in static small-town locales, untarnished by the forces of industrialisation (2014, 82). The sentimentality, narrow-mindedness and the bucolic settings of this kailyard genre were appropriated by Glasgow writers in the early twentieth century and relocated to an urban space in what has been termed "urban kailyard" (Burgess 1998, 69). According to Liam McIlvanney, the main exponents of "urban kailyard" are J.J. Bell and Neil Munro (2012, 223). Yet it is crucial to make a distinction between "urban kailyard" and late nineteenth-century urban social realism. Although, in principle, the kailyard genre is specifically concerned with rural life, the main feature to define a piece of fiction as kailyard is not so much the social context, but the writer's attitude towards the portrayal of that context. According to Andrew Noble:

There is little doubt that the Scottish establishment, assiduously and rewardingly served by the majority of eighteenth and nineteenth-century Scottish writers, promulgated such a vision as a highly successful method of distracting attention from the real nature of

Scottish problems and as a way of providing a series of flattering practical militaristic and pastoral stereotypes designed to promote passivity. (1982, 58)

Indeed, the Glasgow “urban kailyard” is overall urban, but this industrial atmosphere is addressed in a superficial and sentimentalised manner, touching upon a variety of topics, but avoiding transcendence and any deep political message. Most “urban kailyard” writers belonged to the middle-classes and were still getting used to the idea of Glasgow as a sprawling and massive metropolis. As a result, they escaped from urban social realism, concealing the industrial roots of their fiction, as Elliot argues, under scenarios of domesticity that were closer to classic kailyard than to the realistic novel (1977, 98).

In fact, “urban kailyard” coexisted with other more realistic works that were generally ignored by critics among the vast number of publications that filled Scottish newspapers in instalment form at the time. As William Donaldson explains, in these novels “there are cities and slums, factories, workers, capitalists, crime, poverty, disease, in short the whole urban gamut almost wherever no one cares to look” (1986, 87). Some of these titles include David Pae’s *Lucy, The Factory Girl: Or, The Secrets of the Tontine Close* (1860) and Sarah Tytler’s *St. Mungo’s City* (1885). Pae’s novel, for instance, exposes the interplay between Glasgow’s high and low life by means of depicting the “Glasgow rabble” and the criminals that emerged in a “place of savage darkness in the heart of the commercial metropolis” (McIlvanney 2012, 222). This means that, as Douglas Gifford argues, already at the end of the nineteenth century, the first symptoms of an excessive industrial growth and the unimaginable squalor that resulted from it were a concern for Glaswegian society and became subsequently visible in its fiction (2004, 500). The literary depiction of Glasgow as a poverty-ridden monstrous urban centre thus became pervasive in the interwar period.

2.2.2. The 1920s and 1930s: The Scottish Literary Renaissance, the Glasgow School and the Gang Novel

The interwar period is particularly interesting for Scottish literature. Scholars and academics have termed it the Scottish Literary Renaissance, a name first used by Hugh MacDiarmid in the Book Reviews section of the *Scottish Chapbook* of August 1922

(Palmer McCulloch 2004, xiii) and then re-employed by French critic Denis Saurat in an article published in 1924 (McIlvanney 2012, 4).³ It is crucial, however, to indicate that with this term Saurat referred specifically to a group of male writers led by the poet Hugh MacDiarmid, whose work had been published in his *Chapbook* and in three issues of the *Northern Numbers* journal published between 1920 and 1922 (Gifford 2002, 505). In fact, this particular group of writers was not the only one involved in a literary revitalisation of the Scottish cultural scene of the interwar period. Consequently, this subsection makes a distinction between the approach to the Glasgow novel by those writers who are considered to belong to the SLR group in the strictest sense, that is, MacDiarmid and his acolytes and other equally significant writers who wrote about Glasgow in the 1920s and 1930s. This latter group, referred to as the “Glasgow School” (Burgess 1998, 114), is constituted by the work of novelists such as Dot Allan, Catherine Carswell, James Barke and George Blake. Moreover, I will examine the key features of the 1930s gang novel by focusing on its literary epitome, H. Kingsley Long and Alexander McArthur’s *No Mean City* (1935).

The SLR movement was not a homogenous one: the poets and writers who can be said to belong to it used varied themes and had different views on the artistic and social role of literature. Despite their many differences, they all shared the intention to revitalise the Scottish arts, which they felt could be achieved by highlighting the importance of national culture. In addition, the movement’s members were collectively committed to the recognition and promotion of vernacular languages in order to configure a literature distinct from British models. As Douglas Gifford puts it:

Most critics would agree that [the SLR writers] include a return to roots in terms of language and respect for tradition; in terms of folk belief, legend and mythology, a search for an essentialism of racial inheritance; and a resurrection of national consciousness and a —single—Scottish identity. (2004, 18-19)

Interestingly, in an article published in 1926, the leading figure of the SLR, Hugh MacDiarmid, recognised some Glasgow writers and their work as part of this movement while simultaneously ignoring the most popular Glasgow novels of the 1920s and 1930s (McIlvanney 2012, 223). MacDiarmid’s rejection of some literary works because of their presumed lack of appeal or quality shows to what extent he could be intellectually elitist,

³ The Scottish Literary Renaissance will be abbreviated into the acronym SLR from this point forward.

aiming to differentiate himself from what they considered to be popular, “less Scottish,” works. The un-Scottishness of the Glasgow novels written during the interwar period lies, for Edwin Muir, in the homogenisation of Glasgow by depictions of industrialism that do not recognise nationality (1935, 102). Industrialisation grew as such an international phenomenon at the turn of the twentieth century that it was deemed incompatible with the fundamentally national and rural focus of the SLR artistic project. Moreover, in his 1926 article in *Contemporary Scottish Studies*, MacDiarmid dismisses the novel as a low second genre after poetry, describing it as “a form alien to Scotland” (qtd. in Gifford 2004, 29). As such, Glasgow and more specifically the Glasgow novel, was problematised and often excluded in these writers’ construction of a new form of Scottishness. For George Blake, Lewis Grassie Gibbon, Hugh MacDiarmid and Edwin Muir, Glasgow was “both a victim of and a threatening force for modernity, industrialism, commercialism, immorality and foreign, un-Scottish influence” (Bryce-Wunder 2014, 86). In most of their writings, the SLR authors evoked a rural past, an original Scotland uninfluenced by the forces of the Empire that stood in stark contrast to Glasgow’s extreme urbanisation.

While many of the SLR writers expressed their artistic ideals especially through poetry, Edwin Muir’s novel *Poor Tom* (1932), set in Glasgow, stands as an exception to the other publications of the group. The idea of Glasgow as a malevolent force that stifles creativity and embodies illness and horror for its inhabitants makes its first appearance in this novel, constituting an influence on forthcoming Glasgow fiction, specifically in the portrayal of characters’ relationship with the city (Gifford 1985, 7; Burgess 1998, 175-6). Even if Edwin Muir contradicts the SLR rejection of Glasgow as a setting for their writing, he does so with the same anti-Glasgow agenda held by his peers. In *Poor Tom*, the image of the city is distorted to its extremes, portraying misery, alienation and corruption, in opposition to the values associated with the rest of Scotland. In this vein, by offering a comparison between the brutal and dangerous Glasgow and a rural, bucolic and mythical Scotland, Muir’s *Poor Tom* reaffirms the latter as a much more appealing concept to pursue for the SLR’s artistic endeavours.

Among the Glasgow School writers listed above, namely Dot Allan, Catherine Carswell, James Barke and George Blake, only Carswell published her work in the 1920s. Her first novel, *Open The Door!* (1920), was an oddity in Scottish literature of that period due to its focus on an urban environment rather than on a rural one (Bell 2004, 23). Set in middle-class turn-of-the-century Glasgow, *Open the Door!* explores the coming of age of female protagonist Joanna Bannerman as she experiences the need to escape Glasgow,

characterised as an intellectually alienating space. The city is internalised in Joanna's first-person narration as she wanders around the University of Glasgow, Glasgow Art School and Sauchiehall Street department stores (Palmer McCulloch 2009, 72). Several scholars have stressed Carswell's stylistically innovative exploration of feminine psychology in an urban space. By means of a stream-of-consciousness, Carswell allows readers to enter Joanna's minds as she questions her identity as a Glaswegian woman. Moreover, in her unravelling of female psychology through the character of Joanna, Carswell acknowledged the lack of opportunities for women in Glasgow, mirrored in the recurring symbolism of the caged bird throughout the novel (Bell 2004, 24). Joanna finally flees a dark and conservative Glasgow in search of a freedom the city does not grant her (Norquay 1997, 390; Burgess 1998, 294). The city as an alienating and inauthentic environment is also addressed in Carswell's second novel, *The Camomile* (1922), through the narration of Ellen Cairstairs, who, like Joanna in *Open the Door!*, leaves Glasgow to go to London (Whyte 1990, 318).

In the 1930s, authors like George Blake who had started their careers in the early years of the SLR adopted a more amicable tone in their writing. Instead of degrading Glasgow's image and excluding it from the future cultural project of Scotland, thus ignoring its significance for the nation at large, writers in this decade show their social concern about the relevant socio-political issues affecting Glaswegians. As such, they document their circumstances, acknowledging and denouncing the injustice and inequality present in the city and in the "changing reality of the modern world" (Malzahn 1990, 193), mainly focusing on a depiction of the working classes. Two popular examples of Glasgow fiction written in the 1930s with a socially committed tone are George Blake's *The Shipbuilders* (1935) and James Barke's *Major Operation* (1936). Employing different Glasgow settings, the Clyde shipyard in the former and a hospital in the latter, Blake and Barke explore the relationships among the social classes that conform Glasgow population, specifically between business owners and workers. The Glasgow novel of the 1930s employs the realistic mode to portray the everyday problems of the working classes, such as unemployment, exploitative working conditions, famine and crude violence, in a negative light. The fictionalisation of these workers' daily lives is carried out from a left-wing perspective, which truthfully depicts the workers' strife while also promoting a belief in progress and in the possibility of solidarity among different social classes.

Another novel worth mentioning is Dot Allan's *Hunger March* (1934). The main reason for its inclusion in this chapter is its criticism of the rigid British class system, regarded as the most prominent aspect of the alienating socio-political hierarchies imposed on Glaswegian citizens. This particular case is especially valuable to understand the relevance of working-class political activism in the city of Glasgow and the progressive representation it acquires in its fiction. In *Hunger March*, the depiction of a public demonstration in Glasgow's George Square serves as the setting of one day in the life of the city. The specific timeframe illustrates to what extent participation in politics characterised urban interactions in Glasgow in the 1930s, especially for the working classes, who were affiliated with the Marxist and socialist agendas of trade unionism. Glasgow was by the 1930s the most populated city in the country and consequently was home to the majority of Scotland's working-class population. This is crucial to understanding the development of Glasgow's 1930s proletarian literature as a genre that has influenced subsequent authors in the Glasgow tradition, Alasdair Gray and James Kelman included.

The 1930s is also the decade when the gang novel proliferates, becoming a crucial genre to appreciating the history of Glasgow fiction, most notably with the publication of H. Kingsley Long and Alexander McArthur's *No Mean City* (1935). Regarded as the quintessential Glasgow gang novel, the novel is set in the violent world of slum-dwelling Glasgow gangs, portrayed as a nightmarish and inescapable urban labyrinth (Spring 1990, 72). The main character, Johnnie Stark, is the leader of a street gang who instils fear within the slums by cutting his enemies' throats with a razor. Razor street violence was common in Glasgow in the 1920s and 1930s and the most infamous type of street attack, the so-called "Glasgow smile," involved making a smile-shaped cut from the corners of the mouth to the victim's ears. Violence seems to be Stark's only language, either in the street or at home with his wife Lizzie, as fighting is "the only way of life he can choose to lead" (Malzahn 1987, 234). The lives in the slum are so hopeless and survival in the gang so challenging that escaping through politics, art and imagination is unattainable in the world of *No Mean City*; any sort of personal transcendence only seems possible through gang violence (Whyte 1990, 325).

The gang novel literary archetype, known as the "hardman" or "hairy," is typically a member of the working classes who lives in dark and small tenements where the residents are crammed together. These dwellings are located in the slums of Glasgow, the most infamous one being the Gorbals, located in the city's South Side and close to the

banks of the River Clyde. Hardmen are known for their participation in street and domestic violence, as well as for massive alcohol consumption as a way to ease their frustration and the depression caused by their life conditions. These features, present in some of the poorest population pockets in Glasgow, are overdramatised in a sensationalist manner in *No Mean City* and other gang novels that derived from it, such as Bill McGhee's *Cut and Run* (1956). Even if the literary quality of *No Mean City* has been recurrently questioned, according to Ian Spring, the novel "perhaps constituted the thirties' major contribution to the mythology of Glasgow and set an agenda for subsequent discussion of the nature of representations of the city" (1990, 73). In fact, according to Séan Damer, *No Mean City* set a national and international standard in the association of violence, poverty and slum communities with Glasgow and in the popularisation of these often limiting and damaging stereotypes (1990, 5).

Apart from social class, another important factor to understand the gang novel is its representations of gender and how it intersects with other aspects of the characters' identity. The perception of the city and of working-class status as sources of personal alienation is extrapolated to the characters' gender expression. These male characters often fail to accept who they are and use violence to compensate the clash between their poverty and their expectations as men to be strong and powerful breadwinners. In *No Mean City*, Johnnie Stark stands as an "icon of unadulterated masculinity" due to his violent persona (Whyte 1990, 323). However, his inability to get his wife Lizzy pregnant renders him helpless and psychologically impotent, following the male pathos features traditionally portrayed in Glasgow fiction (Whyte 1990, 325). As Sylvia Bryce-Wunder explains it, the controversial hypothesis of *No Mean City* is that the imposition of class and gender roles motivates the male working classes tendency towards violence and their damaged personalities (2003, 122). The male stereotype created by this genre is probably one of the most lasting images of the cultural conceptualisation of the Glaswegian. As Bryce-Wunder argues, both Alasdair Gray and James Kelman have played with the representations of Glaswegian masculinity and femininity introduced in *No Mean City* (2003, 123). In fact, due to their helplessness and vulnerability, Kelman's male characters are described by Carole Jones as "unstereotypical hardmen" (2009a, 24). Glasgow fiction's focus on masculine experiences of urban alienation present in all the novels revised so far, with the key exception of Catherine Carswell's *Open the Door!*, is iterated and expanded in Glasgow fiction from the 1940s to the 1970s.

2.2.3. Post-war Fiction

As Susanne Hagemann contends, post-war Glasgow fiction is mostly characterised by a rejection of the organic and uniform national artistic tradition supported by the SLR writers, as well as by the expansion of the bleakness, discontinuity and alienating characteristic of urban contexts (1996, 10). Within this period, I include publications ranging from post-1945 —the last year of the Second World War— and until 1979— the year of the first Scottish devolution referendum following Liam McIlvanney’s periodisation in his book chapter “The Glasgow Novel” (2012, 227). The central Glasgow novel of the 1940s, Edward Gaitens’s *Dance of the Apprentices* (1948), expands on the tensions between art and politics as potential vehicles of social mobility and escapism and the soul-crushing atmosphere of the industrial city. The main character, Eddy MacDonnel, is a committed socialist who engages in actions and philosophical discussions aimed at the defeat of capitalism and who also tries to find in politics and poetry the beauty and inspiration the slums he inhabits lack, reading both Lenin and Keats. Here, art is presented as a possible salvation but one which is bound to fail in Glasgow’s urban and working-class environment. In this manner, as Bryce-Wunder explains, “Edward Gaitens’s *Dance of the Apprentices* tends to confirm the ‘Renaissance’ idea that Glasgow is the enemy of art and culture” (2014, 94). Gaitens’s novel, in fact, reproduces the conceptualisation of a creatively stifling Glasgow and the frustration of a character in his attempt to resist such dearth. According to Edwin Morgan, the theme of thwarted working-class idealism recurs in later Glasgow novels (1993, 86).

In the 1950s, Glasgow was still recovering from World War II, therefore not many notable works of fiction were produced. In the 1960s, Glasgow continues to be depicted as a relentless and cruel machine that stifles creativity and hinders access to the city’s history and cultural past, demonstrating the great impact of the interwar anti-urban discourse on the thematic treatment of Glasgow. Archie Hind’s *The Dear Green Place* (1966) is a good instance of 1960s fiction produced in the city and clearly connected to both Gray’s and Kelman’s work. This novel has had a significant influence on subsequent authors, given its existential reflections on how Glasgow and its urban spaces affect its citizens and influence their identity. In *The Dear Green Place*, the main character, Mat Craig, confronts the ordinary and bleak atmosphere of Glasgow urban spaces while

attempting to write a novel. Instead of completing it, blocked by the little literary material that his life and city can offer, he takes up a job in a slaughterhouse. In Hind's novel there is a distinctly ambivalent sense of locality, which was already noticeable in previous examples of Glasgow fiction, such as Gaitens's *Dance of the Apprentices*. As such, Mat Craig's purely Glaswegian working-class experience is intercalated with references to international literary works, including Dostoevsky, Joyce, Scott Fitzgerald and Yeats, from which Mat takes inspiration for the novel he wishes to write (Morgan 1993, 86). The presence of international influences reflects the recurring acknowledgement of a lack of Glasgow or Scottish literary referents that Douglas Gifford defines as "the dilemma of the Scottish writer" (1985, 14). In fact, Bryce-Wunder argues that the main obstacle for Mat Craig is his Glaswegian identity and accent: "Simply being Glaswegian kills the artistic spirit" (2014, 94). The discussion of the literary potential and suitability of the Glasgow accent is later touched upon in James Kelman's work. Indeed, Kelman's work interrogates the literary establishment's marginalization of certain ways of speaking and the resulting perception of Glaswegian vernacular as an inadequate literary language.

The Dear Green Place is also a novel about nostalgia for a lost rural and green past, a motif inherited from the SLR and kailyard literature. The prominence of an idealised pre-urban Glasgow is implicit in its title, which evokes Glasgow's original Gaelic toponym Gles Chu, meaning the Dear Green Place. Modern and industrial Glasgow is described in the novel as "a vehicular sclerosis, a congestion of activity" (2008, 36), whose history has been replaced by "only a null blot, a cessation of life, a dull absence, a blankness and the diminution and weakening of all the fibres of being" (87). The title is simultaneously a tribute to and a mockery of Glasgow as a supposedly fertile green place, exploring the struggle of its protagonist to write a novel in a fragmented and discontinuous environment (Gifford 1996, 25).

Mat Craig perceives a Glasgow that is unsuitable for producing culture, considering that ordinary Glaswegian working-class lives are not valuable novel material. In exploring this dilemma, Archie Hind examines the problem of the working-class Glasgow author when trying to write about his vision of the city (Burgess 1998, 201). Yet, *The Dear Green Place* is also relevant in its manifestation of literary experimentation. For instance, it has a double layer that could be considered close to metafiction in that Mat Craig is trying to write a novel within the novel. Even more paradoxically, what Hind acknowledges, through Mat, as flawed novel material, becomes the core of Hind's novel. The daily life details that Mat judged as ordinary, tedious and

gritty, like working in a slaughterhouse, become grotesque and bizarre enough in the way they are portrayed to provide good material for the novel where he is a protagonist. All in all, the ambivalent space occupied by Glasgow's cultural and artistic possibilities is re-examined and explored in depth in *The Dear Green Place* (1966), reflecting on the Glasgow working classes' inferiority complex as regards artistic production and asking whether this cultural insecurity lies within the individual or is actually influenced by the city's industrial environment.

Interestingly, in the introduction to the 2008 edition of *The Dear Green Place*, Alasdair Gray points out that: "Our novels [*Lanark* and *The Dear Green Place*] were both about low-income Glasgow artists doomed to failure, this coincidence worried us slightly, but we had chosen that theme long before meeting each other and had to put up with it" (2008, 2). This declaration confirms that the similarities between *Lanark* and *The Dear Green Place* are not deliberate. Gray started writing typescripts for *Lanark* as early as 1952 (Dent 2002, n.p.), fourteen years before the publication of *The Dear Green Place*; hence, Hind's direct influence on Gray would have been impossible. In this case, it is the impact of shared values, shared historical periods and a similar social environment that provokes a repetition of identifiable themes and tropes, as happens with many other works among the ones revised here.

In the 1970s, there are two pivotal writers that continue to explore the relationship of a male Glaswegian with the city. These two writers are George Friel, author of *Mr Alfred M.A.* (1972) and William McIlvanney, author of *Docherty* (1975) and *Laidlaw* (1977). In *Mr Alfred M.A.* (1972), George Friel tells the story of a comprehensive school English teacher whose good intentions clash with a changing Glasgow society where gang fights and graffiti are taking over the culture of the teenagers whom he is supposed to teach. When one day he is beaten by his ex-pupils until he is unconscious, a vision of Glasgow's hellish destiny is sent to him in a prophetic and dreamt conversation with the Devil. Gang violence, graffiti and other forms of vandalism are identified as new signs of the crumbling and desperate state of the city and of Mr Alfred's own identity. Mr Alfred fails to communicate effectively with his Glaswegian and Scottish social environment. According to Moira Burgess, this difficulty in communication reflects the understanding of the Union, felt by many Scots, as a distant government that has linguistically and culturally isolated Scotland by imposing English standards of communication (1998, 237). In fact, although he is a Scot, as an English teacher, Mr Alfred's methodology and

relationship to language is mediated by the standards of institutional English, which differs from Glaswegian local varieties. As Cairns Craig suggests, in *Mr Alfred M.A.*:

Instead of language being a mimesis of the world it becomes an imitation of the forms of language itself, in reflection of and in resistance to the condition of a country and a culture where the written language has been the medium through which the native voice of the people has been repressed. (1999, 168-9)

In this vein, in order to transgress the distinction between written language as institutionalised English and oral language as vernacular and thus officially rejected forms of speech, George Friel delocalises language from its national and class categories. He reduces it to its minimum expression in an anarchic representation of language that blurs the boundaries between the written and the oral. Uncertainty and a fragile and discontinuous identification both with the self and the others in the context of the city is recaptured in the 1980s by Alasdair Gray and James Kelman in their exploration of linguistic texture as a construct and in their emphasis on typography (Craig 1999, 192). Moreover, George Friel's *Mr Alfred M.A.* introduces a fantastic and supernatural element in the devilish figure of Tod, who is the destabilising component of Mr Alfred's cultural and linguistic conception. The section in which Tod appears as an evil goblin tricking Mr Alfred's perception of reality foregrounds one thesis of the novel: realism is too limited a mode to depict Mr Alfred's multiple and complex realities (Craig 1999, 172). This problematisation of the perception of reality and the creation of alternative visions is reappropriated in Alasdair Gray's work, an idea that will be further explored in Section 2.2.4. of this thesis.

Glasgow's labyrinthic urban spaces have been employed by several authors to shape the characters' identity and the novel's atmosphere. It is the movement around those spaces and the type of neighbourhoods or venues through which the fictional characters frequently walk that determines various types of engagement with the city. For instance, as Markéta Gregorová argues, in William McIlvanney's *Laidlaw*, its detective protagonist "loses himself in Glasgow" (2015a, 119). Rather than aimlessly wandering its streets in a state of confusion, the eponymous protagonist feels such attachment to the city that he becomes one with it. Losing oneself in Glasgow is also the theme of James Kelman's *How Late It Was, How Late* (1994a), but whereas McIlvanney's protagonist experiences a sense of familiarity and belonging, as Gregorová contends, the blindness

of Kelman's marginal protagonist, Sammy Samuels, renders him a both physically and mentally disoriented man (2015a, 119). McIlvanney incorporates into *Laidlaw* the Glasgow of the hard men, tenement slums and gang violence from McArthur and Long's *No Mean City*, combined with "American hard-boiled detective and police procedural conventions" (Riach 1996, 77). As has been remarked, the violence shown in *No Mean City* (1935) and other gang novels becomes a recurrent trope of Glasgow fiction, reappearing in other novels. In McIlvanney's work, violence is portrayed as the only available solution to the protagonists' problems and in a manner in which the protagonists take justice into their own hands. In this vein, Beth Dickson argues that "McIlvanney's heroes naturally resort to violence to solve their problems. They are so convinced that their way of living is better that they have no hesitation in imposing it by force" (1993, 59).

McIlvanney's novels reflect the historical evolution of Scottish working-class identity as it takes "working class life, people and speech as [its] raw materials" (Dixon 1996, 187). His artistic commitment with the working classes ties his writing directly to James Kelman. Nonetheless, McIlvanney's representation of the proletariat employs a naturalistic, realistic style, to which Kelman reacts rather than taking inspiration from it. Kelman subverts McIlvanney's traditional narratorial style by effacing the formal differences between first and third person, main narrative and dialogue, as will be further explained in Section 3.3.1. of this thesis. Moreover, in *Docherty*, McIlvanney incorporates socialist politics and existential philosophy to narrate miner Tam Docherty's fight against the capitalist structures that the author recognises as a source of social evil (Dickson 1993, 61). Gray and Kelman also show in their work an awareness of and commitment against the oppressive influence that social and political hierarchies exert on the individual. As regards his portrayal of gender, McIlvanney constructs narratives often centered on a violent, hyper-masculine hard man protagonist (Jones 2010, 111). McIlvanney's male characters follow the urban trope of the hard man in their ability to survive by means of force and violence "in a society that is impoverished, squalid, sordid and ruthless" (Spring 1993, 210). In addition, unlike the inward and lonely heroes of James Kelman, McIlvanney's men are actively engaged in the working-class community to which they belong (Hames 2007a, 69-70).

A feature shared by Friel, Gaitens, Hind and McIlvanney is what David Craig denominates the "reductive idiom" (1961, 76). As explained by Douglas Gifford, the protagonists of the novels that follow the "reductive idiom" pattern are sensitive male

individuals who are isolated and struggle to engage with society in meaningful ways, thus increasing their solipsism and obstructing the possibility of finding an identity and a voice of their own (1985, 8). The difficulties these male characters face in articulating healthy interactions with their environment end up turning artistic endeavours or family relations, which were once sources of escapism, into new sources of personal frustration, ultimately hinting at these men's inability to engage with their community. In the 1980s and 1990s, themes such as urban loneliness, the city as a sort of discomfort and art as a potential means of escape are further explored in Glasgow fiction with a new layer of thematic and formal innovation.

2.2.4. Devolutionary Glasgow Fiction

As noted above the timespan between the two referenda that culminated in the establishment of an autonomous Scottish parliament in 1999 is termed by literary scholars as the devolutionary period. This was a tumultuous period in Scotland both politically and culturally for various reasons. The failure of the 1979 devolution referendum and the subsequent inauguration of a Conservative government led by Margaret Thatcher as the new British Prime Minister left those Scots in favour of an autonomous parliament — a position supported by many writers — with a general feeling of political disempowerment and frustration, which Cairns Craig has identified as “a sense of apocalypse” (1987, 2). In the cultural arena, many Scottish writers, rather than falling prey to the surrounding hopelessness, went against the tide and reacted to the political circumstances with an innovative mindset, turning the devolutionary period into what sometimes has been viewed as the second artistic revival of the twentieth century in Scotland after the SLR (Petrie 2004, 2). This artistic flourishing was palpable at a national level and especially visible in the Glasgow literary scene. However, even if devolutionary writers like Alasdair Gray and James Kelman were quite experimental in their technical choices, they continued to touch upon what is, for Eleanor Bell, a key Glasgow fiction theme: the struggle of individual characters with a fragmented identity in finding themselves (1996, 226). As Lynne Stark describes it, the industrial decline and the consequent labour and social instability of the 1980s is consciously reflected in the work of Gray and Kelman through shifts in narrative, formal parameters and a further insistence on working-class

narratives, involving atomised communities made up of socially isolated individuals (2000, 111).

The most iconic work of this period and, according to Dominika Lewandowska-Rodak, an “unprecedented reinvention of the Glasgow novel” (2015, 94) is Alasdair Gray’s *Lanark* (1981). *Lanark* combines the social realism of the Glasgow novel with supernatural fantasy in four books that tell the interconnected lives of Duncan Thaw, in 1950s Glasgow and Lanark, a character lost in the Glasgow-inspired dystopias of Unthank and Provan. In this first novel, Gray challenges chronological order, opening with Book Three and submerges the reader in a narrative that addresses, among other issues, the relationship of human beings with external political hierarchies and with the psychological boundaries of their imagination. In an excerpt of Book One, Glasgow’s literary tradition is discussed through Duncan Thaw’s now famous monologue about the city’s lack of artistic imagination and, in his opinion, Glasgow’s underrepresentation in fiction:

“Glasgow is a magnificent city,” said McAlpin. “Why do we hardly ever notice that?” “Because nobody imagines living here,” said Thaw. McAlpin lit a cigarette and said, “If you want to explain that I’ll certainly listen.” “Then think of Florence, Paris, London, New York. Nobody visiting them for the first time is a stranger because he’s already visited them in paintings, novels, history books and films. But if a city hasn’t been used by an artist not even the inhabitants live there imaginatively. What is Glasgow to most of us? A house, the place we work, a football park or golf course, some pubs and connecting streets. That’s all. No, I’m wrong there’s also the cinema and library. And when our imagination needs exercise we use these to visit London, Paris, Rome under the Caesars, the American West at the turn of the century, anywhere but here and now. Imaginatively Glasgow exists as a music-hall song and a few bad novels. That’s all we’ve given to ourselves.” (1981, 243)

Duncan Thaw, the main character of the novel in Books One and Two, refers here to the Glasgow literary tradition as “a few bad novels,” a statement which, according to Douglas Gifford, “is both true and untrue” (1985, 14). It is true if we consider the conceptualisation of Glasgow as an anti-literary urban space and the absence of writers like Edward Gaitens or Edwin Muir from the “Index of Plagiarisms,” a list of the novel’s literary influences found in *Lanark*’s Epilogue (Gifford 1996, 24). At the same time, it is untrue: writers previous to Gray had fictionally depicted the city, setting a tradition that counts as much more than only a few bad novels (Gifford 1985, 14). As explained in

Section 2.2.3., Archie Hind, William McIlvanney and other writers of the last decades of the post-industrial period reflected on the consequences that both the supposed absence of literary predecessors in the history of Glasgow fiction and the perception of Glasgow as an artistically barren space brought for their characters and for themselves as novelists. Gray shows a similar concern in the realistic part of *Lanark*, yet, paradoxically, Duncan Thaw's reflection denounces a Glaswegian cultural amnesia from within an intrinsically Glasgow novel. Duncan's speech is specifically concerned with the cultural redefinition of Glasgow's artistic void, both revealing its existence and offering insight with which to fill it, redressing, as Randall Stevenson argues, the city's imaginative poverty through a revision of Glasgow as both realistic and fantastic, suffocating and spatially fluid (1991, 60-61).

Gender and class as rigid structures are also present in Gray's work; in fact, as Bryce-Wunder argues, *Lanark* could be considered an "analysis of how class and gender inform the development of Glaswegian identity" (2003, 123). Moreover, Gray's first novel examines and critically addresses many other topics related to Glasgow in a very precise and local manner, while also expanding them to the international sphere. The social hierarchies of the dystopian versions of 1950s Glasgow, Unthank and Provan, reinforce the criticism of the disadvantages of industrialisation and extreme capitalism, which is a recurrent theme in Glasgow fiction. In the fantastical spaces of Unthank and Provan, evil corporations pollute the land and a health institution called The Institute acts with a selfish neoliberal mindset treating its deceased patients as food and fuel. *Lanark* also recovers the fictionalisation of Glasgow as a hellish trap characteristic of 1930s and 1940s Glasgow fiction. As another character interacting with the protagonists, Glasgow/Unthank/Provan is an invasive hellish presence, which affects both the spatial surroundings and the psychological state of Thaw and Lanark. In this vein, Moira Burgess contends that:

The fusion of Glasgow and its people in a novelist's vision —making hell not merely from a physical environment, not merely from a psychological state, but from both and the interaction between them— is something to bear in mind as we enter what has proved to be a golden age of Glasgow fiction. (1998, 180)

Even if in *Lanark* perseverance both in art and politics is as useless as it was in the gloomy and desperate Glasgow portrayed by 1930s and 1940s writers, there is a glimmer of hope in the future as will be explained further in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

Unlike Gray, Kelman does not incorporate fantasy into urban realism; instead, he develops a formally experimental style grounded in the artistic commitment with the marginalised local working-class, especially in his use of vernacular voices. This difference, obvious when comparing their work, is also revealed in the “Postscript” to *Lean Tales* (1985), a short story collection published jointly by Gray, Kelman and Agnes Owens: “Gray was writing a novel which used devices of fantasy to overlook facts which were essential to Kelman’s prose” (1985, 283). Even if, as he declares in an interview with Kirsty McNeill, Kelman considers himself to be part of a Scottish prose tradition (1989, 4); his literary endeavour is radically different in technical and formal approaches compared with any previous Glasgow novelists. Yet, in my view, his emphasis on eliding the divisions between oral and written language and exploring a fragmented sense of space goes back to Friel’s preoccupation with typography and the literary limitations of realism in *Mr Alfred M.A.*

According to Cairns Craig, James Kelman’s writing has been recognised by its literary innovation in three main areas: the representation of working-class life, the treatment of voice and the construction of narrative (1993, 99). Concerning the portrayal of the working classes, Kelman’s literary purpose is, according to Morgan, “following ordinary people about their business throughout the whole day” (1993, 94). His male protagonists do not believe in the collective politics of working-class representative bodies as a means to escape from their isolating conditions. Instead, they often are individual characters disconnected from their families and withdrawn into their own selves. Indeed, as Craig contends, in Kelman’s novels *The Busconductor Hines* (1984), *A Disaffection* (1986), *A Chancer* (1985) and the Booker-prize winner *How Late It Was How Late* (1994), as well as in his short story collections, “every man is for himself” (1993, 101).

Kelman’s treatment of voice, mainly employing a Glaswegian vernacular, is very much related to his relationship with the city. As he explains in the collection of essays *Some Recent Attacks: Essays Cultural & Political* (1992), he does not write about Glasgow because he has special interest in this city over the rest, but because it is the one with which he is most familiar. This choice of a setting due to familiarity responds to Kelman’s literary objective: writing about regular events to gain a full understanding of

the personal experiences of ordinary people. The manner in which he chooses to present the city is nonetheless ambiguous, as will be further explained in Section 3.3.1. of this thesis. It is also crucial to point out that in Kelman's fiction, the state of the city and of the novels' protagonists is replicated in the construction of the narration. The formal and typographic representations of the relentless existence in which his protagonists live vary across his novels. For instance, in *The Busconductor Hines*, Kelman divides each section with three Os, a device that will later be appropriated by Janice Galloway in her novel *The Trick Is to Keep Breathing* (1989).

Kelman's reaction to previous Glasgow fiction can also be observed in his subversion of the active, dominating masculinity of the gang novel hard men, such as the heroes in William McIlvanney's work. In contrast, Kelman constructs narratives that feature vulnerable men. As a counterpoint to the female character whose development is primarily dependent on men, some of Kelman's men live in female-directed households. In both Gray's and Kelman's work, the city appears as an oppressive force their characters struggle to engage with. In their exploration of this topic, these authors resort to and challenge the nature/nurture controversy, drawing from previous existentialist literary perspectives on the effect of the city on people's lives and introducing the variable of individual responsibility into the equation.

As Moira Burgess explains in *Imagine A City: Glasgow in Fiction*, one of the features that made Glasgow fiction quite predictable before the 1980s and 1990s was the absence of strong female characters whose viewpoint was not associated with that of the male protagonist (1998, 290). However, in the late 1980s and especially in the 1990s, Glasgow women writers contributed to the city's fiction with a subversion of the narrative perspective, acknowledging female-driven experiences and interrogating gender identity (Burgess 1998, 294). The rigid gender standards revealed, for instance, in the gang novel and criticised because of their social and psychological effects start gaining attention and their parameters are expanded. Furthermore, where there were only victimised males limited by social expectations, new titles in fiction written by women authors gave space to women's experiences in which the influence of the urban is still distinctly present.

One of the clearest instances of this is Janice Galloway's *The Trick Is to Keep Breathing*, which was published in 1989, some years after Gray's and Kelman's arrival on the Glasgow literary scene.⁴ According to Douglas Gifford:

⁴ While Janice Galloway is normally categorised as a Glasgow author and *The Trick Is to Keep Breathing* as a Glasgow novel, in "Beyond the 'Glasgow Discourse'? Emotions and Affects in Ellie Harrison's *The*

Janice Galloway's impressive *The Trick Is to Keep Breathing* (1989), working through "stream of consciousness" and the post-traumatic regeneration of her sense of self, must not simply be allocated to "school of Kelman," but it is clear from her structural patterning and her typography that both Kelman and Alasdair Gray have, in different ways, greatly impressed her (Kelman's *The Busconductor Hines* [1984] and Gray's *1982, Janine* [1984] in special). (1996, 30-1)

In *The Trick Is to Keep Breathing* (1989), Janice Galloway portrays a female character, Joy Stone, undergoing trauma and depression after the death of a lover. The central features of this novel linked to previous themes and works of Glasgow fiction are, among others, the representation of urban space, the portrayal of identity and the treatment of voice. Both identity and voice are mirrored in Galloway's experiments with typography in a manner especially reminiscent of Gray's and Kelman's formal techniques. The novel offers two stories separated by their differing typography: the fragments written in italics tell the story of Joy's past, the reminiscence of the death of her lover and the contiguous second—but equally relevant—story, recorded in standard typography, narrates Joy's present. This visual division on the novel's texture mimics Joy's psychological state and dual identity manifested in "a disconnection from her body and the objects and events in her world" (Metzstein 1993, 138). Moreover, as it has been already mentioned, Galloway introduces pauses dividing the novel into sections with the three Os used by James Kelman in *The Busconductor Hines*. In the case of Galloway, these Os are interpreted by critics like Cairns Craig as the textual record of Joy's breath. According to Craig, this textual mark, together with marginalia, text bubbles and the disappearance of page numbers, challenges the boundaries of formal text in an attempt to visually manifest how the main character's fluid and dissipated identity spills beyond structural conventions and uniform understandings of the self (1999, 196). Alasdair Gray also uses the margins of the text as a representation of the fantasy realm in Lanark's "Index of Plagiarisms," in *1982, Janine* (1984) and in many of his short stories, such as "Sir Thomas's Logopadoncy," included in *Unlikely Stories, Mostly* (1983).

One of Janice Galloway's main preoccupation was to include a female authorial voice and a female perspective in what she found to be a highly misogynist Scottish

Glasgow Effect and Darren McGarvey's *Poverty Safari*," Carla Sassi argues this novel is in fact set in North Ayrshire (2021, 10)

tradition (March 2002, 108). In her work, encompassing the novels *The Trick Is to Keep Breathing* (1989), *Foreign Parts* (1994) and *Clara* (2002) and in her short story collections and autobiographical writing, Galloway challenges patriarchal structures as well as formal features, resulting in what Carole Jones considers to be “a more violent breakdown of dominant discourse than we find in Kelman’s work, perhaps to be expected from a writer who is a woman and inevitably more alienated from the unifying ideals of a universal selfhood” (2009a, 64).

In this thesis’s reconsideration of Alasdair Gray’s and James Kelman’s place between their predecessors and the subsequent writers of Glasgow fiction, neither A.L. Kennedy nor Agnes Owens should be overlooked. Among A.L. Kennedy’s many works, the most examined ones are her first collection of short fiction, *Night Geometry and the Garscadden Trains* (1990) and her novels *Looking for the Possible Dance* (1993) and *So I Am Glad* (1995). Her narratorial style is characterised by a use of free indirect speech along with the contrast between the characters’ intimate thoughts and the external third-person narrator (Dunnigan 2000, 144). This division of two types of narrative styles and, therefore, two contiguous storylines recorded in standard and italicised typography for the line of thought in novels like *Everything You Need* (1999) recalls the experimentation with typography carried out by previous writers, especially Janice Galloway’s dual stream of storylines in *The Trick Is to Keep Breathing*. Moreover, human disconnectedness is also touched upon by Kennedy, as Cristie Leigh March explains:

Kennedy’s characters concern themselves with the personal connections and disconnections that channel their emotional well-being. Embedded in relationships or disengaged from them, these characters seek ways of creating proper emotional unions that will sustain them. (...) Despite such attempts though, many of her characters remain isolated, unable to understand lovers and spouses... (2002, 139)

In this vein, Kennedy’s sometimes ambiguously gendered characters are similar to Friel’s Mr Alfred or some of Kelman’s marginal outcasts in their inability to properly communicate and articulate emotions. This might be related to the fact that, as Douglas Gifford points out, the post-Thatcherite world of Kennedy’s novels reinforces the experience of the city as an alienating space (1997, 620).

Agnes Owens’s link with Gray and Kelman transcends a mere literary relationship. It could be said that Owens was “discovered” by James Kelman, Alasdair

Gray and Liz Lochhead when her short story “Arabella” was given to Lochhead at a writing workshop in the Vale of Leven (Gray 1985, 283). In *Gentlemen of the West* (1984), Owens presents the life of a young bricklayer, who is living in the periphery of Glasgow, in a realistic style. From a working-class background herself, Owens writes about what she knows: workers in a disaffected environment who struggle to communicate what they want and what they need (Morgan 1993, 90). Like Kelman’s deprived men, Owens’s characters are people who come from the margins of society and whose response to injustice is apathy and a total loss of faith in the possibility of social improvement (Stark 2000, 111). However, it should be questioned whether the origin of this similarity lies in a direct literary influence or rather is caused by the authors’ shared social background. The 1980s were a fatal decade for the Scottish working classes, who witnessed the final steps of industrial disintegration and a change in previous economic paradigms. However alienating they may have been, secure, jobs were becoming increasingly rare and unemployment was on the rise in the shift from a primary-sector to a third-sector industry. Therefore, it is no wonder that the working-class protagonists of the aforementioned novels feel hopeless in finding meaning in their existence.

Despite the obvious formal and ideological differences among these writers, Ian A. Bell suggests that their literary efforts can be seen as part of a common Scottish project arising from “a desire to imagine and disseminate as many different ‘Scotlands’ as possible” (1996, 221). New writing techniques and artistic movements are merged in devolutionary Glasgow fiction: fantasy in the case of Gray; an experimentation with language in the case of Kelman; and an innovative approach to typography and textual materiality in the case of Galloway’s *The Trick Is to Keep Breathing*. All these writers strive for a representation of multiple and heteroglossic experiences of space, language and gender, all of which reflect Glasgow’s difference and diversity, a thematic choice that will gain more adepts in post-devolutionary Glasgow fiction.

2.2.5. Post-devolutionary Glasgow Fiction

After the successful devolution referendum of 1997, an interest remained in Glasgow fiction in the portrayal of the city’s urban identities and how these are mediated by the surrounding socioeconomical conditions. Further engaging in the challenge to the image

of the Glaswegian as male, initiated by Janice Galloway and A.L. Kennedy, post-devolutionary fiction expands the representation of female Glaswegians and broadens the city's literary scope by including racially and sexually diverse Glaswegian narratives. The contemporary cultural transgression of the white male monolith as a model of Scottishness and, in turn, Glaswegian-ness and the consequent reflection of the city's multiple identities has been linked to various sociocultural phenomena. According to James McGonigal and Kirsten Stirling, the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 prompted an unprecedented level of discussion on national identity and on how Scots saw themselves (2006, 9). In the event of having to decide whether Scots wanted their parliament to be separate or to remain joined to Westminster, profound questions on the configuration of a politically autonomous Scottish identity spearheaded the devolutionary process. Indeed, as Philomena de Lima explains, devolution was key for the introduction of racism and "race" equality issues in the Scottish literary arena in new and unexplored ways (2005, 143). Other simultaneous phenomena similarly contributed to the shift in the conceptualisation of Scottishness. According to Berthold Schoene, in an era of growing internationalism and with the popularisation of theoretical movements such as postmodernism, poststructuralism and postcolonialism, Scotland's signature problematic fragmentation —encapsulated in concepts such as the "Caledonian Antisyzygy" (Smith 1919)— became an asset (2007, 9).⁵ Consequently, heterogeneity and discontinuity, previously rejected in favour of a homogenous understanding of Scottish identity, became celebrated in contemporary Scotland and fostered in its fiction. Moreover, Cairns Craig has identified two decisive landmarks in the 1990s which, as he contends, anticipated the recognition of what had previously been absent in the representation of Scotland's multifariousness (2004, 234). The first one is the 1993 conference on "Bahktin and Scottish Literature," which, as Craig sees it, paved the way for the acceptance of mixed linguistic and cultural history, as well as facilitated the recognition and integration of postcolonial theories into Scottish literature (2004, 235). The second one is James Kelman's Booker Prize acceptance speech in 1994, in which the author situated himself in a tradition that stems from the decolonisation and self-

⁵ G. Gregory Smith coined the term "Caledonian Antisyzygy" in his book *Scottish Literature: Character and Influence* (1919) to describe the absence of a coherent cultural and linguistic tradition in Scottish literature, characterised instead by heterogeneity and a duality between Scottishness and Englishness. This cultural duality was equated, in the early twentieth century, with a schizophrenic Scottish psyche often seen as a problematic and weakening identity trait.

determination of his own culture, thus intersecting Glaswegian identity with a postcolonial framework (2004, 236).

Apart from being directly influenced by the reconceptualisation of Scottishness as diverse, post-devolutionary Glasgow fiction acquired an increasingly globalised tone due to shifts in the city's economy. From being the epicentre of heavy industry, Glasgow became, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, a hub of third-sector service business, tourism and shopping. The image of a Glasgow oriented to the service industry was further moulded by the neoliberal political agenda of the times. In fact, Alan Bissett lists a series of post-Thatcherite events that he associates with the city's makeover, namely: "the founding of New Labour, the 'war on terror' and American imperialism" and "corporate globalisation" (2007, 60). Glasgow's economy adapted to this era of global capitalism, even achieving the international accolade of "Capital of Cool" by National Geographic magazine (Devine 2012, 647); to date, Glasgow is considered to be the second-best shopping city in the UK after London. This new dimension to Glasgow's urban depictions also contributed to the exploration of the city's participation in the expansion of the British Empire and to the growing identification of its colonial ties in its fiction. Building upon the illustration of post-devolutionary Glasgow that I have offered thus far, this subsection of my thesis examines literary portrayals of Glasgow as a globalised urban space where transcultural connections and gender difference are evinced, while also tracing the legacy of Gray's and Kelman's work. This generation of Glasgow writers, identified under the label "New Weegies" (2007, 59) by Alan Bissett, is spearheaded by racialised writer Jackie Kay and Suhayl Saadi, female crime fiction authors like Louise Welsh and Denise Mina and other authors such as Anne Donovan, Zoë Strachan and Alison Miller.

Queer Black Glasgow is explored deeply in the fiction of Jackie Kay. Born in Edinburgh to a white Scottish mother and a Nigerian father and adopted by a white Glaswegian family when she was an infant, Jackie Kay is one of the most renowned Scottish writers nowadays. Celebrated especially for her poetry—she was the Scottish Makar from 2016 to 2021—she has published notable works of fiction, among which *Bessie Smith* (1997) and *Trumpet* (1998) share references to a Glaswegian urban backdrop. In both novels, Glasgow is elevated to a global perspective. In *Bessie Smith*, Kay's fictional biography of the Black and lesbian blues singer, the author constructs a genealogy for Black Scots and for lesbian Black Scots specifically, by establishing an imagined connection between Bessie Smith and Scotland. In the chapter "The Trunk and

the No-Good Man” (1997, 45-60), the narrator of the novel, Kay’s alter ego, imagines that Bessie Smith’s sisters send a trunk full of Smith’s symbolic personal memorabilia to Scotland in a way that interlaces the singer’s genealogy with Scottish history and with Kay’s own genealogy as a Black and lesbian Scottish woman. The interrelation between Glasgow and blues in the novel evokes the moment when Kay became conscious of her own blackness in a Scottish context —“I will always associate the dawning of my own realization of being Black with the blues and particularly Bessie’s blues” (Kay 1997, 138). In a racist and oppressive Glasgow, blues and the figure of Bessie Smith appear as referents of blackness and Black femininity aimed at compensating the lack of representation of Black women in Glaswegian and Scottish literature, characterised by a mostly male, white and heterocentric perspective. As Kay explained in an interview, illustrating the tensions between black and Scottish identities: “being Black and Scottish is always treated as a kind of anomaly” (Wilson 1990, 122). Set in the 1970s, *Trumpet* further ponders the intersections and tensions between Black, queer and Glaswegian identities through the character of another jazz musician, the fictional trumpet player Joss Moody. Jazz, the music of improvisation, becomes symbolic of Joss Moody’s identity as a transgender man. As a black man whose female features remain noticeable, Joss Moody defies both the categorisation of the white and visibly masculine Glaswegian man as well as that of the hyper-masculine black man. As Sara Marinelli argues, in *Trumpet* “Glasgow is confronted with its dominant whiteness and heterosexuality” (2003, 160). Kay further transgresses previous representations of Glasgow and Glaswegians by tracing Moody’s colonial origins. In a recollection of Moody’s father’s arrival in Greenock from Africa to become the servant of a wealthy Scottish family, the Duncan-Braes, Kay makes visible the latent but until then hidden connections between Glasgow and imperial colonialism.

Scottish Pakistani author Suhayl Saadi has published two novels, *Psychoraag* (2004) and *Joseph’s Box* (2009), as well as several works of shorter fiction, of which the most critically acclaimed is *The Burning Mirror* (2001). In his work, Saadi explores the hybrid identity of the Glaswegian Asian diaspora by representing their multiple voices in an exercise of heteroglossia and border crossing. As Marie-Odile Pittin-Hédon argues: “For Saadi, Glasgow is a good place for crossing over” (2015, 87). If Scotland is, as Alastair Niven defined it, “a composite nation, melding together several ethnic elements” (2007, 320), then the ethnic diversity of the nation is replicated in a local scale in Saadi’s *Psychoraag*. Like Saadi himself, the protagonist in *Psychoraag*, Zaf, is a Scottish Pakistani man. According to Sarah Upstone, in 1999, Scottish Pakistanis were the largest

ethnic minority in Scotland, making up to 33,8 per cent of the population (2011, 191). As such, Saadi portrays a common, while previously unrepresented, reality. In this novel, Saadi defines Glasgow as “Migra Polis” (2004, 310), incorporating the experience of the migrant community to Glasgow urban imagery while simultaneously discussing the city’s local and global dimensions. Throughout the six chapters of the novel, Saadi submerges the readers into the six hours of “The Junnune Show,” the programme where Zaf is a DJ in the Glasgow Asian radio station Radio Chaadni. In his DJ session, Zaf combines languages as varied as Urdu, English, French, Gaelic, Arabic, Hindi and Punjabi with Glaswegian vernacular; in doing so, he acknowledges, as Éva Pataki argues, Scotland’s heterogeneity and polyglotism (2017, 189). Glasgow is portrayed then as a city where Glaswegian-ness and Asian-ness, the local and the international, coexist.

However, this coexistence is not without its tensions. From midnight to six in the morning, which is the duration of “The Junnune Show,” Zaf expresses his struggles to accept his own hybridity as well as his troubles both engaging with Glasgow’s instability and feeling that he truly belong in the city. In Carla Rodríguez González’s words: “In this shifting scenario, a sense of belonging is doomed to be illusory, especially for Zaf, who cannot articulate his connection with the material, emotional, or pedagogic side of Glasgow’s collective life” (2016, 100). In this vein, as I see it, Zaf shares the physical and mental disorientation experienced by Kelman’s male characters that is pointed out by Markéta Gregorová (2015a, 119). However, Zaf’s disorientation presents a specifically ethnic nature. His self is divided between whiteness and otherness, often desiring, as Pittin-Hédon argues, to efface his own ethnic difference and “escape into whiteness”; there is also a divide between past and present, as he is still haunted by the memories of his family’s migration from Lahore to Glasgow (2015, 90). Zaf’s personal and psychological fragmentation is hinted at in the novel’s title, which Saadi’s translates as “symphony of the mind” or “symphony of madness” (2007, 29). The raag is a rhythmic pattern for improvisation in Indian traditional music and it has a crucial emotional component that, in Saadi’s words, can sound like “lunacy, a cosmic song” (2007, 31). The city’s multiplicity is recorded through language but also through music. Zaf encapsulates the elements of his Glasgow’s hybrid identities in his DJ playlist by blending both Eastern and Western songs in a mishmash of influences, which range from the Beatles, Irish rock, British-Asian bands and electronic music to traditional Pakistani songs. Like the novel’s multifarious voices, music represents Saadi’s conception of identity as a performative exercise of continuous improvisation and negotiation. As

Katherine Ashley describes it, in Saadi's novel "like a raag, which is never performed the same way twice, identity [...] is conceived as a flexible process rather than as a predetermined state of being" (2011, 141). Both Glasgow and Zaf belong to a realm of narration in which the perception of each of them, their imagery, their memories and their stories are subject to everchanging cultural parameters.

In her article, "The Rhythms of the City: The Performance of Time and Space in Suhayl Saadi's *Psychoraag*" (2016), Carla Rodríguez González applies Henri Lefebvre's study of urban rhythms as illustrated in his book *Rhythmanalysis* to dissect the novel's exploration of Glasgow's rhythms. Rodríguez González contends that, through the negotiation of Glasgow's social body, itself a polyrhythm "experiencing continuous states of arrhythmia" (97) and Zaf's individual "multi-layered states of disorder" (97), new rhythms are assimilated into Glasgow's previous imagery, rendering the city in a continuous process of shifting and becoming. Consequently, the intersection between Glasgow and Zaf, as a representative of the Pakistani Glasgow community, produces a new fictional urban space. Zaf interacts with voices, music, lyrics and also with his own past histories and those of Glasgow as well, confronting the city's colonial and slave trade past by considering its connections to his own family history and the history of Pakistan, which was part of the British Empire until 1947. Moreover, Zaf's Glasgow is mapped in the novel through his walks. As an urban flâneur, Zaf navigates across South Side areas, such as Kinning Park, Pollokshields, as well as East End areas, such as the Gorbals, all of which are, according to Alan Bissett, linked to Irish, Jewish and East European immigration (2007, 64). Glasgow is thus portrayed as a mobile city whose urban spaces are demarcated by immigration flows.

Saadi shares with James Kelman the understanding of language and narration as political constructs and tools. Interestingly, as Katherine Ashley explains it, all the words from Asian origin included in the draft version of the novel were written in the same format as English ones. This was an intentional decision by Saadi, who aimed to textually reproduce the equal balance between all the elements of *Psychoraag*'s protagonist hybrid Scottish Asian identity. However, this was later changed by the editor, who italicised them (2011, 138). This stylistic choice is similar to Kelman's endeavour to efface political bias and systemic class dynamics from the literary page. Moreover, Saadi's linguistic fragmentation and rupture with the prominence of English as the literary language can be also associated to Kelman's agenda. Kelman's political statement in the use of Glaswegian vernacular elements —deploying the Glasgow working classes as his most

familiar model— seeks to highlight the representational invisibility of marginalised and disregarded cultural groups around the world. In fact, as Saadi declares in his chapter in *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature*:

I aimed to debunk the dominant London-Oxbridge text, the shrine by which even the most supposedly progressive narratives are framed and to shatter the mirror of decorum, linguistically, culturally and in terms of a regressive class dynamic that defines most corporately published literary novels in the UK. I believe the positioning of my work within the post-Kelman context of contemporary Scottish literature has made such a critique both possible and necessary. (2007, 30)

By means of this claim, Saadi is acknowledging his indebtedness to Kelman's politically rooted narrative technique and recognising its relevance in inaugurating the path for anti-elitist literature in Scotland.

Glasgow vernacular is also explored in the fiction of Anne Donovan, Zoë Strachan and Alison Miller. Borrowing Jeremy Scott's idea of "immanent voices," Marie-Odile Pittin-Hédon identifies how these authors follow Kelman's interest in representing locally rooted voices (2015, 2-3). In *Buddha Da* (2003), her first novel, Donovan uses Glasgow vernacular as the language of narration. When asked about this choice in a 2008 interview with Adrian Searle, Pittin-Hédon replied:

When I started out I suppose I wrote the kind of stories that I thought I should write—you know, it's that kind of third-person Standard English—a bit of dialogue, you know, maybe more 'Glasgow' because that's what people are speaking and I never felt happy with them and it was not until I actually started to write in a Scots voice that there was anything that I was happy with or in fact that anybody wanted to publish and the way that I did it originally was purely, again, character-driven because I realised that the character I wanted to write about—that was not how she spoke—she did not speak in Standard English, so therefore I started to write in Scots and, immediately, it just made much more sense, it was much more alive, it was much more true, it was much more real and I was much more excited by it. (qtd. in Scott, 2017, n.p.)

I see that Donovan's declaration, even in her choice of words, bears a close resemblance to Kelman's arguments about the use of a third-person Standard English. Although linguistically rooted in the local, her narrative in *Buddha Da* looks beyond it to

portray the city's configuration. A working-class family of three, each member represented with their own identifiable voice and their interactions with South Asian culture as well as pop culture are at the centre of the story. The main protagonists are Jimmy, the Da in the title, a Glaswegian worker who finds peace in Buddhism, along with his daughter Anne-Marie and his wife Liz, who are both Catholic. These characters, especially Jimmy and Anne-Marie, find multifaceted reidentifications as Glaswegians that challenge the Western, male and white imagery of the city by revealing a multi-tiered identity that agglutinates new layers of meaning. As Bissett puts it: "Anne Donovan's work (...) while retaining a sense of continuity with the Glasgow tradition in its deployment of the vernacular, indicates how Glasgow might, through developing an awareness of consumerism, begin to search for new definitions" (2007, 62). In this preference for hybridity, Donovan's *Buddha Da* shares Saadi's *Psychoraag*'s use of music as a medium for mixing or, as Bissett terms it, "sampling" (2007, 63) sounds from diverse origins that merge in the city. Scotland's and Glasgow's hybridity is epitomised by Anne-Marie's and her friend Nisha's musical creation by mixing various languages such as Latin, Tibetan, Punjabi, Indian and Glaswegian in a pop song. In this vein, *Buddha Da* situates Glasgow in the possibility of a *glocal* space, since the cultural components found in the novel, as well as Donovan's use of language, are decentred towards the global. As Pittin-Hédon describes it, Donovan problematises "the notion of locality and belonging, in a context which, as her use of Buddhism as well as multiculturalism indicates, is both localised and globalised, or at least placed in an increasingly global context" (2015, 27). Jimmy, Anne-Marie and Liz's Glasgow is a postmodern and cosmopolitan space in which, optimistically, Donovan places all different cultural elements the family interacts with —Buddhism, Catholicism, Glaswegianness, youth culture, hip hop or pop music— at the same level.

Concerning Alison Miller, her novel *Demo* (2005) intertwines the use of the Glasgow vernacular with an acute preoccupation with class as a parameter of social division. These two aspects link her to the tradition of demotic writing as well as to the recurrent working-class background and characters of Glasgow fiction. In an interview with Bissett, Miller revealed which of her predecessors had inspired her to find her own technique:

I couldn't have written Clare's voice in *Demo*, for example, without Kelman and Leonard doing those linguistic experiments first (...) Kelman showed that it is perfectly legitimate

for his narrator to address the world in dialect. And he showed how it is much more the rhythm of the speech that characterises local dialect and he created a more serious literary orthography of Glasgow dialect. In *Demo* I'm trying to use similar techniques, but from a female perspective. And it was writers like Liz Lochhead, Janice Galloway, Jackie Kay who first showed that, yes, you can write as a Scottish working-class woman and make women characters central to your writing! (qtd. in Pittin-Hédon 2015, 5-6)

Given Miller's inspiration from female Glasgow writers, such as Lochhead, Galloway and Kay and her own commitment to make women characters central to [her] writing, it is two women, Clare and Laetitia, who narrate the story in two separate lines: one, Clare's Glaswegian and working-class and the other, Laetitia's English and upper-class. *Demo*'s set of protagonists is completed by two men who function as Clare and Laetitia's pairings: Danny, Clare's brother and Julian, Laetitia's boyfriend and, like her, a PhD student. She situates the action between two political demonstrations, which serve as beginning and ending: the anti-globalisation demonstration in Florence in 2002, where the four main characters meet; and the anti-Iraq demonstration in Glasgow in 2005. In doing so, Miller links the novel to Glasgow's radical history. Miller's *Demo*, as suggested in the title —Demo is short for demonstration— is a highly political novel with an underlying anti-globalisation and anti-capitalist message, specifically one of warning over the growing inequalities catalysed by the twenty-first-century neoliberal system. As Rosalyn Mary Marron argues in a positive tone, the Glasgow characters' political engagement as demonstration attendees shows that there is still energy invested in human rights protests in the city and that the masculinised history of Glasgow's radical movements can be re-signified and claimed by Scottish women who, like Clare and her Glasgow Muslim friend Farkhanda, are at the forefront of the novel's activism (2011, 244-5).

Another contemporary writer who is worth considering in terms of where her work meets or diverges from previous Glasgow fiction tradition and with Gray and Kelman particularly, is Zoë Strachan. In her novels *Negative Space* (2002) and *Spin Cycle* (2004), Strachan employs a Kelman-influenced Glasgow vernacular, yet she takes a turn by voicing it through female lesbian working-class characters. In that sense, her creative proposal is closer to those of female Glasgow writers Janice Galloway and A.L. Kennedy, as she joins them in the attempt to de-masculinise the Glasgow tradition. In *Negative Space*, the main character, Stella, shares with previous Glasgow fiction protagonists a

struggle to escape a sense of estrangement in the city and to reconcile her sense of self, fragmented after the death of her brother, Simon (Marron 2011, 176). The metaphor of the urban environment as a locus of entrapment, as it appeared in novels such as Hind's *The Dear Green Place*, Gray's *Lanark* and Kelman's *The Busconductor Hines*, is found again in this novel. In fact, Strachan herself has attributed to Kelman her own interest in disaffected characters:

I began this piece with a quotation from Kelman's most recent novel because reading his work changed my perception of what could be done in fiction and what could be done in Scotland. Although he wrote about women with that Calvinist self-flagellation identified by Dixon, I did not see any point of reference between myself and his women characters, aside from the most obvious common denominators of Scottishness and femaleness. It was the male characters who compelled me. I admired and identified with their yearning, their angst. It was a while before I realised that all the novels I loved were by men. When I did, at first I thought that, as a feminist, I should write about women and particularly to claw back some of the experiential potential which seemed to have been packaged up and labelled 'male'. (2007, 55)

Instead of replicating Kelman's model, Strachan, in an effort to counter Glasgow's machismo, subverts the fiction model of the disaffected male and develops characters who, very much like Galloway's Joy Stone in *The Trick Is to Keep Breathing*, are disaffected women. Strachan, who has described her own work as tackling "those sacred thistles of Scot Lit —masculinity and class— head on" (2007, 55), together with A.L. Kennedy, Louise Welsh and Jackie Kay, contributes to the growing fictional representation of the Glasgow queer community.

Like the novels mentioned above, *Negative Space* has been categorised as cosmopolitan in its transgression of borders and labels by Fiona McCulloch (2012, 24). Stella's trip to Orkney from Glasgow heals her fragmented psyche and liberates her queer sexuality, previously oppressed by the highly hierarchised Glasgow urban spaces in a Scotland that, as Strachan declared in 2007, had not progressed much from the "repressed queer characters and subtexts in pre-devolution Scottish literature" (53). In this vein, Glasgow is symbolically associated with repression, masculinity, disorientation and the death of her brother, while Orkney stands as a metaphor for a recognition of the self and acceptance of her queer impulses. As Carla Rodríguez González argues, Orkney is the

opportunity for a fresh start “away from the masculine symbolic order that the city represents in its private and public spaces to a liberating environment that is perceived as feminine” (2017, 66). Strachan’s *Negative Space* proposes a reconfiguration of Glasgow’s masculinised and conservative values by showing a female queer protagonist who finds happiness and wholeness away from the urban centre and its repressions, ending with her new life in London, where she can explore alternative paths that Glasgow does not yet offer her.

Masculinised Glasgow is further challenged in post-devolutionary Glasgow crime fiction. I will address the ways that the work of Louise Welsh and Denise Mina fits with this tradition. While their choice of genre and characters and their execution of political commentary differs from Alasdair Gray’s and James Kelman’s, both Welsh and Mina share an interest in unveiling and denouncing oppressive political hierarchies in a Glasgow setting. According to Gill Plain (2007, 132), along with the great influence of the American detective novels tradition, which is more pervasive in this genre than English popular culture, Scottish crime fiction heavily relies on the urban working-class Scottish tradition. Some post-devolutionary Scottish crime fiction novels share an anti-establishment agenda and their protagonists exist on the margins as “misfits and outsiders drawn into situations beyond their control” (Plain 2007, 133). According to Emily Horton, Louise Welsh’s acclaimed novel *The Cutting Room* (2002) dissects the urban identity of a Glasgow newly rebranded by the forces of globalisation, reflecting on the disastrous implications of consumer capitalism as the cornerstone of human relationships and exchanges, especially for marginal communities (2018, 194). While industrialisation was the main menace for society in post-industrial Glasgow fiction, the contemporary alienating force in de-industrial Glasgow in *The Cutting Room* is capitalism and extreme consumerism. Capitalism had already been seen as an enemy in Gray’s *Lanark* in the corporative hierarchies governing his science-fiction and fantastic versions of a future Glasgow.

In *The Cutting Room* (2002), Louise Welsh retrieves the theme of Glasgow as a merchant city. One of Glasgow’s many embodiments, the merchant city, alludes to Glasgow’s prosperous commercial past as the nineteenth-century “Second City of the Empire,” as well as to the neighbourhood in the city that was built from the gains of tobacco, sugar and the slave trade, named Merchant City. In the post-devolutionary Glasgow of the novel, commerce does not lead to prosperity but to instability and to a loss of significance. As Bissett argues, in this novel, Glasgow as “a signifier is now

detached from any lasting and definite signified beyond consumerism itself, that is, beyond the eternal ingestion of images, the purchasing of objects divested of their history, the exploitation of anonymous, unidentifiable bodies” (2007, 61). The Glasgow represented in Welsh’s first novel is shaped by economic transactions, as well as human exchanges, like sex trafficking and the post-Thatcherite rebranding of the city permeates every one of the city’s meanings. *The Cutting Room*— and Louise Welsh’s work as a whole—is also relevant in its representation of the Glasgow queer community through a protagonist, detective Rilke, who is an openly gay man (Strachan 2007, 54).

To continue with post-devolutionary Glasgow crime fiction, Denise Mina’s subversion of the hard man through accidental detective Maureen O’Donnell in the Garnethill Trilogy (1998-2001) and journalist/detective Paddy Meehan in the homonymous series, together with her focus on decaying urban areas, both expand and introduce changes in the Glasgow novel themes so far examined. Her crude portrayal of crime-flooded housing schemes situates Mina’s social critique within urban space itself, as she sets “individual crimes and particular problems of law and order against ongoing systemic iniquities that see ordinary people made vulnerable by faulty urban planning” (Clandfield 2008, 80). Unlike in the gang novel, where the protagonists of violent episodes were men, Mina shifts the crime novel paradigm by presenting female protagonists and by building avowedly feminist plots heavily aware of patriarchal injustice. Furthermore, as I see it, Mina’s insistence on portraying, as well as critiquing, Glasgow’s urban corruption and its consequences, links her work thematically to the gang novel, to Friel’s *Mr Alfred M.A. and* especially to Kelman’s vulnerable, marginal and, like Mina’s Maureen O’Donnell, unreliable characters. Indeed, as Andrea Rodríguez Álvarez contends (2019, 242), Mina’s focus on the depiction of Glasgow’s deprived areas and her underlying criticism of the isolationist urban policies affecting the working classes is another feature shared with Kelman. Robert P. Winston describes the protagonist of the Garnethill Trilogy as someone who “clearly exists at the margins of Glaswegian society” (2008, 68). Despite her marginality, Maureen conducts the investigation of her boyfriend’s murder on her own, relying on her individual agency as well as using her femininity and mental health issues as an asset. As Carla Rodríguez González argues:

In her role as an outcast, Maureen becomes a trespasser, capable of accessing spaces forbidden to women precisely because of her identification as a mentally ill person, but

also because she is capable of taking advantage of what Maureen A. Flanagan and Maryann Gialanella Valiulis recognize as the “historical and concrete ... tension between the visibility and invisibility of women” in cities. (2019, 177)

Mina’s depiction of flawed systems of care and protection, from the institutional—public housing, police, mental hospitals—to the personal—family—as shown by her protagonists’ helplessness, renders individual agency a default survival option (*Plain 2007, 133*). The fragmentation of the social tissue already found in Kelman’s *How Late It Was How Late* and in its protagonist Sammy Samuel’s solo fight—and flight—against the system reappears in the character of Maureen O’Donnell with further layers of social invisibility and vulnerability. O’Donnell both confronts and escapes the system, first as a female and second as a mentally ill woman with memory gaps. Accordingly, Mina addresses the topic of social marginality that was explored by Kelman from a different perspective. Moreover, the mistrust of the social services can be also linked to Gray’s questioning, throughout his work, of the motivations and foundations of political institutions and his aims of revealing their unequal power dynamics.

Glasgow’s labyrinthic properties have not disappeared in contemporary Glasgow fiction and the city is still a place for characters to get lost in and to interact with its many facets, either to be denied all stability, like Rilke in *The Cutting Room* or Stella in *Negative Space*, or to embrace the vibrant, multicultural lifestyles the city offers, both as a victim and an agent in globalisation, like in Saadi’s *Psychoraag* and in Anne Donovan’s *Buddha Da*. Glasgow’s original history and culture is simultaneously mourned and celebrated, created and re-created through new voices, religions, ethnicities and cultural products that are continuously incorporated in Glasgow’s urban space and reflected on its fiction.

This chapter has examined many of the Glasgows fictionally available, those which contributed to the Glasgows both Gray and Kelman inherited as literary inspirations, as well as those re-imagined by subsequent writers. As Zoë Strachan asserts, “there are a lot of Scotlands out there and many of them haven’t been represented yet” (qtd. in Marron 2011, 411). Likewise, among all the Glasgows that exist, some are represented for the first time by post-devolutionary authors and many more are still waiting to be fictionalised. Chapter Two of this thesis will discuss the politics of Alasdair Gray and James Kelman concerning the local, national and gendered dimensions of their fictional writing and essays.

**CHAPTER 3. LITERATURE AND
POLITICS IN SCOTLAND: THE
POLITICS OF ALASDAIR GRAY AND
JAMES KELMAN**

Alasdair Gray and James Kelman have always demonstrated a strong political commitment in their literary work and public declarations. In fact, both writers can be considered activists. Whereas Gray participated in the Scottish Independence Movement through the launching of pro-Home Rule pamphlets, Kelman has been a strong advocate against state repression worldwide and both Gray and Kelman joined grassroots working-class groups such as the Workers' City. This chapter will contextualise the political dimension of Gray's and Kelman's outlook and how their work reflects national, local, class and gender issues. Although casting light on the relationship between this pair of authors and the Scottish Home Rule movement is not the chief aim of this chapter, as Gray's and Kelman's complex and broad politics go beyond matters of nationalism, some space will be devoted in the introduction to discussing the intermingling of national politics and literature in the scholarly interpretations of Scottish literature since 1979. The analysis of Scottish literature in its capacity to enable a cultural re-embodiment of the nation and national values, or as Scott Hames has called it, the "cultural nationalist paradigm" (2007b, 246), has become such a pervasive critical approach in Scottish literary and cultural studies since the late 1980s that examining its origins and ramifications seems pertinent to the focus of this chapter.

The connection between Scottish writers and national politics historically extends beyond the devolutionary period. For instance, interwar poet Hugh MacDiarmid was actively engaged in national politics and his long poem "A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle" has been regarded as one of the main attempts at analysing "the condition of Scotland" (Palmer McCulloch 2009, 40). This chapter is, however, limited to the study of the cultural-political interaction since 1979. There are two methodological reasons for this temporal framing: first, the lasting relevance of the understanding of the devolutionary period as a time of cultural and political revitalisation in Scotland; and second, the fact that most of Alasdair Gray and James Kelman's work was published within this period.

3.1. The Interaction between Culture and National Politics in Scotland: An Unresolved Debate

The bond between Scottish literature and national politics has become a “critical commonplace” (Pittin-Hédon 2015, viii) in contemporary Scottish literary studies. Scottish texts have been pervasively examined as embodiments of the nation. As Berthold Schoene points out, the impact of a nation-bounded framework of analysis in Scottish literary criticism is so substantial that the tendency to interpret it from a national perspective was the chief measuring stick of devolutionary Scottish literature (2007b, 7). While the reading of Scottish literature as a symbol of the nation is not limited to post-1979 publications, the thriving cultural scene of the 1980s and 1990s has been recurrently acknowledged for its capacity to configure a sense of Scottishness in various influential collections on Scottish literary studies such as *The Scottish Novel since the Seventies: New Visions, Old Dreams* (Wallace and Stevenson 1993), or volume three of *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature* (Brown et al. 2007). In 1999, Cairns Craig argued that, through the assertive manifestation of Scottish cultural identity, Scottish authors were conceiving and re-writing Scotland’s “national imagination” (33). This concept envisages the nation as a cultural entity whose configuration is dependent on its literary voices and on the texts categorised as Scottish. Expanding on this idea, Carla Sassi considers that the connection with the nation is in the nature of the literary text itself, which, rather than establishing rigid national identities, instead opens up a space for discussion on what Scottishness entails (qtd. in McGuire 2009, 31). Several authors beyond Scotland have considered the literary text a bearer of national values, from those analysing the sociological configuration of the nation—for instance, Benedict Anderson’s idea of “print capitalism” (1983, 37) in his book *Imagined Communities*—to those looking at it from a literary standpoint, such as T.S. Eliot and, in the Scottish context, Edwin Muir. For authors like Cairns Craig or Francis Russell Hart (1978), the Scottish novel is the most suitable genre for creating a sense of nationhood; for some others, like Alan Riach, it is poetry (McGuire 2009, 30). If the nation is, as Anderson has defined it, an “imagined community,” the imagined nature of literary narratives places them in close affinity with the nation. The tie between nations and narration has been further theorised by authors like Homi K. Bhabha in his books *Nation and Narration* (1990) and *The Location of Culture* (1994). For Bhabha, the nation’s cultural configuration explains the shifting nature of the concept: “The nation’s ‘coming into

being' as a system of cultural signification, as the representation of social life rather than the discipline of social polity, emphasizes this instability of knowledge" (1990, 1-2).

One consequence of the reading of Scottish texts as necessarily national is the consideration of the cultural contributions of Scottish writers, Alasdair Gray and James Kelman included, as instrumental in the debates leading to the successful devolution referendum of 1997. According to Alex Thomson, the earliest definition of devolutionary Scottish writers as political agents can be traced to Cairns Craig's preface to *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture*, published in 1989 (2007, 4). As Craig explains in the foreword:

The 1980s proved to be one of the most productive and creative decades in Scotland this century — as though the energy that had failed to be harnessed by the politicians flowed into other channels. In literature, in thought, in history, creative and scholarly work went hand in hand to redraw the map of Scotland's past and realign the perspectives of its future. (1989, 1)

The energy Craig mentions had been channelled, unsuccessfully, into achieving an autonomous devolved parliament for Scotland in 1979. In the frustrated first attempt to establish a Scottish assembly, the division among Scots between those who did not vote, those who voted in favour and those who voted against was evident (Finlay 2007, 6). The results were close and positive for nationalists and supporters of devolution. However, votes in favour did not reach the 40 per cent of the electorate established by Labour MP George Cunningham as a requirement for the approval of the referendum results (Harvie 2004, 139). As the 1979 referendum was unsuccessful, the 1980s entailed, for those in favour of an independent Scottish parliament, a period of deliberation over the path Scotland might take after such a hard blow.

The failed attempt at establishing a parliament was followed by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative rule, which not only left devolution out of the question while she was Prime Minister, but also increased the belief that, due to Scottish dependence on the votes of an English parliamentary majority, the Union was structurally designed to disregard Scottish political demands. Indeed, as Richard Finlay argues, the unpopularity of the Conservative Party North of the border and, consequently, of the Union, which had begun to be equated with a neoliberal right-wing agenda, stemmed partly from the party's indifference towards the national dimension of Scotland (2008, 168). In this vein, Craig suggests that within a politically defeatist period in which the electoral consequences of

Scotland's status as, employing David McCrone's definition, a "stateless nation" (1992) were becoming increasingly present for Scottish nationalists, writers tapped into the national representative role that Scottish MPs could not take on, having failed to bring about an autonomous parliament (1989, 1). This same idea has been adopted and reinscribed by other scholars. In his oft-cited article "Masculinities in Contemporary Scottish Fiction," Christopher Whyte identifies Scotland's pre-1997 lack of autonomous representation as the reason behind the conflation of devolutionary literature and national politics. As he argues: "In the absence of an elected political authority, the task of representing the nation has been repeatedly devolved to its writers" (1998, 284). Moreover, Robert Crawford contributed to this narrative by asserting that "devolution and a reassertion of Scottish nationhood were imagined by poets and writers long before being enacted by politicians" (2000, 307). The Scotland that had been envisioned in the pages of Scottish literature was, according to Liam McIlvanney, "a kind of substitute or virtual polity" of the belated parliament (2002, 186). In light of the lack of an autonomous Scottish assembly, Craig, Crawford, McIlvanney and Whyte diagnose a representational void, ready to be filled by the voices of writers. Within this paradigm, hence, the polysemic meaning of representation in the cultural and political arena merges.

Accordingly, the promotion of a distinct cultural identity fulfilled by Scottish artists is often described with political metaphors. The labelling of the assertion of Scottish cultural difference under the term "devolution" features, for instance, in two 1990s publications: Robert Crawford's *Devolving English Literature* (2000) and Willy Maley's "Cultural Devolution? Representing Scotland in the 1970s" (1994). Inspired by what he calls a "devolutionary momentum," Crawford attempted to reconstruct a history of Scottish interferences with culturally hegemonic Englishness, from the eighteenth century up to Modernism, releasing them from the margins and challenging the idea of English Literature as a unitary tradition untouched by Scottish influences (2000, 7, 11). Similarly, but focused on a different timeframe, Maley distils representations of the Scottish 1970s from what he too identifies as a monolithic Anglocentric "'British' vision" (1994, 80). As he asserts, in the 1970s there was "a devolution of nationalist sentiment from politics to culture" (1994, 96). Replacing the metaphorical use of devolution for the term independence, Christopher Harvie likewise called the vibrant Scottish cultural scene of the devolutionary period "a sort of intellectual Unilateral Declaration of Independence," highlighting its emancipatory potential (1990, 254). Some devolutionary Scottish authors are even directly identified with the figure of the parliament and granted

its nationally representative role. For instance, in what is his most cited reflection, Duncan McLean states: “There’s been a parliament of novels for years. This parliament of politicians is years behind” (1999, 74). What all these ideas share is the suggestion that, during the 1980s, writers anticipated politicians in finding ways to channel specific national concerns and to accommodate a sense of national identity, which did not become politically tangible until the 1997 successful devolution referendum.

This connection between Scottish literature and its national political potential in the devolutionary context involves two much-discussed ideas: first, the possibility that the 1980s cultural revival was prompted by the 1979 electoral debacle; and second, that it was partly this cultural revival that contributed to the successful 1997 referendum. Some authors, like Duncan Petrie, argue that it was precisely the hopelessness of the Thatcher years, which he defines as a “Doomsday Scenario,” that enabled such a creative outburst in devolutionary Scotland (2004, 2). Agreeing with Petrie, Tom Gallagher proposes that Margaret Thatcher’s disregard for Scotland’s particular identity within Britain was, ironically, quite beneficial to the fruitful re-evaluation of Scottishness, as Scots discarded their burdensome national “complexes” and furnished “the wardrobe of Scottish national identity with a new and weatherproof set of clothing for the rigours ahead” (1989, 19). Gallagher argues that the inherent confidence and strength of the devolutionary cultural revival allowed Scots to rid themselves of pervasive notions that, as we see with G. Gregory Smith’s “Caledonian Antisyzygy” (1919) and Edwin Muir’s “Scottish Predicament,” had equated the internal divisions of Scottishness —Gaelic, Scottish and British— with a sense of national imperfection, inferiority and parochialism. Reinforcing the argument that political desperation motivated cultural affluence, Douglas Gifford sees the failure of 1979 as the inauguration of, “perhaps in reaction, perhaps in defiance,” a period of boldness and innovation that claimed the need to achieve political autonomy (2007, 245). Besides, as Berthold Schoene puts it, not only was the post-devolutionary Scottish cultural prosperity proof that new literature can flourish in adverse socio-political circumstances but, moreover, the Scottish people’s “disenfranchisement and representational elision by an anachronistic politics of Anglo-British homogeneity only induced [them] to pull more closely together and develop a more clearly defined and morally superior sense of national identity” (2007b, 7).

Regarding the bond between the devolutionary cultural revival and the success of the 1997 referendum, Craig argues that the 1970s and 1980s produced “a specific political outcome in the successful referendum of 1997 and the consequent (re-)establishment of

the Scottish parliament in 1999” (2006, 223). Yet the relationship between Scottish devolutionary writing and nationalist politics has not only been analysed by Scottish cultural studies scholars like Wallace and Stevenson (1993), Craig (1996, 1999), Schoene (2007b) and Gifford (2007), but also by historians. In *The Scottish Nation. A Modern History*, T.M. Devine reinforces the idea that the international success of writers who, like James Kelman, Alasdair Gray, William McIlvanney, Iain Banks and, later, Irvine Welsh, depicted Scottish scenarios often in a vernacular language has contributed to the promotion and growing visibility of separatist ideas (2012, 608). Devine further stresses the linkage between Scottish culture and the establishment of the Scottish parliament by directing attention to similarities between the Scottish devolutionary cultural revival and the Quebecois “Quiet Revolution”. As he sees it, both in Quebec and Scotland, culture was a key element for political regeneration and, in the case of Scotland, for amplifying the reach and influence of the Home Rule movement (2012, 609). In addition, Alice Brown, David McCrone and Lindsay Paterson also note the contributions of artists—“writers, folk singers, rock musicians, painters and sculptors”—to the creation of an anti-unionist “democratic, European and firmly not English” (1998, 218) Scotland, which, in the 1980s, stood at the opposite end of the nineteenth-century unionist-nationalist model.

In contrast with the scholars who see a clear connection between the devolutionary cultural revival and political devolution, there are critics for whom culture was not a significant factor. Already in 1992, David McCrone questioned the validity of culture as a decisive devolutionary factor, as he argued that “cultural concerns provide some raw material for nationalism, but are rarely its *raison d’être*” (212). Moreover, in her participation in the 2015 workshop of the research project “Narrating Scottish Devolution: Literature, Politics and the Culturalist Paradigm” (2014-16), historian Catriona Macdonald argued that the role of artists was “important (...) but not determining” in the foundation of the Scottish Parliament; instead, it was the party system that delivered the referendum (qtd. in Hames 2017, 7, 12). Furthermore, the dissonance between the nationalist politics of the leading party of the Home Rule movement, the SNP and cultural nationalist politics has also been employed as a counterargument against the conflation of national literature and nationalist politics. For Tom Nairn, the “neo-nationalism” that began growing in Scotland, especially since the 1970s, was “overwhelmingly a politically oriented separatism, rather exaggeratedly concerned with problems of state and power and frequently indifferent to the themes of race and cultural ancestry” (2003, 59). This dissonance is also identified in the cultural field. As James

Kellas points out, although cultural nationalists promoted “the use of a Scottish means of expression in literature and cultivate[d] Scottishness in the other arts,” only some of them supported “the SNP, or political devolution” and most were “uninterested in politics, preferring to change Scottish society through education and cultural activities” (1989, 129).

The interpretation of Scottish literature as a standard-bearer of national representation with the potential for constitutional change has particularly influenced the critical analyses of Alasdair Gray’s and James Kelman’s work. Alasdair Gray’s first novel, *Lanark* (1981), is often judged as the spark that “detonated a cultural time-bomb which had been ticking away patiently for years,” inaugurating a new era of confidence for Scottish literature (Wallace, 1993, 4). Indeed, Gifford celebrates Gray’s experimental style for its ability to bring “a new faith in Scotland” and “new awareness of the need to challenge political, gender and identity stereotypes” (2007, 245). Moreover, James Kelman’s subversive rendering of the vernacular voices of the socially dispossessed is often characterised as a claim for national visibility. Craig regards Kelman’s liberation of the Scottish voice from the textual boundaries that separated Scottish vernacular and standard English as an aspect that made Scottish literature from the 1960s to the 1980s especially apt for the reinforcement of national identity (1996, 193). In placing Scottish vernacular varieties at the same textual level as standard English, James Kelman was liberating the Scottish language from the literary margins and asserting the existence of a linguistic identity. This stylistic choice was, for Craig, aligned with the acknowledgement of Scottishness needed for the promotion of cultural nationalism.

One of the criticisms voiced against the identification of Scottish devolutionary writers as spokespersons for the nation is that this view ignores the ideological differences among the devolutionary writers who, like Alasdair Gray and James Kelman but also Janice Galloway and A.L. Kennedy, are said to have contributed to Scotland’s constitutional change. Indeed, as Hames has argued, devolutionary writers “largely reject the ambassadorial politics of ‘representation’ enshrined in parliamentary democracy” (2020, 4). As he contends, their labelling as guarantors of Scottish devolution in their ability to retrieve national identity through literary representation ignores that the politics of contemporary Scottish writers often questions nationalism and the agenda of parliamentary devolution (2020, 4). As far as Alasdair Gray and James Kelman are concerned, Gray is ideologically closer to the separatist movement initiated with devolution. In his pro-Independence pamphlet *Independence. An Argument for Home*

Rule, he even acknowledges the political role that his four pamphlets on Scottish politics, including this one, may end up having, arguing that if the public discussions after their publication “did not influence how North Britain is governed, then democracy here does not exist” (2014, 10). In contrast, James Kelman’s anarchist grassroots agenda actively distrusts nationalism, as shown by his suggestion that: “This idea that the interest of the country at large can be expressed irregardless of political and economic difference is very suspect indeed” (2002, 127).

In addition, several scholars have identified theoretical limitations and structural problems in the interpretation of Scottish texts as representative of the nation. For instance, Eleanor Bell’s *Questioning Scotland* applies postmodernist, poststructuralist and postcolonial frameworks to Scottish literature in order to expand what she claims to be the reducible and too recurrent approach of explaining Scottish texts in terms of their Scottishness (2004, 2). Moreover, in the article “‘You Can’t Get There from Here’: Devolution and Scottish Literary History” (2007), Alex Thomson argues that the study of devolutionary writers based mainly on their ability to culturally and politically revitalise Scottishness risks being a redundant and limited framework of analysis since “it is the circulation of the claim itself that supplies the evidence of the cultural revival to which it purports to attest” (2007, 5). Without using further evidence to support this argument beyond the Scottishness of the texts itself, Thomson describes this idea as self-evident in its unquestionability and, therefore, as structurally flawed. Besides, the absence of neutral criteria and the difficulty of remaining unbiased when it comes to the selection of texts for their Scottishness further jeopardises the argument’s solidity. As he contends: “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” (2007, 6). Agreeing that this nation-based perspective is deeply impactful, David McCrone nevertheless underscores its lack of rigour: “Such culturalist accounts [...] have powerful appeal despite (or perhaps because of) their lack of systematic and rigorous evidence to back them” (2009, 54-56). As Stuart Kelly ironically puts it: “Scottish academia insists on its ‘Albattitude’ to the extent that deep-reading is foregone in favour of a desperate screaming of ‘mehereIammetoo’. While other literary cultures discuss the pleasure, the carnivalesque, the difficulty and triumph, the olio-podrida of reading, the Scots stick with a great Yahweh-ish ‘I AM’” (2009, 2-3). In fact, the emphasis on questioning Scottish literature’s potential to represent Scottishness constitutes a current trend in Scottish Studies, one which aims to discover fresh theoretical approaches by

rejecting the pervasive conflation of the representational aspects of national politics and culture.

Given the methodological difficulties of considering the extent to which Gray's and Kelman's politics enabled devolution, for which a sociological rather than a literary approach would be needed, this chapter aims to move beyond what various recent scholars regard as a theoretically prioritised and too recurrent nationhood bias (Lehner 2007, 292). As such, it will examine Gray's and Kelman's relationship with the political arena critically, taking also into consideration some of their ideas that do not bear a direct connection to the devolution and Home Rule movements specifically. As Matt McGuire points out: "Whilst questions of national identity are integral to Scottish literature, there coexists another reading in which contemporary writing can be seen deliberately to distance itself from the ideological baggage and theoretical wranglings of cultural nationalism" (2009, 11). This chapter does not aim to solve the discussion about whether Scottish writers did facilitate devolution; instead, it considers literature's potential to generate ideas of a political nature in the minds of its readership.

3.2. The Politics of Alasdair Gray

According to Stephen Bernstein, one of Alasdair Gray's greatest contributions has been "his capacity to imagine the particular requisites for confronting historical forces like the political challenges of the new millennium" (2007, 167). Throughout his life, Gray's work—visual, literary and political—showed an in-depth exploration of the impact that rigid power hierarchies have on humanity, as well as an inspiring determination to challenge these hierarchies. Even if he did not participate in the British parliamentary and political machinery, not belonging to or specifically endorsing any political party—"I am too impatient to be a useful member of any political party" (Gray 2014, 117)—, his pro-Home Rule politics and his artistic tribute to Glaswegian and Scottish settings have been extensively praised by nationalist politicians and cultural nationalists alike. The day of his passing, some politically influential voices expressed this sentiment via Twitter. For instance, Nicola Sturgeon, Scotland's First Minister, praised Gray for having "helped create the Glasgow of our imagination" (29 December 2019). Moreover, his most recurrent motto, "Work as if you lived in the early day of a better nation," Gray's own

version of a line of Canadian poet Dennis Lee's "Civil Elegies" (1972), which first appeared in the frontispiece to the original edition of *Unlikely Stories Mostly* (1983), has been interpreted, as Christopher Harvie explains, as "a slogan for the distinctive Scottish resistance to Thatcherism" (1991, 77). It is, in fact, this same sentence that appears engraved on one of the murals of the Scottish Parliament building as a symbol of the connection between its politically hopeful meaning and the spirit of future envisioning that lay within the parliamentary devolutionary project. Alasdair Gray's political concerns come, obsessively and recurrently, from what he sensed as a place of resistance, a sense of constant clash between "personal imagination and social power (...) freedom and government" (Gray 1997a, 280). As such, his politics and power dynamics oscillate between efforts to liberate, individually or collectively and the rules and limitations that constrain these efforts.

The following section of this thesis examines how Gray viewed the relation between human beings and the power hierarchies inherent to the space they occupy. It addresses both the author's recurrent concern with entrapment and freedom as well as his significant connections with socialist humanism. Both these issues are closely related to the study of gendered urban space and solidarities that this PhD is concerned with. Indeed, in Gray's work, characters fluctuate between spaces of entrapment and freedom in which the interstice between victimhood and the possibility of agency is conditioned by our relation towards our own selves and by our social bonds with others.

3.2.1. Escapist Fiction against Oppressive Structures

Gray's concern with entrapment and his interest in exploring the possibilities that the weak have against the powerful date back to his youth. In the short story, "The Wise Mouse," published in the *Whitehill School Magazine* in the Summer of 1949, when Gray was 14 years old, the author narrates the beating of "an enormous monster who has defeated human might" (Crawford 1991, 3) by a tiny but clever mouse who travels inside the monster's body in order to defeat it. The monster's body symbolises a system of rigid hierarchies that the mouse succeeds to escape from within; thus the story conveys an optimistic message about the struggle of oppressed beings against the systems that enslave them. Gray's fictional —and polemical— imagery is replete with such structures.

Some of his novels and short stories are compartmentalised into various levels of significance so that the book itself, like a cage, becomes the first boundary enclosing characters and readers alike. The book as a system that can trap its characters is masterly crafted in *Lanark*. This novel flouts chronology, beginning in Book Three and following with Books One, Two and Four and it includes an Epilogue in the middle of Book Four, where the main character meets his creator. Trapping conceits are also found in Gray's sixth novel *Poor Things* (1992), whose narrative imbues readers with a sense of literary entrapment through its four textual layers: a found manuscript by Scottish Public Health Officer Archibald McCandless M.D., a letter by Victoria McCandless and an "Introduction" and "Critical and Historical Notes" by the editor, Alasdair Gray, in an overt practice of intertextuality that follows the structural complexity of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818).

This exhaustive exploration of authoritative structures is not only reflected in the structure of his books, but it is also conveyed on spatial, physical, emotional, mental or textual levels (Walker 1991, 38). As such, in *Lanark* (1981), the dual protagonist Thaw/Lanark "is continually in combat with monstrous systems" (Crawford 1991, 3). These systems are institutions —the Institute, the Council, Glasgow Art School— cities —Glasgow, Unthank, Provan— and physical and mental states —Lanark's dragonhide and Thaw's madness. In fact, in one of Gray's notebooks kept at the National Library of Scotland, he describes the idea that would later culminate in *Lanark* as a form of "escapist fiction."⁶ In 1982 *Janine*, his second novel, Gray deepens his exploration of mental bondage through the character of Jock McLeish. Departing from a similar idea to the one proposed in *Lanark*, in which the insane and neurotic mental state of the characters is replicated in their physical appearance, as well as in the novel's spatiality, in 1982 *Janine*, Jock McLeish's alienated and imaginatively unsatisfactory life as a supervisor of alarm system installations is mentally internalised as a relationship of dominance towards his own fantasies. Jock psychologically re-channels both the oppression levied upon him by his job and the shame he feels due to his bad luck with women whom he imagines torturing. However, this use of imagination further limits him: "his own fantasies not only involve bondage but also become for him a form of entrapment. Again, with horrible ease, escape seems to become another kind of imprisonment" (Crawford 1991, 5). Sexual torture reappears in Gray's *Something Leather* (1990) in the form of sadomasochistic

⁶ Accession 9417, box I, notebook 4, dated 1950, National Library of Scotland.

practices. In this novella, it is not clear whether violence is a force of entrapment or liberation. As Alison Lumsden asserts, while sadomasochism in *Something Leather* is often presented as freeing, the female characters also encounter imposed social restrictions, which they have to then challenge (1993, 117). Therefore, this novella shares with Gray's previous works an interest in exploring the fine line between escapism and entrapment and a constant defiance of pre-established conventions.

Achieving freedom from the constraining bondages of morality, language, gender and totalitarian socio-political dynamics is a constant struggle in the mature Gray. Rather than easily and effectively escaping the monster like the Wise Mouse did, Gray's work since 1981 is often not as optimistic. For many characters, there are no guarantees that they will be completely free after having escaped the systems that imprison them. As such, the last lines of *Lanark* —“THE LAND LIES OVER ME NOW. I CANNOT MOVE. IT IS TIME TO GO”— suggest a simultaneous and paradoxical bodily state between immobility and flight. As Robert Crawford observes: “Such an escape which is also from another perspective an act of enclosure is typical of [Gray's] imagination as a whole” (1991, 6). Due to his maps being “out of date” (560), the dual character Thaw/Lanark remains static and, as Alison Lumsden asserts, even after his thematic liberation “there may be no way of escaping the large-scale economic and social structures which serve to entrap the individual” (1993, 121). In this vein, Gray's fiction portrays liberation from oppressive hierarchies as a difficult task that comes “after much pain” and is not necessarily a conclusive state (Lumsden 1993, 118).

The obstacles and shortcomings faced when trying to escape or improve the system are further acknowledged in *Poor Things*. The dual character Bella Baxter/Victoria McCandless liberates herself from Archibald McCandless' account of her story by dismissing his supernatural version and narrating it herself in “A Letter to Posterity” (1992a, 251-276). In this letter, she describes how she became an advocate for socialism and feminism, working to safeguard women's reproductive rights in her own clinic. Still in her state of liberation, Victoria writes to poet Hugh MacDiarmid expressing her enthusiasm as a first wave feminism activist about the Labour majority's achievement after the 1945 general election: “Britain is suddenly an exciting country (...) a worker's co-operative nation will be created from London, without an independent Scotland showing the way” (Gray 1992b, 316). In hindsight, this was Gray's belief throughout his teenage years as well. He was proud because, as he declares in the second edition of his pamphlet *Why Scots Should Rule Scotland*, “Britain had carried a socialist revolution”

(Gray 1997a, 95) that had improved British welfare during the 1950s and 1960s. Yet, it had never occurred to him that the Welfare State would be dismantled by Margaret Thatcher (Argüeso San Martín 2021, 63). However, by writing this novel from a 1990s chronotope in which he already knew that the project for a Labour Britain would dramatically fail, leading to a Conservative and anti-welfare government in the 1979 elections, Gray portrays Victoria McCandless' desire in *Poor Things* as dramatic irony rather than a prediction, a device that allows Gray to acknowledge the shortcomings of idealism and the difficulties of ensuring liberation as a finite state.

This idea—that liberation is not a finite state—is in line with Stephen Bernstein's analysis of Gray's last texts. According to Bernstein, Gray's optimism towards the human ability to effect meaningful socio-political change is gradually undermined in these works due to a "complex struggle" (2007, 172). Thus, in novels like *A History Maker* (1994) or the novella *Mavis Belfrage* (1996), the character's final destiny resembles resignation rather than qualified hope. In this vein, for Gray, the achievement of complete liberation from oppressive systems without a constant revision of their development and fluctuation is deemed a challenging task. As Gray declared to Douglas Gifford in the postscript to the 1997 edition of *Unlikely Stories, Mostly*: "neither side [is] simply right or wrong. Both are essential" (280). Indeed, according to Neil James Rhind, in Gray, freedom and entrapment are set against in a persistent battle where none is the final winner (2011, 109). Accordingly, for Gray, power dynamics and political systems are malleable and fluid rather than static, traversing diverse stages that heavily affect the humans within. When giving his opinion on democracy in his political pamphlets, Gray agrees with Thomas Carlyle's idea that a democratic system will need constant revisions and versions, or in Carlyle's words "quackocracies" until its finite utopian version can be achieved (Gray 1992b, 48). As Rhind puts it, the closest in Gray's fiction to a total escape is achieved when "the desire for individual freedom and the inescapability of systems of social organisation are reconciled through reconceiving such systems" (2011, 117). Therefore, in Gray's fiction and polemics power systems must undergo constant restructuring.

Through the representation of politically corrupt alternative realities and fictional compartments, Alasdair Gray produces canvases of socio-political critique that constitute "working models of the world they seek to condemn" (McIlvanney 2002, 200). He imagines new possibilities while simultaneously denouncing existing problems. His preoccupation with the corruption of hierarchies derives partly from his socialist defence of welfare services—schools, housing, hospitals—as basic rights to which everyone

should have equal access. In an interview with Mark Axelrod, he recognises that institutions “have been made by people for the good of the people,” but he is also concerned with the corruption of these institutions and so, in his literary work and personal politics, he denounces political neglect and oppression and explores potential solutions. In Gray’s own words: “when we see [institutions] working to increase dirt, poverty, pain and death, they have obviously gone wrong” (Axelrod 1995, n.p.). Gray’s denunciation of political corruption can be observed in the oppressive institutions in *Lanark*. One of them, the Institute, is an exploitative sanitary centre presented in Book Three that, while functioning like a hospital, in fact extracts energy and resources from the patients who cannot be cured (Miller 2005, 41). Educational institutions are also portrayed in Books I and II, like Thaw’s school and Glasgow Art School, as symbols of the “controlling nature of authority” (Crawford 1991, 2). These depictions convey the idea that the politics of oppression and imposition function across all human areas. Hence, Gray is not against education, creativity, democracy or any type of political institution, but against their elitist, selfish and tyrannical application.

Lanark’s fantastic and exploitative systems —the Institute, the Council and the Creature— seek to “expand themselves” (Donaldson and Lee 1995, 155) by destroying the environment, swallowing entire cities and feeding off unemployed, sick and miserable people. Gray’s preoccupation with power abuse, megalomania and the dangers of delusions of grandeur is also reflected in certain short stories, such as “The Start of the Axletree” (1983), which narrates the construction of a vertical Holy City that an Emperor has ordered to be built for eternity as a symbol of his power. In addition, “Five Letters from an Eastern Empire” (1983) constitutes, according to Gifford, a satirical and critical commentary on the phases of the misuse of power, “centralisation, privilege and snobbery” (1997, 285). By portraying the dynamics of human dependence and servitude throughout his work, Alasdair Gray condemns the manipulation and human exploitation enacted not only by centres of power, but also by other human beings. Corruption, violence, exploitation and marginalisation are human forms of power abuse that must be challenged. As Lanark hears in the corridors of the Institute: “Man is the pie that bakes and eats itself and the recipe is separation” (1981, 101). As a socialist humanist, Gray propounds a restructuring of power dynamics based on equality, honesty and collective solidarity.

3.2.2. A Socialist Humanist Conception of Subjecthood: against Individual Alienation

Socialist humanism is inscribed in Gray's portrayal of megalomania and extreme ambition as dangerous paths for the achievement of human individual and communal happiness. Focusing mostly on *Lanark*, the socialist humanism of his politics has been studied, among others, by Cairns Craig in *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination* (1999), by Gavin Miller in *Alasdair Gray and the Fiction of Communion* (2005) and by Georgia Walker Churchman in her article "(Scottish) Critic Fodder: On Why Alasdair Gray's *Lanark* Isn't a Nationalist or a Postmodernist Text, Mostly" (2019). According to Walker Churchman, the protagonist Duncan Thaw loses his mind when he employs art as an act of both personal and "aesthetic mastery" and also as a misanthropic movement of detachment from earthly relations and mundane pleasures (2019, 78). For Thaw, creativity justifies his abandonment of the social world and his self-assertion as an uncaring loner who does not need friends or love, functioning as a kind of egotistical "revenge against those who have wronged him" (Walker Churchman, 2019, 84). However, in this mental state, he is unable to finish his mural or to be intimate with women. Consequently, as Miller has observed, solipsism destroys both Thaw's art and social life (2005, 36). His self-centred ambitions of wanting to be exceptional and superior to other artists and to the teachers in the Art School become his own trap and hinder him from achieving his goals. He thus engages in a process of self-sabotage. By showing how a misanthropic, individualistic and omnipotent conception of creativity and subjecthood is ultimately destructive for humanity as an inherently social species, Gray suggests that their reconceptualisation as collective could be more positive.

Among the values proposed by Gray for the achievement of communal happiness, there is a rehashing of work as an activity that should benefit the individual by catering to the collective rather than being based on selfish and exploitative principles of "profit or personal mastery" (Walker Churchman 2019, 80). In fact, in *Lanark*, Thaw/Lanark reaches comfort, sanity and the possibility to socially engage with his surroundings thanks to his embracing of down-to-earth "notions of coherence, wholeness and unity" inspired by love for his son and his son's mother and his acceptance of the proximity of his own death, one of the most human and limiting realities (2019, 76). The relationship between honest and humble work and love also appears in other texts, like *A History Maker*, whose protagonist, Wat Dryhope, hopes to bring men and women closer together through

cooperative work: “the hard work of making an old-fashioned house together would teach us to depend on each other and love each other more than other men and women love each other nowadays” (Gray 1994, 53). In *Lanark*, Unthank’s dominating leader, Sludden, expresses that work has to be an activity through which “a man feels exalted and masterful” (Gray 1981, 5). Gray challenges this notion by envisioning work as a communitarian activity that would make people happier and societies more prosperous. As argued by Markéta Gregorová, “Gray’s work (...) neither champions individualism, nor does it celebrate anarchy, quite the contrary, it embraces humanistic ideals and envisions a cooperative society that would balance the demands of the community and the desires of the individual” (2015b, 49). Gray identifies the symbiotic relationship between the individual and the collective in his literary work and recognises that individual sanity is a prerequisite of communal happiness. As he tells American writer Kathy Acker in an interview: “before my man [Jock McLeish in *1982 Janine*] can be fair to others he must be fairer to himself” (qtd. in Moores 2002, 56).

For Gray, the sense of community and the dimension of the other should always be present to reduce participation in individualistic and exploitative power dynamics. As such, solidarity among the members of a community appears as a key element to ensure political cohesion and well-being. Thaw/*Lanark*’s failure at achieving individual mastery through art or politics in *Lanark* shows Gray’s commitment to communal solidarity and to the idea that, as Jock McLeish expresses at the end of *1982 Janine*, “history is what we all make, everywhere, each moment of our lives, whether we notice it or not” (1984, 340). This communal and equal understanding of the relationship between humans and power is present even in Gray’s vision of heaven as “the Scottish Cooperative Wholesale Republic where everyone lives by making and doing good things for each other” (qtd. in Rhind 2011, 118). Indeed, Gray’s conception of politics as collective is also evident in his use of plural bodies as democratic electors in his political essays. The right to demand, democratically and through the vote, fair and representative governments is exerted by the plural form used consistently in Gray’s pamphlets on political participation in Scotland and the UK: “we” (Gray and Tomkins 2005), “all people” (Gray and Tomkins 2005, 3), “Scots” (Gray 1992b) and “everyone is Scotland who is able to vote” (Gray 1997a, 1).

The following section will revise how the basic rights of the Scottish people, understood as a collective, are at the centre of Alasdair Gray’s nationalist, socialist and republican ideas. His political pamphlets are the main source I will draw from to better

define his agenda beyond the ideas reflected in his fiction. These pamphlets are imbricated in Gray's socio-political surroundings. In *Why Scots Should Rule Scotland* (1992 and 1997 editions), *How We Should Rule Ourselves* (2005), written with Adam Tomkins and *Independence. An Argument for Home Rule* (2014), Gray retells the history of Scotland and of Anglo-Scottish relations from his own perspective. The publication of the four pamphlets, very similar in content, each coincided with an electoral date in Britain. The first edition of *Why Scots Should Rule Scotland* was published before the general elections of 1992, which were won by Conservative candidate John Major and its second edition was published before the following general elections held in 1997 and won by Labour candidate Tony Blair. The third political pamphlet published by Gray, in this case written together with Adam Tomkins, was also published close to a general election, that of 2005 and Gray's last pamphlet *Independence. An Argument for Home Rule* was released before another crucial vote for Scotland, the 2014 referendum for Scottish Independence. These pamphlets' chronology of publication is not fortuitous; on the contrary, Gray deliberately narrates his own take on Scottish and Anglo-Scottish Union history with one goal in mind: persuading Scots to vote in these elections, for the republican, socialist and pro-Scottish Home Rule political option.

3.2.3. Gray's National and Local Politics

Alasdair Gray was born in Glasgow in 1934, five years before the start of the Second World War. His politics were heavily influenced by his family, his upbringing, as well as by the changes British politics underwent throughout the eighty-five years of his life. The same year he was born, the Scottish National Party was founded; however, until the 1970s, not yet convinced about the need for Home Rule, Gray supported several political options, especially Labour, but sometimes Liberal and even Tory, which had contributed to the establishment of the British welfare system. The politicians and welfare measures Gray celebrated are those that had a positive impact for the Glasgow working classes and were not solely represented by Labour or other left-wing parties. Indeed, one of the Second World War welfare policies that appears the most across Gray's non-fiction writings is the Butler Act of 1944, passed by Tory politician and Education Minister during the war, Rab Butler. This act allowed Gray's and later generations of working-

class children to pay for college and university educations through taxation (Gray 1997a, 98). Both his romantic vision of his own childhood and adolescence in the Glasgow housing scheme of Riddrie and his enjoyment of the government measures that improved his own living conditions during the Second World War explain why welfare is at the centre of Gray's politics.

As Rodge Glass, Gray's biographer, argues, his politics are deeply rooted in the happy memories of his surroundings during his youth. Comparing his depiction of Riddrie with that employed by Mora Gray, the author's sister, Glass observes that, while Mora's description is ordinary, Alasdair's reads as an idealised exaltation of Riddrie's socialist wonders, a "Gray Creation" on its own that omits, for instance, the fact that Barlinnie Prison, known at the time for its poor conditions, was built there (2008, 19-20). Moreover, Gray's description of the Second World War in Britain is also quite particular as none of the horrors associated with it affected him or his family closely. In an interview with Tom Toremans, Gray describes his childhood as "utopian," stating that thanks to the nationalisation of public services accomplished by the Churchill war ministry, a Tory-Labour coalition government running from 1940 to 1945, Britain had become a socialist democracy in the 1940s (2003, 575). In this vein, rather than retaining a sordid memory of the war, as many children his age would, the 1940s were formative years for Gray in which, as Glass states, he "proved things could and should be done to better society as a whole" (2008, 29). As Gray reveals in *Why Scots Should Rule Scotland 1997*: "In the fifties and sixties I took the future of British socialism for granted" (Gray 1997a, 98). Those were years in which the education grants introduced by the Butler Act remained and in which Gray still believed that the living conditions he had experienced as a child would be preserved if politicians had the will to make such policies permanent.

However, in the 1970s, Gray's faith that welfare could be guaranteed by traditional parties, Tory or Labour, diminished. Until then, as he explained to me when I interviewed him in 2019, he had found Scottish independence "an entertaining idea, not at all convincing, not at all necessary" (Argüeso San Martín 2021, 63). However, appalled at the policies of Thatcher's Conservative Party and disappointed with the right-wing turn of the Labour Party, Gray began considering Scottish nationalism and the achievement of independence a better alternative to restoring the Scottish welfare state: "Scotland Independent might become much more Labour, much more truly socialist (...). It might start recovering some of the socialist advantages that the British Tory government has abolished" (Argüeso San Martín 2021, 63). Indeed, the cornerstone of Gray's pro-

independence agenda is the achievement of a solidary socialist Scotland similar to his own memory of the political system of the 1940s and 1950s, where unemployment was scarce and “everybody had enough to nourish themselves” (Toremans 2003, 575).

The names of Gray’s political icons are scattered throughout his pamphlets. Apart from admiring Scottish socialist politicians like Keir Hardie, founder of the Independent Labour Party (1893) and member of the Scottish Home Rule Association, Gray finds inspiration in the pro-welfare and humanist ideas of American political theorist Thomas Paine, one of the first modern thinkers to develop the idea of a tax-funded welfare state (Gray 1997a, 61). He repeatedly alludes to the Fabian Society, whose members—one of them was Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw—believed that further legislation was key to ensure basic social rights for all (Gray 1997a, 82). These political affiliations are connected to Gray’s upbringing, his family and his local roots. Both his grandparents were Labour Party supporters, back when the Labour Party was focused on advocating for workers’ rights instead of being “a party for the wealthy and fashionable” (Gray 1997a, 82) and his mother’s father had been a trade unionist. The original Labour Party to which both Gray’s grandfathers belonged “was created by people who wanted Scottish self-government” (Gray 1997a, 83): trade unionists, Liberal Scottish nationalists and the Fabian Society (Gray and Tomkins 2005, 34). Indeed, Gray’s father had been a Fabian Socialist and a Communist (Gray 2014, 11) and his family “belonged to the skilled and semi-skilled working class” (Charlton 1991, 11).

Another idol of Gray’s was “Red Clydesider” (Gray 1997a, 90) and Labour Minister of Health John Wheatley, responsible for the passing of the Wheatley Acts, which authorised the construction of Riddrie. This North-Eastern Glasgow housing scheme and its public library were Gray’s own socialist paradise: he “expected the world to become a mosaic of Riddries, each with a strong local flavour” (Gray 1997a, 97), but all of them managed with a socialist agenda in mind. Gray’s ideas are closer to the advocacy for working-class rights and more distant from the ones advocated by Tony Blair’s New Labour, whose growing economic reliance on the private sector was described by Margaret Thatcher as “her greatest achievement” (Gray 2014, 75). Democracy and welfare are the two main pillars of Alasdair Gray’s politics. Home Rule, republicanism and state decentralisation are the tools through which Gray envisaged the achievement of a decent democratic socialist government for Scotland. His opposition towards the Union, rooted in what he perceived to be its neglect of the principles of

democracy and welfare, can be divided into two key periods: the Union of Parliaments of 1707 and Scottish politics since 1979.

The Union of Parliaments is, for Gray, the legal foundation on which Britain was constructed and thus, the root of the political issues he seeks to remedy through Scottish Independence. As Jessica Homberg-Schramm argues, narratives of how the Union of Parliaments was enacted change depending on the role and presence of nationalism in the historical and political context in which they are articulated (2018, 16). The terms of the agreement between the Scots and the English and whether the signing of the parliamentary union had been a consensual decision or, on the contrary, had involved a certain degree of coercion, remains an unresolved topic of discussion to this day. On the one hand, there are historical accounts that depict the signing of the act as a deliberate choice by Scotland, seeing both Scotland and England as equals in the treaty. For instance, in his 2006 publication *The Scots and the Union*, Scottish historian Christopher Whatley argues that the aim of his book is to explain why the Union was signed by Scottish commissioners with good intentions in mind and why some of the Scottish unionist politicians who signed it “can properly be considered as Patriots” and “were not altogether the rogues they have been portrayed as” (2006, xiv-xv). On the other hand, for other historians, the Anglo-Scottish parliamentary union started off as an unequal agreement that Scotland was forced to sign and thus stands as proof of England’s power over Scotland (2018, 30). Nationalist political activist Paul Henderson Scott, in his book *The Union of 1707: Why and How* (2006), reinforces this idea by asserting that, in the Union, England was profiting from “their centuries long objective of asserting control over Scotland, not by conquest but by intimidation and ingenious and diverse means of bribery” (2006, 7). Whereas Whatley contends that the Scottish MPs who agreed to the Union believed it would be a positive shift for Scottish politics, Scott argues that Scottish MPs were manipulated into joining the Union rather than consciously entering into it with optimism about its potential benefits. Whatley’s and Scott’s views on the Union could not be more different and yet they coexist.

While listing the various possible causes of the Union is not the chief aim of this section of my thesis, examining some of them is important to understand the implications that the dissolution of the Scottish parliament and its incorporation into an Anglo-Scottish state in Westminster has had for later claims to Scottish independence, such as the one Alasdair Gray conveys in his pamphlets. The different reasons that the English and the Scots had for joining have been studied by historians like T.M. Devine, who argues in

The Scottish Nation. A Modern History that it was mainly for security matters that the English proposed a Union of Parliaments (2012, 16). As for Scotland, one of the causes for the signing of the treaty often mentioned is the perception of the Union as the main solution to the severe crisis that affected the country in the 1690s (Whatley 2006, 139). The belief that Scotland's economic needs and vulnerability at the time had played a determining role in the Scottish parliamentarians' decision to sign the treaty inspired the idea that the Union of Parliaments had been a strategy of bribery. This argument is frequently linked to Robert Burns' words "we're bought and sold for English gold," included in the poem "Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation," written in 1791.⁷ This theory's significance is widespread in many accounts of the Union, especially in those with a Scottish pro-Home Rule agenda, in which manipulation and corruption are inherent to the treaty itself. According to Rosalind Mitchison, the two main concerns about the Union at the time of her writing in 2002 were if the agreement was reached through bribery and if it was a sensible decision (241). This interpretation shows to what extent the suitability of the Union to address Scottish political concerns has been questioned since its inauguration. Indeed, these two concerns are shared by Gray in his pamphlets. Within the myriad of interpretations of the Union, Gray's view is among those that see it as a mostly damaging political structure for Scotland, one which, through centralisation in Westminster, fostered a disregard of Scottish concerns.

In his pamphlets, Gray comments on the conditions of the treaty as well as on the impact that the Union of Parliaments had on Scottish society. Understanding how the Scottish parliament ceased to exist from 1707 to 1999, having been dissolved into Westminster, is essential, Gray asserts, to creating a healthier post-devolutionary Scottish parliament (2014, 46). He believed that although England and Scotland shared a parliament for almost three hundred years and despite the victory of the Scottish devolution referendum in 1997, traces of the joint parliament are still remarkably palpable both politically and culturally. In fact, Gray contextualised the times in which the Union was established as deeply undemocratic (1992b, 35). Regarding the conditions of the treaty, he argued Scots were cornered into signing it. The reasons he attributes to this are both economic and military and the first factor that, according to Gray, pressured the Scots into signing the treaty was the passing of the Alien Act (1705). This Act proposed a blockage in Scottish trade if Scotland decided to remain independent (Gray 1992b, 36).

⁷ The poem "Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation" is included in the collection *The Jacobite Relics of Scotland*, edited by James Hogg in 1819.

As T.M. Devine argues, although the Alien Act had to be revoked due to its massive unpopularity, it gave a clear message that the English were devising direct measures to appease the threat that Jacobitism, Catholicism, anti-Englishness and Scotland's good relations with France, England's political rival, posed to the stability of the Union of Crowns between England and Scotland (2016, 19). In two views of the Alien Act similar to Gray's, Devine offers the description of a "naked piece of economic blackmail," while Mitchison likens it to a quarrel within a marriage in which each partner strives to hurt each other, a "method of putting the screw on the Scottish Parliament" (2016, 19; 2002, 237). For Gray, the possibility that the Alien Act could have been re-enacted had Scotland tried to resist the dissolution of their parliament meant that the only chance of improvement for Scottish trade meant signing of parliamentary union.

The second factor, Gray argued, that risked Scotland's stability had they refused to sign the Union treaty was the danger of warfare. According to Gray, Scotland was menaced by the increasing military power of England, which "after defeating France" in the war, "could easily invade" Scotland and "rule them through an army, as Cromwell had done" (2005, 25). As evidence that the threat of war had been discussed during the Union negotiations, Henderson Scott mentions Scottish commissioner to the Union of Parliaments Sir John Clerk, who wrote in his book *Observations on the Present Circumstances of Scotland*, published in 1730, that it was the danger of an English invasion and the potential imposition of worse conditions that motivated the acceptance of the Union, not the consideration of the expansion of trade (2006, 16). Scott also quotes part of the speech delivered by Lord Keeper William Cooper on behalf of the English commissioners after the approval of the draft of the treaty, in which he specifically revealed that "bloodshed" and conflict between England and Scotland would have followed had Scotland not agreed to an incorporating Union (2006, 23). Gray believed that, due to these coercive factors, Scottish parliamentarians had had no other choice than to join the Anglo-Scottish united parliament and dissolve the autonomous Scottish parliament if they wanted to avoid further socioeconomic decline.

Another problematic aspect of the Union for Gray are the changes applied to the treaty of the Union after its approval. Although one of the articles of the Union contract was the promise to maintain the independence of the Scottish legal system, Gray argues that after signing the treaty, the Scottish legal system was overruled by the House of Lords on all but criminal matters (1992b, 37). The independent legal system is inherent to Scotland's distinct identity within Britain, therefore Gray's argument that, after the Union

of Parliaments, this system became increasingly Anglicised undergirds the anti-Union and pro-Home Rule political message of his pamphlets. However, historians like David McCrone, Michael Keating or T.M. Devine have argued that Scotland kept a fundamentally different legal system during the three-hundred years of joint parliament. McCrone contends that Scotland did retain “a remarkable degree of civil autonomy” after the Union (1992, 3) while Keating argues the Scottish legal system was left intact (2009, 35). In addition, Devine asserts the most influential political decisions continued to be made in Scotland itself (2016, 39). Notwithstanding this evidence, Gray’s pro-Home Rule stance strategically portrays the Union as an extremely homogenising system, constructed on corrupt and untrustworthy foundations, to emphasise the urgent need for Scotland to leave it.

Gray also condemns the alteration of the articles that were included in the Union treaty as prerequisites for the agreement of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. In 1712, the Westminster parliament approved two measures affecting the Church, namely, the Patronage Act and the Toleration Act, which were perceived by the Presbyterian Church of Scotland as an inadmissible breaching of the Union (Devine 2016, 30). The Toleration Act opened freedom of worship to Episcopalians in Scotland if they included the king in their prayers. The second measure, the Patronage Act, restored the right for landlords instead of members of local church congregations to appoint parish ministers. According to Michael Lynch, the Patronage Act was the most disappointing of the 1712 amendments for the Church of Scotland, as it reversed the abolition of patronage achieved in 1690 (1992, 144). For Gray, both breaches of the treaty in legal and religious matters meant that the articles of the treaty were not fixed; instead, they could be changed in ways that were disadvantageous for Scotland (Gray 1997a, 46). This showed Westminster’s feeble compromise with the Union’s original articles and, as a result, in Gray’s view, their lack of commitment to the protection of Scotland.

Another huge fault that Gray attributed to the Union was the introduction of a new and unfavourable taxation system. Both the implementation of home salt and malt taxation in Scotland in 1713 and the replacement of low taxes and lax methods of revenue collecting with a more rigorous taxing regime were met with popular outrage and even official consideration by Scottish aristocrats that the Union should be dissolved (Devine 2016, 33). Gray argues that not only were new taxes introduced but also the Scots were taxed to replace the money that had been given to them as one of the rewards for the signing the treaty. According to Henderson Scott, this sum of money, £398,085 and 10

shillings to be precise, was not enough to cover everything it had been meant to compensate for, including the Scottish losses in the Darien Scheme colonial expedition, as well as other sources of debt and new expenses related to the adjustment to the Union (2006, 23). Moreover, this amount, which is referred to by historians as “the Equivalent” or “equivalents,” was, as Henderson Scott argues, closer to a loan than to a reward, as it had to be repaid through high duties on wine, beers and spirits (2006, 23). As such, adding the return of that economic compensation to the money spent on the new taxes, it is clear how burdensome the economics of the Union proved to be. Gray argues that the burden was heavier in Scotland since the new taxation system “deliberately helped the English economy and depressed the Scottish” (1992b, 37). This description of Union politics follows Gray’s idea of Britain as an Anglo-centric political enforcer and Scotland’s position as a victim. By focusing specifically on which points of the treaty were violated, Gray manifests his vision of Anglo-Scottish political relations as rooted in distrust and manipulation and therefore unacceptable according to his democratic and humanist values that defend political transparency and accountability.

A final but key feature of the Union Gray criticises, which also permeates other anti-Union discourses, is the small number of Scottish Commons and Lords that entered the Westminster parliament after 1707. At the House of Commons, the Scots had “a ratio of 45 to 513” (Gray 1997a, 44), only two more than Cornwall’s forty-three MPs, which was not representative of its total population. Indeed, Article XXII, the one in the Union treaty that determined the number of Scottish Lords and Commons to be included in the Westminster parliament, was one of the most controversial articles of the treaty and remained so after it was passed. As Jeffrey Stephen describes it, England’s first proposal was thirty-eight members in the House of Commons (2007, 29). To this, Scots asked for a more equal representation that would redistribute the new parliament seats in a proportionate manner equivalent to the population of both nations. Regardless, the English refused Scotland’s petition of redistribution and offered instead forty-five Scottish seats in the House of Commons and sixteen in the House of Lords (Stephen 2007, 29).

For Gray, the structural inequality between Scottish and English MPs in Westminster was an obstacle to the achievement of Scottish political interests (2014, 12). Before the successful devolution referendum, in the 1997 version of *Why Scots Should Rule Scotland*, Gray argued the marginality of Scots within the Union was due to a state of political dependence and irrelevance according to which “most Scottish opinion has

no influence on how Scots are ruled” (1997a, x). The diagnosis of the difference in MP numbers as the root cause of the inability for some Scots to materialise their demands in government was a widespread pro-Home Rule argument in Scotland in the 1980s and 1990s. According to Murray Pittock, it was after the elections of 1983, in which Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was re-elected for a second legislature, that Scottish Labour politicians started to use the phrase “democratic deficit” to describe this issue (2008, 66). This feeling of political irrelevance and powerlessness was shared among Scottish Labour, SNP and other Scottish politicians, who in the 1980s argued that the Conservative administration that held office in Westminster could not be overturned since Scottish votes were in the minority.

Not only was further institutional assimilation a problematic result of the 1707 Union of Parliaments for Gray, but also the centralisation of the government, which rendered the task of remotely managing Scotland from London a challenging one, which often left Scotland unattended. The political isolation caused by the Union turned Scottish MPs in Westminster, according to Gray, into “the most insulated Scots of all” (1992b, 58). In order to describe his own vision of this situation, Gray employs the woman-as-nation trope to describe Scotland as a female whose “limbs and organs are underfed, numb and disconnected from each other” (Gray 1992b, 59). The head of his Scotland-as-female figure is Westminster, which acts like “a remote head which is distinctly absent-minded toward them because it must first direct a far more urgent set of limbs and organs” (1992b, 59). Here Gray personifies Scotland as female and portrays her as a victim of political disregard. As Kirsten Stirling argues, while the woman-as-nation trope tends to represent female purity and perfection, in the Scottish context, due to Scotland’s contested status as nation, particularly problematic before the devolution of parliament approved in 1997, this symbol is deformed, appearing as a victim or as monstrous (2008, 13-4). Indeed, Gray’s use of this symbol points towards his nation’s colonial status. Dependent as Scotland is on England, in Gray’s view, when represented as a woman, the perfection of the uncontested nation is replaced by a lacking Scotland, weakened by the domination of central England. Indeed, as Rosalind Mitchison points out, it has been usual to think of the Union as a merger of the Scottish Parliament into the English, rather than a dissolution of both parliaments in a joint Westminster (2002, 238). Thus, as Gray sees it, the consequence of Westminster’s parliamentary structure, as well as its remote centralisation, meant a further marginalisation of Scotland.

Gray's conceptualisation of Scottishness combines civic nationalism with a postcolonial framing of the Union as Anglo-Centric and of Scotland as peripheral. As Gray posits, his use of Scots in the title of his pamphlets excludes anyone who, despite feeling Scottish, votes "in England, America or Hong Kong," while his intended audience includes people who despite feeling English live and work in Scotland and also those who, although living elsewhere most of the year, keep properties and are registered to vote in Scotland, like "great landowners" or "the seventy-one Scottish members of Parliament" (1992b, 5). As Krzysztof Jaskułowski describes it, in civic nationalism, residence is a much more important criterion of national belonging than birth (2010, 293). Yet Gray's perspectives on nationalism extended beyond questions of citizenship and residency into the realm of imperialism and, more specifically, the power imbalance inherent to Anglo-Scottish relations. As McCrone views it, the definition of Scotland as poorer than England, dependent in the manner of a British colony, derived from the analyses offered by authors such as Michael Hechter (1975), Tom Nairn (1977; 2000), Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull (1989) or Robert Crawford (2000). This interpretation resonated with pro-Home Rule political discourses such as Gray's, which became, starting in the 1970s, a nationalist-by-default explanation of Scotland's problems: "To the question, 'What is wrong with Scotland?' came the chorus, 'Scotland is dependent'" (1992, 55).

Gray points directly to the centrality of the English nation out of the four British nations by denominating the British Empire, the "English Empire" (1997a,73). This renaming derives from the idea that, despite having supposedly equal membership within the Empire, Wales, Ireland and Scotland followed the leadership, political model and speech of England's governing class (1997a, 73). Moreover, in a further diagnosis of English hegemony, Gray calls the British Class System "the English Class System" because "Scots who thrived by it had been to Oxford and Cambridge" (1997a, 82). According to these two ideas, the English occupy a superior role, representing the imitation model and the norm to follow within the Union. In his explanation of the Union's tendency towards "Anglo-Centralising," taking an illustrative example in the reform of Scottish criminal procedure during Alex Salmond's government following the English standards, Gray acknowledges the underlying colonial aspects of this dynamic. As he describes it, the feeling that the Scots need to imitate the English stems from a colonial attitude towards London shared by many Scots in Westminster, which "assumes that what the richest English do is best" (2014, 127). In fighting for Home Rule, Gray

aims to overthrow the tendency to place the English politically and culturally at the top and aspires to replace this hierarchy with a balanced and more equal alternative.

According to Gray, Scottish marginalisation within the Union was also palpable culturally. In the first edition of *Why Scots Should Rule Scotland*, he claims British history books relegate sub-national identities such as Scottish and Welsh to “isolated chapters or paragraphs which fit into the book like ghettos into a big city” (1992b, 43). Moreover, Gray also acknowledges and resists the linguistic imposition of a Southern upper-class English model throughout the whole of the Union. He argues that, through the cooperation of the Scottish middle classes in Scotland’s “Anglo-Centralising,” by 1997, the voices of the Scottish governing class sounded like those of the English (1997a, 56). In this vein, for Gray, “Anglo-Centralising” is a social phenomenon within which both nationality and class operate. The voices and accents of Westminster parliamentarians, Scottish and English, are defined by Gray as “dominating,” giving those in Britain who are governed by them “the sensation of living under foreign occupation” (1997a, 56). By suggesting that many English people may also feel occupied by Westminster MPs, Gray identifies class-rooted domination patterns that place the Anglo-Scottish upper classes, including but not limited to Westminster politicians, City of London bankers or Oxbridge professors, as dominant and the rest of the British population as dominated. These intersect with the nation-based colonial framework in which England is central and Scotland peripheral.

These ideas are reflected in Gray’s fiction. For instance, in the short story “You,” published in the collection *Ten Tales Tall & True* (1993), Gray reproduces this stereotypical dichotomy in the two main characters: an authoritative and arrogant English businessman and a Scottish working-class poor woman. In his analysis of “You,” Len Platt describes the English character in the short story as “an ethnic stereotype like other representations of English identities in Gray’s fiction, of brutality, materialism and self-obsession that slips into race discourse too easily” (2015, 178-9). Gray’s linkage between Englishness, but especially the power centres of Westminster, London and Oxbridge and the neoliberal and elitist agenda he is averse to as a social humanist is also observed by critic Marshall Walker in his analysis of Gray’s literary work. As Walker points out: “Among the exploiters, the duplicitous banking nations, the eastern communists, the Ozenfants and Mad Hislops, the English are the supreme élite in Gray’s warrantably paranoiac Scottish opinion” (1991, 39). Still, elitism can be found, according to Gray, beyond those with an English nationality and among those, English or Scottish, who

belong to the British ruling class elite. As such, it seems Gray employs “Anglo-Centralising” and “Englishness” as umbrella terms that describe the ideas of neoliberalism, imperialism, elitism and militarism he attributes to the leading institutions of the Union, mostly located in South-East England, rather than referring solely to a specific English nationality.

The linkage between “Anglo-Centralising” and neoliberalism became especially troublesome for Gray starting in 1979. This was the year when the failure of the first devolution referendum was followed by Margaret Thatcher’s victory as Britain’s new Prime Minister. Gray describes Thatcher’s economic agenda as a strategy of general privatisation of state industries and services. He specifically mentions this period in his novel *1982 Janine*: “Then came cuts in public spending, loss of business and increased unemployment” (1984, 66). Indeed, the economic policies of both Margaret Thatcher and John Major stand out for their emphasis on state centralisation, market deregulation and various methods of privatisation such as the limitations to the public body of civil servants by hiring private external agencies instead (Brown, McCrone and Paterson 1998, 111). Moreover, Gray agreed that, as T.M. Devine argues, Scotland was more vulnerable to Thatcherism than many parts of England (2012, 592). Both an ideological and structural rejection of Britain’s growing conservative principles since 1979 resulted in Gray’s consideration of Scottish Home Rule as the only option to politically regain welfare and a direct democracy closer to its citizens. In his pamphlets and interviews, Gray mentions particular state cuts that aroused his disenchantment with the Union.

Education is one of the pillars of welfare about which Gray was most concerned. As a young student, he profited from the grants provided by the Butler Act of 1944, which, as he argued, made it affordable for most working-class people of his and younger generations to study (Gray 1997a, 98). Equal to his praise of these grants is the sadness and anger he expresses at their undoing by Margaret Thatcher’s government. In the terrain of education, Thatcher applied a philosophy of cost-efficiency, because, in her opinion, in the British education system of the 1960s “too much money was spent to achieve too little” (Evans 2018, 75). This response has to do with the fact that since 1965 comprehensive schools with a more inclusive approach than classifying students on the basis of academic proficiency were introduced in Scotland. Comprehensive schooling thrived in Scotland more than in England, where, by 1974, less than 50 per cent of the population attended comprehensive schools compared to 98 per cent of the Scottish population (Devine 2012, 580). The agenda of inclusion, diversity and personal

development rooted in comprehensive education institutions was contrary to Thatcher's belief in a competitive education system that brought success to Britain by devising measurable examinations and attainment levels (Evans 2018, 75-6). Gray describes this phenomenon as a classist separation between first-rate and second-rate schools (2014, 79). In addition, Thatcher's decision to promote a "consumer" choice system in which families could choose the schooling of their children based on preference (Evans 2018, 76) increasingly hampered equal opportunities of access. For Gray, these individualistic policies made British society since the 1980s less cooperative and more competitive.

Healthcare is another welfare element whose limitations, enforced by Thatcher's government, are criticised in Gray's pamphlets. In *Independence. An Argument for Home Rule*, Gray denounces Thatcher's cuts to state-run psychiatric hospitals and the consequent early discharge of patients still in need of medical treatment (2014, 112). Shortening the length of patients' stays in public hospitals, which Gray specifically condemns, as well as a reinforcement of private sector care through financial incentives were some of the measures imposed by Thatcher's government (Evans 2018, 71). The promotion of private over public options resulted in an unequal treatment of patients, relegating many who could not afford private healthcare to precarious and often insufficient medical coverage (2018, 74). Concerning healthcare, Alex Scott-Samuel et al. contend that Thatcher's aggressive anti-welfare policies contributed to Britain becoming "a less healthy and more unequal place than it might otherwise have been" with post-industrial areas like Scotland suffering the consequences especially (2014, 66). Thatcherism's extreme individualism and its appreciation of concentrated profit above universal care was in ideological opposition to Gray's socialist humanism. Gray believed that Thatcher's policies inaugurated a widening of Britain's social inequalities and a growing classist and business-driven culture, which promoted policies on the basis of economic profit rather than well-being.

For Gray, the reduction of welfare services beginning in 1979 was also connected to the centralist political agenda of Thatcherism, which viewed the autonomy of local governments and of the civil service sector as a nuisance to democracy within Westminster (Evans 2018, 57). As Devine argues, by centralising most political bodies and functions in Westminster, it seemed Thatcher disregarded the idea of the Union as a partnership on equal terms between England and Scotland, prompting the suspicion among Scots that Thatcherism equalled anti-Scottishness (2012, 605-6). In Gray's own vision of welfare, shaped by what he experienced as a child in the Glasgow housing

scheme of Riddrie as well as by his family's working-class background, it was thanks to the power of its local government that Glasgow achieved good welfare services in the 1950s and 1960s. Consequently, Thatcher's curtailing of the functions of trade unions and local councils through centralisation is, for him, in direct contradiction with the quality of Scottish welfare (Gray 2014, 116). Moreover, centralisation led to the marginalisation of civil servants and to a growingly disengaged Westminster, less in touch with local politics and with citizens' demands (Evans 2018, 161-2). This outcome clashes with Gray's belief that politics are more efficient the closer they are to the people they represent.

The incursion of New Labour into the British political scenario since their victory in the 1997 general elections further motivated Gray's desire for Scottish independence. Unlike in other Scottish nationalist interpretations of the devolutionary period, in which Margaret Thatcher is presented as the main villain, Gray lashes out at the 1980s Labour party as well as Tony Blair's New Labour of the 1990s, grouping them all under an increasingly neoliberal capitalist tendency (2005, 35-6). For Gray, New Labour meant the corruption of what he deemed to be original Labour values, namely direct democracy, economic equality, universal access to welfare as well as Scottish self-government (1997a, 80, 83; 2014, 65). According to Geoffrey Foote, when it was founded in 1900, the Labour Party was a mixture of trade unions, socialist groups, working-class advocates and other radicals, among which "the Marxists of the Social Democratic Federation (SDF), the gradualists of the Fabian Society and the Ethical Socialists of the Independent Labour Party (ILP)" stand out (1997, 18). What joined these diverse groups under labourism—and a trait that the Labour Party has maintained since its foundation—is a commitment to trade union politics and working-class demands, such as higher wages, shorter working hours and better conditions (Foote 1997, 6-7). Moreover, Michael Keating and David Bleiman argue in *Labour and Scottish Nationalism* that support to Scottish Home Rule was indeed, as Alasdair Gray notes, a traditional demand by Labour, especially of its Scottish and leftist branch, represented by the 1888 Scottish Labour Party and the 1895 Independent Labour Party, both founded by Scottish politician Keir Hardie, one of Gray's political icons (1979, 52).

While sociologists like Raymond Plant, Matt Beech and Kevin Hickson (2004) and Stephen Meredith (2005) believe a right-wing faction had always existed within Labour, it is the socialism derived from the Fabians and Ethical Socialists that established the party that Gray supports, perceiving New Labour as a departure from inherently

Labour socialist values. In both his 1997 and 2014 pamphlets, Gray shares his perception of New Labour as followers of the capitalist policies of the neoliberal right-wing, which bowed to the demands of “the banks and London Stock Exchange” (Gray 2014, 78). Gray argues that, rather than catering to workers, New Labour followed Thatcher’s and Major’s steps by pandering to the banking sector and those with great fortunes. As Mark Bevir states, in their rebranding as New Labour, the party eliminated state ownership and a collectivist welfare state from their agenda, replacing these structures with public-private partnerships and supply-side policies designed to increase the competitiveness and efficiency of the free market (2005, 1). From a socialist perspective like Gray’s, this stance towards welfare was too individualistic and competitive, as it ignored systemic inequalities on the basis of class, which ultimately rendered social mobility more difficult for the working class.

Apart from condemning New Labour’s economic privatisation, Gray criticises how basic welfare elements, such as education and a minimum wage for workers, were further transformed by the conservative principles espoused by Tony Blair’s Labour government. In January 1997, Gray argued that Blair’s government was both denying “a legal minimum wage to British workers” and introducing an education reform that proposed old didactic methods based on obedience and authority (Gray 1997a, 67, 74). Indeed, welfare was reformed under Blair and taxation remained as low as in the Conservative period. High taxation had been a reason for Labour unpopularity since the 1970s, so New Labour maintained low taxes to increase their possibilities to stay in power in Westminster (Powell 1999, 6). Moreover, the promotion of warfare, which Gray, as a pacifist, radically opposed, was a fundamental aspect of Tony Blair’s government. Blair sent British troops to fight alongside Americans in Kosovo (1999), Sierra Leone (2000), Iraq (1998, 2003) and Afghanistan (2001).⁸ Although the hawkish nature of Blair’s government was a disappointment for pacifist Gray, it was the further deterioration of the welfare state what was central in his opposition to New Labour. Gray had rejected Conservatism since 1979 and Labour since 1997 for the same reason: their dismantlement of the welfare state. It is these policies that he equated with the Union, with Westminster and with the phenomenon of “Anglo-Centralising,” explained above. Consequently,

⁸ Specific information on the circumstances on which Tony Blair decided to enter these wars can be found in Alastair Campbell and Richard Scott’s *The Blair Years. Extracts from the Alastair Campbell Diaries* (2007).

independence was the only option Gray believed feasible for returning and improving the socialist utopia he idealistically dreamt of.

For Gray, Home Rule went beyond parliamentary devolution and the final goal for him was independence. He viewed achieving further independence for Scotland as a matter of utmost necessity that would, despite not being the definite solution to the nation's marginalisation, offer hope for the future and be "a centre of resistance" (Gray 2014, 81) against the imperialist and neoliberal model of the City of London, Oxbridge or Westminster. Gray's ideal Scotland would be an independent small socialist republic whose government would be "not much richer than the People" (1992b, 63). As he contends in a reflection against political tyranny: "Very big nations become very big bullies" (Argüeso San Martín 2021, 64). Its small size would, according to Gray, limit the amount of riches Scotland could amass, making the establishment and preservation of a solidary socialist co-operative democracy easier. Accordingly, it would be possible to ensure a system of common product ownership and distribution, one in which the wealth of Scotland would reside in the goods of the land rather than in the millions accumulated by a few (1997a, 110). The inhabitants of this Scottish socialist micro-unit would live in kind and honest communion by "making and growing and doing things for each other" (1992b, 64). In order to achieve this sort of government, the British monarchy would have to be abolished and a representative monarchy transformed into a more accountable direct non-partisan democracy (Gray and Tomkins 2005, 48). Considering Gray's political referents, these ideas share similarities with the agenda of the Ethical Socialists who participated in the formation of the Labour Party. In fact, Gray argued that he took his belief that "small self-governing nations were as essential to democracy as socialism" (Gray 1997a, 80) from the agenda of Independent Labour Party founder Keir Hardie.

Gray identified precedents such as the Declaration of Arbroath in 1320, the American Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the French Revolution in 1789 (Gray 1997a, 59) as proof that emancipation can be accomplished by the people. Considering Scotland's demographic characteristics, namely its population being similar to that of Denmark and Finland (Gray 1997a, 108), Gray imagined his model of a Scottish independent socialist republic as an imitation of the basic welfare system of Scandinavian countries.

An optimistic believer in the ability of people to effect political change — "Nothing is forever in politics. Government is shaped —and can be re-shaped— by its people" (Gray and Tomkins 2005, 56)— Gray kept voting throughout his life to achieve

a more representative and socialist democracy. In fact, in the 2010 general elections, he voted for the Liberal Democrats because, as he explained, “my wife and I thought that if all Scottish nationalists, like us, backed the Liberal Democrats we might be able to push the Labour incumbent out of power” (Horne 2010, n.p). In 2019, however, he voted Labour, because he distrusted the current state of the Scottish National Party, who were “imitating the English Tory government” (Argüeso San Martín 2021, 63) and were “not taking (...) a properly independent line” (Jenkins 2019, n.p.) from Westminster. Among his reasons for voting Labour in 2019 Labour, Gray’s rejection of Toryism and his fear of the loss of Scottish difference due to “Anglo-Centralising” policies remained central. Moreover, as a socialist, Gray always insisted that the governments’ budget should be used to ensure basic human rights instead of being spent on nuclear defences, warfare or invested to further enrich the wealthy. Indeed, Gray’s anti-militarism, along with his critique of social control through surveillance, is another pillar of his politics that is heavily present in his last pamphlet. In 2014, he addressed the growing helplessness of people against the law and the police in light of the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010 (Gray 2014, 110), which was passed by Alex Salmond’s independent Scottish parliament in 2010. According to Gray’s interpretation, this Act places those accused of any crime in a state of total vulnerability, as reports could be made without disclosure of the accuser’s identity.

Gray’s commitment to local politics also persisted until the end. In a gesture of socialist humanism, as well as of political nostalgia, Gray’s Yes vote for independence in the 2014 referendum was especially committed to a “return of power to localities” (Gray 2014, 116), as a manner to ensure a solid welfare system in which power is collectively shared. Gray’s insistence on the idea that Scotland’s culture could be revitalised only if its artistic and cultural institutions were managed with profound respect and deep knowledge of the culture being promoted—in other words, for the sake of art instead of for the sake of economic profit—relates to his artistic and political commitment to Glasgow and its local culture (2014, 126). Although Gray has claimed that the Glasgow locality of some of his literary work does not have a specific political intention and was merely chosen because it was his home—“Glasgow [is] as unimportant to [him] as St. Petersburg was to Dostoyevsky” (Argüeso San Martín 2021, 62)—in his endeavours to resist cultural marginalisation, the author contributed greatly to Glasgow’s cultural legacy. For instance, Robert Crawford considers *Lanark* to be “one of the major works which have turned Glasgow into a locus of the imagination” (1991, 7). This resistance

also materialised in his political participation in the local working-class group Workers City. Gray joined this group, together with James Kelman and other writers and intellectuals, to offer a faithful portrayal of Glasgow's history, one which included its working-class past and present, in the Glasgow European City of Culture 1990 events. Gray and the Workers City Group intended to challenge the biased and negative vision of Glasgow's past as a shamefully radical city whose "gang violence and radical Socialism (...) should be forgotten" (Gray 2012, 106). These two Glasgow archetypes, gang violence and radical socialism, are used by Gray to indicate the institutional disregard for Glaswegian culture, which has been subject to parochial and sensationalist stereotyping.

Gray was engaged with Glasgow both politically and artistically since his youth. In 1977, he worked as an "Artist Recorder" for Glasgow's People's Palace, an institution at Glasgow Green devoted to the exhibition of Glasgow's working-class history. In his job as the city's "Artist Recorder," Gray "painted more than thirty portraits of contemporary Glaswegians in surroundings of their choice and streetscapes of the city's east end as it was being redeveloped" (Charlton 1991, 16). According to Cordelia Oliver, Gray's portraits presented ordinary Glaswegian scenes and lives "well known and unknown, but always within the domestic or working habitat" (1991, 33). His contribution to the city's visual representation underscores his concern for the preservation of Glasgow's local and working-class culture and foregrounds his fear that not enough attention was being paid to it by the authorities. Apart from capturing Glasgow visually as an "Artist Recorder" in order to celebrate the city's urban spaces and its denizens, Gray integrated his own art into the city. The murals Gray painted as a freelance artist enriched Glasgow's urbanity and became an iconic hallmark of the city, especially of the West End area. His murals can be seen in Greenhead Church, the Ubiquitous Chip restaurant off Byres Road and Scotland-USSR Society in Belmont Crescent, as well as in Hillhead Subway station and the stained-glass dome of the Oràn Mor restaurant, also off Byres Road. With attention to the author's concerns with the workings of authority, the next section discusses the gender dynamics present in Alasdair Gray's fiction.

3.2.4. Gender Dynamics in Alasdair Gray's Fiction

As previously identified in the analysis of Alasdair Gray's politics, his novels and some of his short stories often narrate the characters' efforts to accommodate or exit a complex mesh of interlocked systems, which both enclose and condition those trapped within. In ways similar to religion, education or morality, gender is revealed as another hierarchy that demarcates the subjecthood of Gray's characters. The description of *1982 Janine* as a novel "about the problem of achieving a coherent self in the contemporary world" (Walker 1991, 42) can be applied to the whole of Gray's oeuvre. His characters struggle to reconcile the schism between their own multiple uncertain identities and their expected and shifting gender standards, thus turning into troubled and schizophrenic beings caught between psychological fragmentation and a desired stability. In this section, I will examine how Gray explores and problematises patriarchal constructs in three gendered aspects of his work. This PhD thesis examines the articulation of masculine working-class solidarities in the spaces portrayed by Alasdair Gray and James Kelman. Consequently, the first aspect I will revise is how Gray reflects on the intersection between men and the patriarchal hierarchies of masculinity in his novels *Lanark* and *1982, Janine*. The second aspect I will consider is the key and controversial role that pornography and the use of sexual fantasies as socio-political and personal metaphors plays in Gray's work. Finally, I will focus on Gray's use of the intersection between gender and nation in two of his novels, *1982, Janine* and *Poor Things*.

3.2.4.1. Problematising Masculinities

Since the surge of gender studies in the 1970s, theories on masculinity as a gendered and embodied complex social process have become an area of interest in both the humanities and social sciences. According to Máirtín Mac An Ghail, in earlier studies on gender dynamics, masculinity was defined as a homogenous concept and equated with patriarchy as the root cause of women's oppression (1996, 1). The contradictions between this limited and monolithic model and the plurality of masculinities present in the world led to the development of men's studies which, from a gender perspective, examined masculinities as a multiple, shifting and context-dependent concept. Henry Brod and Michael Kaufman's *Theorizing Masculinities* (1994), R.W. Connell's *Masculinities*

(1995), Máirtín Mac An Ghail's *Understanding Masculinities* (1996) are just three examples among the many pioneering studies that challenge essentialist conceptualisations of masculinity. In *Masculinities*, Connell coined the concept "hegemonic masculinity" to define the basic template of masculinity operating within a dynamic and relational gender system (1987, 183). Within this gender system, the configuration of hegemonic masculinity is dependent on the gender identity of subordinated non-hegemonic masculinities —such as homosexual men (Kimmel 1994; Connell 2005), working-class men (Jackson 2001; Ward 2014), transgender men (Halberstam 1998; Eking and King 2005) or racialised men (Marriott 2000; Mac An Ghail and Haywood 2016)— and femininities. In addition, apart from being conditioned by the interrelations of the gender system in which they are situated, masculinities are determined by their historicity as well as by class, geographical and factors specific to the individual (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 845).

Although masculinities are plural and subject to a dynamic system of gender relations, the literary portrayal of Scottish masculinities has followed particular tendencies rooted on the cultural configuration of Scottishness. Regarding Scotland's national and class construction as inferior to a hegemonic England, the twentieth-century literary Scottish male appears as a paradoxical figure. His halfway position between cultural inferiority and male hegemony within the patriarchal order leads, according to Berthold Schoene, to a precarious gender identity rooted in the constant reassertion of "the integrity of a self that finds itself continuously embattled and destabilised by its own irrepressible alterity" (2002, 94). Hence, following his contested colonial status as well as his working-class personification in the British cultural imagery, the Scottish male stands, employing R.W. Connell's typologies and relational theory of masculinities, in a subordinate position towards hegemonic England (2005, 78). He is inferior in comparison to his English counterparts due to class and national factors, while remaining, as a male, at the top of the patriarchal gender order. As Schoene explains it:

Scottish masculinity represents a case of highly ambivalent cross-interpellation. It occupies no fixed position of indisputable social hegemony but is caught up in continuous oscillation between the diametrically opposed sites of (post)colonial marginality on the one hand and patriarchal dominance on the other. This simultaneous inferiority and superiority make an uneasy blend, highlighting Scottish men's complicity with a system of oppression (that of patriarchy) while, at the same time, necessitating their commitment

to counter discursive resistance (against English domination and remote control). (2002, 94)

According to Schoene's interpretation, failing both to ignore and to embrace his marginality within the masculine hegemonic standard, the Scottish male expresses an unstable and particularly fragile masculinity. Carole Jones has pointed out that, during the devolutionary period, the literary portrayal of masculinities became an exaggeration of this subordinate and weak position. Considering that Scottish masculinities and especially Glasgow ones, are deeply linked to a working-class masculinity, the uncertain scenario of industrial conversion and economic crisis that Scotland experienced starting in the 1970s resulted in, as Jones diagnoses it, a disorienting and more feeble identification with male gender expectations (2009a, 17). In this vein, national, local and class dimensions are crucial to understanding Alasdair Gray's portrayal of gender dynamics.

Alasdair Gray's first novels *Lanark* and *1982, Janine* share male protagonists with a troubled gender identity, characterised by neuroticism and a low self-esteem. In *Lanark*, the main character of Books One and Two, Duncan Thaw, is depressed and dissatisfied by his environment and life prospect as he feels censored by the conventions of post-war Glasgow. His disenchanting vision of the world —he defines history as “an infinitely diseased worm, without head or tail, beginning or end” (Gray 1981, 160)— is accentuated by his poor health, which in turn mirrors the bleakness of his surroundings. Thaw's eczema and asthma appear as psychosomatic symptoms replicating his desperate view of what he believes to be a creatively stifling and hellish Glasgow. As a result, he becomes “monstrous,” both physically and mentally and commits suicide at the end of Book Two (Craig 1991, 93). Shifting away from centrality, Thaw embodies, according to Christopher Whyte, a “terminal form of masculinity” (1998, 279). Indeed, his psychological delusions and self-destructive behaviour could be interpreted as a metaphorical sign of where his identity as a man stands. In Books Three and Four, Duncan Thaw reappears in Glasgow's supernatural version, Unthank, as his alter-ego Lanark. The social self-isolation and deadening worldview that led to Thaw's suicide at the end of Book Two are metaphorically mirrored by Lanark's dragonhide, a fictional disease that hardens his skin and turns it dragon-like in Books Three and Four. This armour symbolises Thaw and Lanark's emotional repression and their misanthropic refusal to engage in society.

Similarly, in 1982, *Janine*, the main character, Jock McLeish, is disturbed by the contradictions between his repressed self and his learnt gender expectations as a man. Throughout the novel and by means of a stream-of-consciousness narration, McLeish describes his experiences as an alcoholic, attempts suicide and performs sadomasochistic torture upon imaginary women with the names of Janine, Superb, Big Momma and Helga. These dynamics of self-destruction and domination are framed within the novel as consequences of McLeish's identity crisis. By portraying two male characters who show self-doubting identity in his first two novels, Gray problematises male identifications with the patriarchal configuration of masculinity as a construct characterised by self-confidence, virility and force. As Arthur Flannigan-Saint-Aubin contends, traditional patriarchal masculinity is moulded upon its metaphorical connections to phallic genitalia—aggressive, violent, penetrating, goal-directed—and in total opposition against the feminine (1994, 239-1). Reflecting on the strain of adapting to this rigid model and on its impact on the characters' subjecthood, Gray explores the pitfalls of navigating male gender expectations.

In *Lanark*, Gray exposes patriarchal strategies through which men attain and preserve power and self-confidence. One such strategy is the relegation of women to the realm of the symbolic and the fantastic. As Gavin Miller explains it, rather than showing interest in attainable girls, whom he rejects due to their belonging to what he views as the dull and constraining society surrounding him, Duncan Thaw searches for his ideal, supernatural communion with a perfect deity and muse in the women he meets (2005, 28). Thaw's yearning for women mainly occurs in his mind, through imaginary versions of the girls he sets his eyes on. Neither Kate Caldwell nor Marjory Laidlaw, the two main targets of Thaw's infatuation, are perceived by Thaw as full and richly nuanced human beings, but also as icons of the female ideal of beauty and purity. The egotistical use of women as self-fulfilling masturbatory props permeates Thaw's sexuality. Female images are used for gratifying and solitary self-pleasure, giving him a "lonely sensation of triumph" (Gray 1981, 276). Miller draws a parallel between Thaw's simultaneous veneration of Marjory Laidlaw and indifference towards her personality and Robert Graves' pagan moon-worshipping cult in *The White Goddess* (1952):

Thaw's attraction to Marjory is as shallow as his pubescent infatuation with Kate Caldwell. He has little interest in Marjory as an individual and brings him into line with Graves's injunction that the artist must look beyond phenomenal women in order to unite

himself with the ideal reality of the goddess. Marjory becomes merely a ceremonial object to be exploited in the sacred rituals which have taken over Thaw's artistic powers. (2005, 38-9)

Confined to an imaginary state, Kate Caldwell and Marjory Laidlaw are objectified by Thaw's male imagination and transformed at his own will.

Duncan Thaw's sexual fantasies intertwine with his political fantasies. In Chapter 25, Thaw dreams about becoming Secretary of State for an independent Scotland. Yet the main point of the fantasy is not solely his achievement of political power but also his resulting potential power over Marjory. Thaw is excited about the idea of Marjory being unable to escape from his political image in the cinema, TV and newspapers while also being unable to touch him. As Georgia Walker Churchman describes it: "The point of this daydream is not to dwell on the idyllic life possible in 'small peaceful socialist republics' ...but rather the sense of sexual omnipotence derived from having complete power over a woman who will not submit to him in real life" (2019, 81). As such, a second patriarchal strategy of power that appears in the novel is access to politics. Politics have historically been a masculinist and hegemonic practice from which women as well as non-hegemonic men have been excluded (Young 1990, 10; McDowell 1999, 175). While in line with Gray's socialist humanist agenda, *Lanark* argues for a more collective and solidary conceptualisation of politics; this vindication is carried out by the revelation and simultaneous condemnation of an individualistic, megalomaniac and markedly patriarchal political agenda. In Books Three and Four, the leader of Unthank, Sludden, embodies a patriarchal understanding of politics as someone who dominates his girlfriends and who regards life, work and love as "ways of mastering other people" (Gray 1981, 6). Through the character of Sludden, Gray establishes a correlation between exploitative and patriarchal politics.

In *1982, Janine*, violence is the main mechanism through which men achieve and reproduce their domination. Jock McLeish's anxious embodiment of his gender identity is linked to a past ridden with violent models of masculinity. The male protagonist internalises his model of masculinity based on the violence inflicted upon him by his teacher/father figure, Mad Hislop. As Gavin Miller argues, in the McLeish household, where the beginning of the novel is set: "Ritualised punishment with the tawse – a leather strap – is the rite of passage by which a boy comes to be acknowledged as a man" (2005, 22). In fact, it is McLeish's stoic submission to punishment that perpetuates this form of

masculinity, as Hislop demonstrates when he celebrates Jock's repression of his own tears while being battered: "Go to your seat son. There's a spark of manhood in you" (Gray 1984, 85). According to Berthold Schoene, Jock McLeish's upbringing, derived from Mad Hislop's past education as a soldier and prisoner-of-war, shows the most masochistic and cruel face of patriarchy:

Unprecedented in its self-conscious, scrupulous honesty, *1982, Janine* represents a male author's exposure of traditional masculinity as little more than delirious, automatised self-abuse. Patriarchal man is portrayed as permanently engaged in a pathetic wrangle with his own inadequacies and insecurities... (2000, 130)

This violent model of masculinity is connected in the novel to a repressively conservative, religious and patriarchal Scottish culture. Miller identifies the Bible passage quoted in *1982, Janine*, "The Lord Chastiseth whom he loveth" (Gray 1984, 86), as evidence that: "For Jock to be recognised as a legitimate Scottish male, he must be chastised by Hislop, just as God scourges those who would enter his kindred" (2005, 22). This religious climate is the breeding ground of McLeish's rigid and simultaneously fragile masculinity. Violence and authority are transmitted from Mad Hislop to Jock McLeish, illustrating the idea within sex-role theory that violence is a socially learned conduct (Hearn, 1998, 23).

Beyond the specific Scottish context of Gray's novel, violence has been heavily linked to masculinity. The fact that men statistically are the most violent social group has rendered the interrelation between men and violence a key research focus within men's studies. Men's violence has been examined from macro-social levels (Connell 1995) to more specific approximations concerning male violence against women (Hearn 1998), male violence against other men (Bowker 1998) and men and crime (Messerschmidt 1993, 1997). Tim Edwards contends that, among the diversity of masculinities, it is the men who approximate forms of masculinity closest to the Western patriarchal rational gender model and to the repression of human emotionality that are most likely to engage in violent as well as sexist and homophobic practices (2006, 54). This tendency is present in Jock McLeish's own conduct, in which vulnerability and confusion are counteracted by the violent tortures he performs in his mind to imaginary sexualised women.

The discussion of politics, violence and female objectification as strategies of power in *Lanark* and *1982* offers potential interpretations of how these patriarchal

strategies are beneficial for men and for society as a whole as well as whether men are able to relinquish them and shift to less exploitative gender and socio-political dynamics. At the end of *Lanark*, the eponymous character feels tenderness when holding his son and ponders whether emotionality and his own understanding of masculinity are compatible: “The small compact body was warm and comforting and gave such a pleasant feeling of peace that Lanark wondered uneasily if this was a right thing for a father to feel” (Gray 1987, 424). Thaw/Lanark show a traditional notion of masculinity completely separate from emotion. As such, the “pleasant feeling of peace” Lanark feels as a father makes him feel inadequate. As Joseph Pleck argues in his article “The Male Sex Role: Definitions, Problems and Sources of Change,” in the traditional male role “interpersonal and emotional skills are relatively undeveloped and feelings of tenderness and vulnerability are especially prohibited” (1976, 156). The influence of traditional masculine roles is strong in Lanark as, instead of staying with his family, he leaves his son Alexander and his partner Rima behind and tries to gain social influence and power through politics.

In 1982, *Janine* the compatibility between masculinity and emotion is also problematised. In Chapter 11, Jock McLeish’s self is fragmented in the parallel columns that comprise “The Ministry of Voices,” a section of the novel in which Gray typographically represents the multiple identities of the male protagonist. After breaking down his subjectivity in “The Ministry of Voices” and then recalling, in the final pages of the novel, the experiences he underwent during his childhood as a subject of Mad Hislop’s violent authority, McLeish cries and reconciles himself with his own vulnerability. Part of this reconciliation involves McLeish acknowledging that Janine, the main protagonist of his violent sexual fantasies, is in fact a personification of his own soul; as a result, he is able to free her from his domination. McLeish’s reconciliation with vulnerability at the end of the novel has been interpreted from a gender perspective by various scholars. According to Carole Jones, the act of crying that initiates McLeish’s emotional liberation “signals a connection between rationality and emotion, the estranged parts of the male self (...) a submission to emotion and their own inherent femininity” (2009a, 57). After he is able to cry, McLeish feels like a new man:

Dry this tear wet face on corner of flannel sheet. Thus. I feel different. A new man? Not exactly the same man anyway. What is this queer slight bright fluttering sensation as if a

thing weighted down for a long time was released and starting, a little to, stir? (Gray 1984, 340)

The final acceptance of vulnerability, a male source of insecurity, is portrayed as a positive sign of health, a “queer slight bright fluttering sensation,” rather than as weakness. Thus, it is suggested that, in accepting his own emotions, McLeish may find a renewed stability and a healthier conception of his own self. According to Neil McMillan, in *1982, Janine*, disempowered Scottish masculinity leads McLeish to a reinvention “out of his embattled masculine reserve, his violent misogyny and his entrapment within the patriarchal structures of work and relationships” (2000, 197-8). Using a similar line of argument, Berthold Schoene suggests that by subverting Janine’s role from an “object of exploitative desire” to “an irresistible emancipatory principle of counter-discursive guidance and inspiration,” McLeish is adopting a new masculinity grounded in non-binary and fluid wholesomeness (2000, 143). In this vein, Schoene describes Jock McLeish as a *sujet en procès* (2000, 143). The process McLeish is subject to, according to Schoene, reconfigures him as an emotional man capable of refusing to reproduce his patriarchal dominance. Schoene bases his interpretation on Kaja Silverman’s idea, theorised in *Masculine Subjectivity at the Margins*, that “to re-encounter femininity from within a male body is ... to live it no longer as disenfranchisement and subordination, but rather as a phallic divestiture, as a way of saying ‘no’ to power” (1992, 389). Notwithstanding, for Christopher Whyte, Gray’s male characters’ strained emotionality is symptomatic of a refusal and inability to accommodate multiplicity, an act of self-pity and an appropriation of a feminine role for a reinstatement of hegemony rather than solidarity towards women and other minority groups (1998, 282). Indeed, the potential for new masculinities to really dismantle or, at least, shift the patriarchal system is an ongoing controversy within gender studies. In *Lanark* and *1982 Janine*, while hierarchies of patriarchal domination and their negative social impact on both women and men are revealed, no solution is offered as to which position men should occupy in order to relinquish their complicit role. The next section specifically focuses on one of the most controversial patriarchal hierarchies found in Alasdair Gray’s work: pornography and the implications Gray’s use of pornographic images has for the author’s political persona .

3.2.4.2. Pornographic Male Fantasies

Alasdair Gray's socio-political agenda and his reflections on human power dynamics are conveyed in a provocative manner that leaves no one indifferent. His presentation as an artist is framed within "the hair-fine" line "between the outrageously unsuitable and the eminently acceptable" (Crawford 1991, 5), of which the author's use of pornography is a prominent example. Gray's tendency both to by-pass critical attention and to trick his audience as a means of avoiding the theoretical pigeon-holing of his work, shown in *Lanark's* "Index of Plagiarisms," *Poor Things'* fictional blurbs and *1982 Janine's* "Criticism of the Foregoing Book," is highlighted in his bold definition of *1982* as overtly and consciously pornographic: "I quite enjoyed writing the sadistic nasty bits" (Gray 1988, 19). Pornography writing has been claimed by Gray as a source of entertainment but also inspiration in various texts and interviews and he has repeatedly voiced his agreement with James Joyce's observation that: "great art should not move us... only improper arts (propaganda and pornography) moves us" (Moore 2002, 48). In fact, he goes as far as proclaiming that Jock MacLeish's pornographic fantasies come from his own open discussion of "sex fantasies" he "had meant to die without letting anybody know happen in this head sometimes" (2002, 49). Yet, despite Gray's attempt to present pornography as a harmless creative exercise, the brutality with which such images are depicted in *1982, Janine* (1984) as fantasies and in *Something Leather* (1990) as fictional but objective events, have rendered his approach a controversial and thorny topic of discussion. The various critical opinions offered on Gray's role as a pornographer assess to what extent the cruelty enacted in these images is artistically acceptable or if it should be regarded as downright reprehensible and offensive when viewed from a feminist perspective. This subsection of my thesis will revise Gray's use of pornography, focusing particularly on the two novels of his that can be classified as pornographic, *1982 Janine* and *Something Leather*.

In the context of gender studies, pornography has been and still is, a topic of extensive discussion. Viewed as a cultural medium that reproduces the domination of men over women in the patriarchal system, pornography has been condemned by various feminist scholars and activists such as Robin Morgan (1977) and Andrea Dworkin (1981) and Catharine A. MacKinnon (1988) and Gail Dines (2010) as a violent and misogynistic industry. In *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*, Dworkin describes pornography as the quintessential manifestation of male power "of hate, of ownership, of

hierarchy; of sadism, of dominance” (1981, xxxix). Accordingly, for Dworkin, MacKinnon and Morgan, the production and consumption of pornography contributes to the increase of sexual violence against women, to their sexual objectification, as well as to the reproduction of their subordinated status. As Morgan puts it: “Pornography is the theory; rape is the practice” (1977, 128). The obliteration of the lines of rape and consent is one of the most recurring issues in the condemnation of pornography. Catharine MacKinnon argues that by promoting male sexual coercion of women and the idea that women actually enjoy being sexually controlled, pornography distorts the concept of consent by reproducing the “when women say no, they mean yes” myth and, even more problematically, it “desensitises people to violence against women so that you need more violence to become sexually aroused if you’re a pornography consumer” (qtd. in Jeffries 2006, n.p.). Other voices within the feminist movement agree with the idea that pornography is a product of patriarchal domination, but they argue that its total prohibition would lead to the invisibility of female sexuality and to the perpetuation of women’s social role as victims. Instead, for them, a better alternative is the resignification of pornography through a feminist perspective based on non-exploitative onscreen dynamics that represent women in control of their own desire (Schorn 2012, 16). This position is called sex-positive feminism and it has been defended in various and different manners by feminists such as Gayle Rubin (1984), Laura Kipnis (1996) and Susie Bright (2005). Although feminist pornography producers, directors and actors are working to change the underlying patriarchal politics of pornography by introducing diverse narratives of gender sexual equality and mutual consent, the majority of pornography still being produced and consumed reproduces violent attitudes towards women and dangerous feminine stereotyping; thus remaining a complex and problematic medium for feminism to this day.

Among the two main texts where Gray’s interest for pornography is displayed, *1982, Janine* is the one that has received the most critical attention. The violent misogynistic tortures performed by Jock McLeish have been offered various interpretations. For Robert Crawford, Gray’s use of pornography is evidence of his obsession with bondage and liberation, evidenced by the author’s “pushing against the limits of what is tolerable within a particular system – whether of politics, morality, or literary genre” (1991, 5). Similarly, Marshall Walker argues that “Gray hates exploitation enough to portray it repeatedly in detail on public and personal levels” (1991, 38). According to this analysis, *1982, Janine*’s pornographic content exposes, through

disturbing images of patriarchal sexual domination, the exploitative conditions of capitalism that Gray criticises in the novel (Lee 1990, 114). In this vein, McLeish's gradual emancipation and his final realisation of his own political position stresses the dynamic between domination and being dominated that exists across the personal and the political, thus revealing, as Kirsten Stirling suggests, that "the very structures and plots of pornography are already inscribed within our society" (2008, 71). In this understanding of McLeish's sadomasochistic fantasies, the specific problematic aspects of pornography, when viewed from a gender perspective, are by-passed and equated to other types of exploitation present in the novel.

Moreover, even if the protagonists of McLeish's explicit fantasies are women, the idea that Janine is a personification of himself is prevalent in the analyses of the pornographic aspect of the novel. For Eilidh Whiteford, the notion that Jock is the imagined woman Janine and that he is witnessing tortures he inflicts upon himself shows Gray's challenging of gender roles and of a binary gendered subjecthood (1994, 76). This idea is similar to Berthold Schoene's interpretation of McLeish's final transgression of traditional masculinity and reconciliation with his emotional side as a sign that Gray is liberating the main character from the reproduction of patriarchal domination. For both Whiteford and Schoene, 1982, *Janine's* goes beyond the story of a depressed ordinary man who watches the torturing of imaginary women for pleasure; it aims to question the traditional foundations of male sexuality and proposes a separation from them. Yet, in my view, the understanding of Jock McLeish's sadomasochistic tortures as self-inflicted ignores the fact that, while the eponymous Janine is later identified as Jock McLeish's own soul, she along with the rest of women he imaginatively tortures are still women who are subject to violent male domination. Although his femininity is acknowledged, the portrayal of violence towards women activates potential readings of the novel's content as a reinforcement rather than destabilisation of patriarchy.

In this vein, other critics have incorporated a feminist perspective into their analyses of the novel. For instance, Stephen J. Boyd describes Jock McLeish as someone "not at all far from the lowest of the low," due to his consumption and creation of highly violent and explicit pornography (1991, 110). The fact that the novel invites its readership into McLeish's otherwise dirty private fantasies may render it an unpleasant experience as we passively engage with these fantasies as an audience without the capacity to intervene from outside the book. Another controversial aspect of the use of pornography in this novel is the myths of femininity these representations may promote. Whiteford

argues that, by constructing women as sexual beings, Gray succeeds at dispelling puritan and Victorian values of femininity (1994, 80). Yet, Kirsten Stirling, in an observation aligned with the theories of Dworkin and MacKinnon, argues that the violence depicted in these fantasies may in turn draw on the myth that women may be aroused by rape (2008, 73). However, Stirling also argues that the women who star in Jock McLeish's sexual fantasies are not always narrated by McLeish and in a subordinated position; instead, they also narrate themselves and express their own sexual preferences:

If we return to the Janine and Superb fantasies, we realise that the women function as the narrative consciousness of the stories and it is their excitement (a crucial aspect of the fantasy) that Jock experiences (...). Thus the women, although represented as sexual objects, are the narrative subjects of their respective stories; the fantasy narrative is refracted through the consciousness of Janine or Superb. (2008, 72)

Janine and Superb are, in fact, the protagonists of their own desire within McLeish's fantasies. However, as I see it, Stirling's understanding of this aspect of emancipatory ignores a key parameter of the construction of the female characters in the novel. Tied to characters whose creation is doubly mediated by the male projections of Jock McLeish and Alasdair Gray, the narrative agency of Janine, Superb, Big Momma and the rest of women appearing in McLeish's fantasies is not theirs but their authors'. Although Janine is symbolically liberated at the end of the novel and identified as McLeish's vulnerable soul, she is neither an autonomous female character nor is she a real woman. Instead, she is just a figment of McLeish's and Gray's imagination. In this vein, her role in the novel perpetuates the incomplete and patriarchal perception of women through male fantasies.

In *Something Leather*, the presentation of sadomasochistic practices as real events in the life of its protagonists—rather than as imagined fantasies—further problematises these issues. As Gray reveals in the novella's Epilogue, its writing was inspired by Kathy Acker's question in an interview with the author: "Have you ever tried to work with a woman as main character?" (Moore 2002, 50). While in this interview Gray's answer was that he didn't "have the insight to imagine how a woman is to herself" (50), he dared to take Acker's suggestion when he saw a girl in high heels and a leather suit in Glasgow Queen Street station and "began imagining how a woman might feel when alone" (Gray 1990, 233). Thus, Gray takes a voyeuristic approach, as a writer, by spying on his female

characters having and actively enjoying lesbian sadomasochistic sex, which is depicted as an enlightening and freeing experience. Scopophilia, the technical expression for voyeurism, was also a key element of Jock McLeish's sexual fantasies. As a voyeur, Jock controlled his own perception of women, imagining them for his own taste. In *Something Leather*, it is Gray as author who controls his own image of how women may be in private. This portrayal of femininity and female sexuality through his own limited presuppositions and male perspective resonates with Laura Mulvey's classic concept of the "male gaze" (1975). Mulvey applied this concept to feminist Film Studies to explain the power relations inherent to artistic discourse in which the portrayal of the female systematically follows, along patriarchal lines, the male projection of what women are (1975, 808-9). For Boyd, the portrayal of sadomasochism as a source of liberation, comparing June's rape to the elevating rebirth experienced in religious sacrifice, is one of *Something Leather*'s most shocking aspects (1991, 121). Indeed, considering Gray devised the story of *Something Leather* as a male perception of how female sexuality might be, the presentation of rape as freeing risks both reproducing, as did *1982, Janine*, the myth that women enjoy being raped and blurring the limits of consent. In the next section of this thesis, I will discuss how Alasdair Gray exposes and replicates the marginal position of femininity in national politics.

3.2.4.3. Gendering the Nation

As I explained in Section 3.2.3 of this thesis when discussing Gray's image of a politically dependent Scotland as an underfed woman, another patriarchal discourse that is explored and reimagined in Gray's work is the intersection between gender and nation. In her book on the place of women in international politics *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* (1989) feminist sociologist Cynthia Enloe defined the nation as a sociological dimension controlled by men. According to Enloe, women are instrumentalised in nationalist movements as "symbols, consumers, workers and emotional comforters" and it is the masculinised narrative of patriotism on which the foundations of nationalist movements are rooted (1989, xvii, 44). Discussing specifically the role of women in Irish nationalism, Bronwen Walter contends that while Irish women do appear in nationalist discourses, they do so "confined to the world of metaphor rather than active participation" (1995,

37). Women's symbolic role in nationalist discourses confirms their powerlessness and their lack of political agency.

Nation and gender intertwine in the work of Alasdair Gray by means of an explicit use of the woman-as-nation trope. The representation of the nation as female and its political ramifications is examined by Nira Yuval-Davies and Floya Anthias in their pioneering book *Woman-Nation-State* (1989) and further developed by Yuval-Davis in *Gender & Nation* (1997) and *Bordering* (2019). Yuval-Davies and Anthias distinguish five roles associated with women in ethnic and national processes of social identification, among which their function as signifiers and symbols of ethnic/national differences stands out (1989, 7).⁹ The role of women as symbols of the nation manifests in the woman-as-nation trope as an image of both nationhood and femininity that is represented visually, in statues and paintings, but also in literature. In *1982, Janine* nation and gender intersect at two crucial counterpoints. On the one hand, in Jock McLeish's search for a place of belonging, he associates femininity with home and with a welcoming and ideal motherland. In traditional nationalisms, where the family is the fundamental unit of social reproduction and representation of the nation, women often occupy the role of symbolic mothers of the nation (Nagel 2005, 405). The nation as motherland, as a nurturing place associated with feminine roles of care and protection appears in the memories McLeish has of his first girlfriend, Denny, represented as "the romantic idea of the nation" (Stirling 2008, 69). Jock's relation to Denny is one of the least complicated relationships in the novel and therefore she is described as a perfect image of Scotland, an ideal mother. On the other hand, Scotland also appears as a victim of McLeish's pornographic fantasies. As he states in a recurrently cited quote: "Scotland has been fucked and I am one of the fuckers who fucked her" (Gray 1984, 126). The use of sexually gendered language to speak of a state of military conquest or, as in the novel, a state of political crisis is, as Carol Cohn has argued, a common tendency in the discourse of national defense (1993, 236). Offering the 1990 Gulf War as an example, Cohn illustrates this tendency by discussing how the phrase "Bend over, Saddam" was written on U.S. missiles to Iran (236).

⁹ The other ways identified by Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias in which women have participated in ethnic and national cultural and political discourses are: (a) as biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities; (b) as reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/national groups; (c) as participating centrally in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of its culture; (e) as participants in national, economic, political and military struggles.

Scotland's role as an abused woman exemplifies what Florence Stratton describes as the use of the woman-as-nation trope as an "index of the state of the nation" (1994, 41-4). In opposition to the features attributed to the image of the mother-nation, namely wholesome and uncorrupted, the woman-as-nation is represented as a victim, often abandoned or raped, or as a prostitute when the symbolism is intended to represent a nation in a state of crisis. The attribution of a victim role to women within nationalist discourses was also pointed out by Yuval-Davis and Anthias, who note that women in danger and suffering mothers are among the images that frequently appear in messages aimed at encouraging citizens, mostly men, to fight for a nation in conflict (1989, 9-10). For Gray, Scotland was, even after the 1997 devolution referendum, led by an Anglo-Scottish Conservative elite. In order to illustrate what he claimed to be a state of domination, Gray portrays Scotland as a female victim.

The feminisation of the Scottish nation is further explored in *Poor Things*. The novel is presented as a found Victorian manuscript consisting of three intersecting narratives: an Introduction, where the fictional editor Alasdair Gray explains the circumstances of the manuscript's publication; a central novel entitled "Episodes from the Early Life of a Scottish Public Health Officer," written by Archibald McCandless, which explains the story of Bella Baxter's "making" (Gray 1992a, 32); and a final letter, written by Bella Baxter, under the name of Victoria McCandless, refuting her husband's narrative and providing her own account of the events. In "Episodes," Archibald McCandless' novel, it is suggested that Bella is a Frankenstein-like creation, a pregnant woman who was surgically brought back to life by Doctor Godwin Baxter. In contrast, in "A Letter to Posterity," Victoria dismisses her husband's novel as a fantastic fabrication, thus revealing the constructed and male-projected nature of female myths. Interestingly, as Stirling suggests, both versions—the fantastic and the realistic—prompt questions on male-authored female constructions and on the myths and expectations imposed on Bella/Victoria by the male characters (2008, 88). Within this multi-layered novel, full of paratextual elements that guide the readers' interpretations, various readings of Bella/Victoria's significance are possible. As Rhind observes:

While the novel's central aporia concerns the competing ontologies implied by the accounts of McCandless and Victoria – each refutes the other – the central paradox of *Poor Things* rests upon wildly different representations of Bella/Victoria *within* these

accounts, generated by intradiegetic narrators' differing conceptions and interpretations of events. (2011, 1)

The reading of Bella/Victoria as a literary feminisation of Scotland, one among all the possible readings Gray offers of this character, is activated by Bella's portrait as Bella Caledonia integrated in Archibald McCandless' male-authored narrative. In her woman-as-nation visual representation, Bella is portrayed as an ideal of feminine beauty, a sort of Scottish Mona Lisa against an anachronistic mixture of Scottish geographical elements, which fuses a "panorama of nineteenth and twentieth-century Scotland (...)" with a wealth of anomalous geographic details," highlighting the atemporality of woman-as-nation icons (Leishman 2013, 3). The Bella Caledonia identity of Bella/Victoria as a pure and static feminine symbol of the nation intersects with the contradictions of her narrative development. Bella is narrated by Archibald McCandless as an adult woman with the brain of a child, whose behavior simultaneously combines the innocence of childhood and the sexual libido of maturity. In Duncan Wedderburn's letters, included within McCandless' "Episodes," Bella's innocent and liberated approach to human sexuality is viewed as a sign of evil. In this regard, Gray brings to light his interest in nudging the limits of morality by creating a surgically re-animated female protagonist who is sexually freed, allowing him to depict the fear of female sexuality which, while typically Victorian, prevails in contemporary times as well. While Bella's active sexuality and her support of women's reproductive rights, demonstrated by her opening an abortion clinic at the end of the novel, serve Gray to discuss the inception of feminism in nineteenth-century Britain, the execution of this aspect of the book is problematic. The fact that Bella starts the novel with the cognitive capacities of an infant while showing the sexuality of an emancipated adult woman addresses the infantilisation of women as well as the sexualisation of girls in a playful manner that ignores the social gravity of these issues. In fact, the infantilisation of Bella can be read as a fictional fabrication of her husband Archibald McCandless that presents a fetishistic male projection of a woman's childish and thus untamed understanding of sex.

The interrelation between the static and ideal woman-as-nation trope of Bella Caledonia, the hybrid and monstrous anatomical composite of McCandless's "Episodes" and Victoria's debunking of the myths of her Frankenstein-like creation in "A Letter to Prosperity" sheds light on the problems of understanding women through monolithic and limited male-constructed stereotypes while simultaneously reproducing them through

Gray's male perspective. The contradictions between the feminine archetypes on which Bella's character is based —the Victorian angel of the house, the femme fatale, the woman-as-nation— show how limited these patriarchal reductions of womanhood are. Yet *Poor Things* does not fully liberate Bella from these archetypes and from her patriarchal position as "other." According to Stirling, Gray's presentation of the woman-as-nation trope as a patriarchal archetype reflects how, while placing them in a symbolic role, this narrative constrains their autonomy and excludes women from the active political construction of the nation as citizens (2008, 96). This paradox inherent to the use of women as symbols of the nation had already been pointed out by Marina Warner in her pioneering book *Monuments & Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (1985). According to Warner: "Often the recognition of a difference between the symbolic order inhabited by ideal, allegorical figures and the actual order of judges, statesmen, soldiers, philosophers, inventors, depends on the unlikelihood of women practising the concepts they represent" (1985, xx). In juxtaposing both the static and the shifting, multi-layered narration of the female in the character of Bella/Victoria, to some extent Gray challenges certain patriarchal interpretations of femininity and exposes the constructed nature of gender archetypes. However, while he reveals the patriarchal structures undergirding the notion of women as clichéd and homogenous entities and plays with their artificiality, his portrayal of Bella/Victoria does not transcend these patriarchal perceptions of female sexuality and, ultimately, remains conditioned by them.

After having contextualised Alasdair Gray's politics in regard to individual subjecthood, national and local spaces as well as gender, the next section of this thesis will delve into James Kelman's politics. I will specifically examine his representation of marginal human beings, his use of space, his vision of official politics, as well as his exploration of gender dynamics.

3.3. The Politics of James Kelman

In the speech James Kelman delivered as the winner of the 1994 Booker Prize for his novel *How Late it Was, How Late*, he presented, in a condensed form, the principles undergirding his artistic and critical agenda. He situated his work within a literary tradition that strives towards "decolonization and self-determination" and is guided by

two premises: “1) The validity of indigenous culture; and 2) The right to defend in the face of attack,” this attack being understood as a process of cultural assimilation and marginalisation led by imperial and colonial authorities (1994b, 2). Kelman’s speech was met with hostility and reported by the media as “a plea for separatism,” nationalism or “the supremacy of Scottish culture” (Kelman 2002, 55). As a rebuttal to these claims, Kelman dug deeper into the meaning of his words. For instance, in the essay “And the Judges Said...,” included in Kelman’s eponymous collection, he clarified that his work aims to validate his own culture rather than to assert its superiority. As he stated, for him, “there is no such thing as an ‘inferior’ or ‘superior’ culture” (Kelman 2002, 55). Through fiction, polemical essays and grassroots activism, Kelman seeks what he terms the validation, self-determination and decolonisation of his own “indigenous” culture while simultaneously extending solidarity towards other international cultures that are being marginalised, attacked and assimilated by the actions of the political establishment, a line of thought heavily inspired by Noam Chomsky’s anti-establishment politics (Kövesi 2007, 5). Kelman perceives the political establishment, that is, the conglomerate of political parties, government institutions or police forces of a state, as a violent structure whose actions are equivalent to those of dominating colonial authorities.

In fact, Kelman could be defined as a political artist. As Miller and Rodger argue: “Kelman won’t let the reader forget that politics not only inform any prose fiction, they are inseparable from it” (2011, 9). For him, aiming to challenge established power systems is a prerequisite of good literature. Art and therefore literature, needs to be inherently risky and should destabilise the rigid value-system in which authors write, placing them in a dangerous position. In his own words, good literature “is nothing when it is not being dangerous in some way or another” (Kelman 2002, 68). According to Mia Carter, Kelman conceives of art and power, specifically capitalism and imperialism, as two sides engaged in a continuous and aggressive battle, in which artistic method serves as a weapon (2010, 54). Literature is regarded both as a political platform and as an authority-constructed hierarchy against which to resist. As Kelman sees it, canonical English Literature is one of the cultural dimensions of the political establishment and, as such, an extension of its racist, classist and elitist practices. Kelman associates specific writers such as Rudyard Kipling, T.S. Eliot or Evelyn Waugh with the discriminatory ideology of the establishment; he considers their models to be incompatible with good art and thus something to be challenged (1992, 22). These anti-establishment values derive from a colonial or imperialist —Kelman employs both terms interchangeably— vision of

the world, where working-class voices and stories have been assimilated and reduced to clichés by the English literary canon.

Kelman's own community, which he is intent on validating, is working-class. Both his father and his paternal grandfather were picture-framers, gilders and restorers, inspiring in Kelman the idea that the realms of art and the working class were not incompatible (McMunnigall 2018, 5). Before becoming a writer, Kelman worked as a bus driver in Glasgow and then as a farmer in the Channel Islands; he produced asbestos-sheets in Manchester and did construction work in London (Hames 2010a, viii). When he was seventeen, his whole family migrated to California only to return to Scotland a year later. While they still lived in Glasgow, the Kelman residence was a traditional working-class tenement where up to twelve families might live in one block (2007, 129). These geographically diverse experiences—a Glaswegian childhood, living as a young immigrant in the United States and a series of jobs around Britain—shaped Kelman's working-class identity, as well as that of the marginal characters he depicts in his fiction. Moreover, his campaigning and co-operation, throughout his adult life, with organisations as varied as Worker's City and The Free University or the Caribbean Artists Movement, demonstrate Kelman's concerns with marginalised groups across local, national and international spheres.

Ideologically, Kelman's politics are constituted by various branches. Whereas in an interview with McNeill, Kelman defines himself as a libertarian socialist and an anarchist (1989, 1), Laurence Nicoll notes the highly individualist existentialist philosophy that characterises the author's fiction (2000, 79-84; 2010, 121-130). Intersecting with both the anarchist and the existentialist, a third aspect of his politics, evident in the Booker speech and observed by Mia Carter, is Kelman's "Marxist, anti-imperialist worldview" (2010, 54). Concerning his conceptualisation of English literature and, hence, of the political establishment as a dominating colonial authority, Kelman's ideas have been analysed by scholars such as Michael Gardiner (2010), Iain Lambert (2011), Stefanie Lehner (2011) and Jessica Homberg-Schramm (2018) under a postcolonial framework. Scholarly analyses have assigned Kelman to a myriad of different categories, demonstrated by the long—but not exhaustive—list devised by Ian A. Bell: "James Kelman is a 'Scottish writer', 'a working class writer', 'a political writer', 'a dialect writer', 'a Glasgow writer', 'an angry writer', 'an experimental writer', 'a writer in the tradition of Kafka', 'a writer following Beckett', 'a post-modernist writer'" (1990, 18). Yet, as suggested by the length and diversity of the political and philosophical

traditions to which Kelman's own ideology is indebted, Scott Hames deems the task of classifying his politics into "preconceived critical slots" a challenging one (2010b, 2). In his resistance to the forces of assimilation driven by the value-system, Kelman eludes consistent affiliation to any one critical category. Notwithstanding, an examination of the critical interpretations of his work, fictional and polemical, will help shed light on the main ramifications of his politics, even if classification remains untenable. This section will examine Kelman's politics firstly in his fiction and secondly in his polemics and activism.

3.3.1. Aesthetic and Linguistic Resistance

Kelman's choice of themes, the type of characters he constructs and their location function as indicators of the marginalised cultures whose validation Kelman is concerned with. According to Cairns Craig, in his first novels and short stories, Kelman fixes his attention on a post-industrial culture whose working-class protagonists are not unionised, skilled in a specific occupation or politically active. Instead, they belong to a crumbling community whose members are further isolated from one another, hindering any possibility of collective solidarity or personal escape from their conditions (1993, 101-102). The socio-political context in which Kelman started his literary career—his first short story collection *An Old Pub near The Angel* was published in 1973 and his first novel *The Busconductor Hines* in 1984—was one of economic crisis and industrial decline in Scotland and particularly in Glasgow. As Stuart Cosgrove and David Campbell describe it, in the first half of the 1980s, poverty levels dramatically increased in the whole Clyde area, with unemployment in Glasgow rising by 46 per cent from 1981 to 1986 (qtd. in Klaus 2004, 29). The industrial restructuring provoked by the collapse of shipbuilding and heavy industries rendered a high amount of Glasgow workers redundant, which had demoralising effects on their lifestyle and overall well-being (Damer 1990, 14, 16). This scenario is captured by working-class fiction of the 1980s, which is, according to John Kirk, deeply concerned with the class displacement brought on by deindustrialisation (2003, 105). This class displacement is indeed clearly reflected in the alienation and powerlessness by which Kelman's characters are subsumed.

His first novels and short stories have a working-class focus that has been analysed for the ways in which it follows or defies the tropes of traditional working-class narratives. For Craig, the promise of social mobility and self-improvement was a central motif of 1950s and 1960s British working-class fiction, which is absent in Kelman's work (1993, 101). As he argues: "In Kelman's fiction, there is a brutal awareness that the Scottish working class, who saw themselves as the carrier of historic change in the days of McIlvanney's *Docherty*, are now the leftovers of a world which had no need of them" (1993, 102). Community spirit, trade unionism and working-class solidarity, as shown by McIlvanney in the Glaswegian context and by authors such as Alan Sillitoe or John Braine in the working-class English tradition, are presented in *The Busconductor Hines* (1984) and in *A Chancer* (1985) as unreachable concepts of the past. However, Kirk challenges Craig's observation that working-class solidarity is largely diminished in Kelman's fiction. For him, rather than radically negating the possibility of establishing groups of collective solidarity, Kelman explores alternative routes towards it (1999, 115). Kirk takes the family reunion in *A Disaffection*, in which Pat Doyle shares a conversation, food and drinks with his brother Gavin and two of his friends, as an example of a potential seed for working-class cooperation (1999, 113). The fact that exploitation, working-class rights and structural unemployment are, according to Kirk, part of Pat and his brother's conversation, shows how, despite their solitude, the characters in *A Disaffection* are fully aware of their political demands.

For Simon Kövesi and Laurence Nicoll, the radical individualisation of Kelman's protagonists and his interest in depicting marginal communities in depth are both rooted in the author's connections with existentialist philosophy (2007, 10; 2010, 122). Kövesi describes Kelman's conceptualisation of society as "intricate networks of individuals (...) not of reassuring communities or groups fighting for, or showing the necessity of, social change" (2007, 21). In its individualism, Kelman's exploration of his characters' lives and subjectivities becomes as free as possible from collective categories that would overdetermine and limit them. Instead of reproducing narratives that mainly revolve around social mobility and the desire to escape as defining aspects of the working-class experience, Kelman zooms in on the bleak realities of deprived men with a sense of pride. For Kelman, the margins ought to be claimed and acknowledged: "My family and culture were valid in their own right; this was an intrinsic thing, they were not up for evaluation. And neither was my work, not unless I so chose. Self-respect and the determination of self, for better or for worse" (2002, 39).

In this vein, rather than insisting on the need to transcend the working-class condition, Kelman claims the right to address ordinary problems, such as unemployment and lack of economic security as literary material while criticising their omission from the literature of the establishment. According to Kövesi, Kelman's "the ordinary" is an umbrella term encompassing those marginal representations that have been neglected by the English literary canon (2007, 10). Due to the omission of the ordinary, the literature of the establishment mainly represents, in Kelman's view, the reduced and elitist worldview of a 20 percent for whom the economic struggles of the remaining 80 per cent are "totally incomprehensible" (McNeill 1989, 9). Ordinary work and daily routines are reassessed as dramatically compelling material and the stress inherent to their everyday repetition is magnified. As Ellen-Raïssa Jackson and Willy Maley observe, making a cup of tea and rolling a cigarette are portrayed as oppressive mundane activities that, from the small action, recreate in Kelman's prose the overall frustration of his characters in an immersive manner (2001, 24). In this aspect, Kelman is influenced by both European and American authors such as Albert Camus, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Knut Hamsun, Franz Kafka, Flannery O'Connor and Tillie Olsen, who depicted "the lived-in, the everyday" (Kelman 2002, 37). Freed from a rigid socio-political hierarchy that constrained them in their writings, these authors presented, as Kelman views it, a fresh and unmediated portrayal of individual human lives (2002, 38). Interestingly, the characters of Kelman's novels are not any ordinary people. As Klaus describes them, instead of showing an "exceptionally gifted working-class figure, the fighter for the Cause," Kelman's characters are "the workless and the homeless, the casually and the menially employed, the cadgers and the dodgers" (2004, 5-6). While Kelman consistently employs the term "ordinary" to describe his thematic interests, his themes and characters are closer to the marginal, the dispossessed.

Moreover, Kelman's challenge to working-class literary stereotypes devises marginal characters who are fond of art and whose lives are worthy of literary depiction. In *A Disaffection*, Patrick Doyle meditates on Höderlin and Hegel and Camus is "implicitly mentioned" (McNeill 1989, 2) in *The Busconductor Hines*, thus showing how working-class men can have philosophical and cultural interests. As Kelman tells McNeill in an interview, for him "working-class intellectuals are simply a fact" (1989, 7). Indeed, in an interview with Fabio Vericat, Kelman describes "the Scottish working class" as a diverse category composed of "individual human beings" with "different tastes" (2002, n.p). As such, Kelman claims the right of the working classes to be, as he puts it,

“subject(s) worthy of art” (Kelman 2007, 110). Not only do their stories hold literary interest per se, but they also can appear as full, complex characters on the page, subverting the clichéd flat portrayals of working-class people as ignorant beings without artistic or intellectual inquisitiveness (McGlynn 2010, 25). The inspiration to fully represent marginal working-class lives came, for Kelman, from his artistic icons. The freeing aspects of American and Russian literature, whose characters defied stereotypes and the confidence of the blues musicians Kelman admired during his teenage years and who “assumed the right to create art” helped configure Kelman’s goal of writing marginal literature that avoided traditional structures (Kelman 2002, 37-9). It is not only the construction of marginal characters Kelman aims to change; he also claims the need to subvert the stark realist mode traditionally attributed to working-class fiction. In addressing very realistic and crude topics, Kelman does so in an experimental manner (McGlynn 2010, 25). This experimentation is especially distinct in *How Late it Was, How Late* (1994) described by Scott Hames as “a landmark of subjective realism” (2016, 507).

The specific themes and locations of each of Kelman’s novels and short stories have changed over time. His first two novels, *The Busconductor Hines* and *A Chancer*, tell the story of a declining bus conductor, Rab Hines and a gambler, Tammas, in a Glaswegian setting. Hines is trapped in an almost disappearing job because of his class circumstances. As Kövesi explains, in Glasgow the job of bus conductor was already gradually being replaced by one-man operated buses in the 1970s and the first trials of automatic ticket machines in 1977 and 1978 (2007, 30). Accordingly, by choosing Hines to perform a job that will soon be part of Glasgow’s past, Kelman explores the anxiety that the proximity of unemployment and the difficulty to secure a better job bring to the Hines household. As Kelman shares in an interview with Duncan McLean: “Somebody like Hines doesn’t have any choice. He’s not on the broo because he’s a masochist – or on the buses because he wants to be on the buses” (1985, 69). In *A Chancer*, job prospects are also far from ideal. Working a morally decent job, engaging in criminal activities and gambling are considered as three possible income sources in the Glasgow marginal atmosphere that Tammas inhabits (Engledow 2002, 75). In addition to being a source of income and losses, gambling is for Tammas an escapist distraction and one of the few areas of his life in which he has agency. As Kövesi argues, despite the arbitrariness of chance, gambling “is determined by the free choice of the individual to operate within a justifying and considerably cohesive set of interpersonal relations” (2007, 72-3). Both the lives of Hines and Tammas are characterised by a need to escape and to control a

socioeconomic context full of uncertainty. Glasgow's streets are a significant space in these two novels, as are other sites like the pub, the workplace, the home, or, in the case of *A Chancer*, the gambling club.

In later novels like *A Disaffection* or *How Late it Was, How Late*, resistance against the repressive forces of the establishment becomes more confrontational and desperate (Klaus 2004, 87). In *A Disaffection*, the narrative plunges readers into the paranoid psyche of Patrick Doyle, a Glasgow teacher who tries to challenge the norms of the educational system yet cannot help but see himself as a political instrument, an enabler of the rules he despises (Craig 2010, 82). The disaffection referred to in the novel's title that swarms Patrick Doyle's life is already suggested in the opening lines: "Patrick Doyle was a teacher. Gradually he had become sickened by it" (Kelman 1989, 1). *How Late it Was, How Late* (1994) portrays the life of ex-convict Sammy Samuels who becomes blind and increasingly loses contact with his surroundings, which renders him increasingly vulnerable. By exploring the tensions arising in the protagonist's encounter with government institutions, such as the police or the Department of Social Services and portraying the judgemental and distrustful attitude shown by these entities towards Sammy's blindness, Kelman highlights the invisibility of marginal citizens in an authoritarian world (Gearhart 2010, 81-2). While navigating these Glaswegian bureaucratic systems, Sammy encounters Ally, a man who offers him legal representation. Due to his attempt to seize control of Sammy's voice as his legal representative, Ally is portrayed, according to Hames, as complicit in the repressive discourses of the establishment (2009, 515-7). Indeed, in speaking for him, Ally would, as Gearhart argues, "prescribe his identity, deny his subjectivity" (2010, 91). In this vein, Kelman infuses this novel with his distrust of official political institutions, which he conceives of as corrupt forces that, rather than enabling a politically effective cooperation, constrain the freedom of minorities to represent themselves.

Amongst his most recent novels, *Translated Accounts* (2001), *You Have to Be Careful in the Land of the Free* (2004), *Kieron Smith, Boy* (2008), *Mo Said she Was Quirky* (2013) and *Dirt Road* (2016), only the third is located in Glasgow. From 2001 onwards, Kelman's literary politics and his engagement with the portrayal of full marginal human beings, rather than stereotypes, has moved towards a globalised framework that transcends Glaswegian and Scottish borders. The first of Kelman's more global novels, *Translated Accounts*, presents a collection of accounts on situations of violence and oppression across a space that escapes an easy localisation, but "evokes a

range of peripheral, neocolonial or semi-occupied regions,” like from “the Niger Delta to scenes resembling the Middle East” (Gardiner 2010, 101, 106). By intentionally not revealing the particular setting of the stories in *Translated Accounts*, Kelman conveys his condemnation of state violence on a global scale.

After the publication of *Translated Accounts*, Kelman continued to set his novels in foreign spaces beyond Glasgow and Scotland. Rather than pointing to a global and unspecified geographical dimension, in *You Have to Be Careful in the Land of the Free* and *Dirt Road*, he sets the stories in the United States, a country with which Kelman is familiar. As mentioned above, he lived in Pasadena, California, as a young migrant, but he also worked as a creative writing tutor at the University of Texas at Austin and San José State University in California (Hames 2010a, viii). Jeremiah Brown, the main character and narrator in *You Have to Be Careful in the Land of the Free*, is a Scottish man who works as a security guard in an American airport, which in fact symbolises a detention camp (Gardiner 2010, 109). Berthold Schoene has analysed Jeremiah’s ambiguous situation from a cosmopolitan framework and has defined this character as a wanderer whose world is dislocated between Scotland and the United States (2009, 70). The portrayal of a migrant who is conditioned by the exclusionary and stigmatising practices of the American government in *You Have to Be Careful in the Land of the Free* further reinforces the multicultural and global aspect of Kelman’s anti-establishment anarchist politics.

In contrast, *Kieron Smith, Boy* follows its protagonist’s development from childhood to adolescence in the Glasgow of the 1940s and 1950s. By using a working-class Protestant child with a Catholic-sounding name as the main narrator, Kelman is able to emphasise the long history of class, cultural and religious marginalisation in a sectarian Glasgow (Homberg-Schraam 2018, 126). Finally, the “quirky” Helen of *Mo Said She Was Quirky* is a Scottish immigrant in London and the only female protagonist in Kelman’s literary oeuvre (Jones 2015, 103). According to Camille Manfredi, Helen’s tension with cultural hierarchies —she worries her Glaswegian accent might become a reason for discrimination in London— is paralleled in Jeremiah’s and Kieron’s experiences as outcasts. As Manfredi contends: “Jeremiah, Helen and Kieron all live dangerously close to the realm of the homeless people (among whom is Helen’s own brother), vagrants, squatters or ‘zombies’ who loom on the far edges of their field of view” (Manfredi, 2015, 218). Despite being located in Glasgow, London, the US or in the “nowhere place” (Kövesi 2007, 171) of *Translated Accounts*, Kelman’s characters

navigate across and against the boundaries of the peripheral spaces in which they are enclosed.

Periphery and disorientation are also present in Kelman's short stories. Often written in the first person, they explore the interiority of male characters who aimlessly wander mostly urban and industrial locations. The lack of a resolution and direction, as well as the incessant repetition of neurotic thoughts, are commonly addressed themes throughout his collections (Macarthur 2004, 7). Indeed, Kelman's goal of portraying the dispossessed recurs throughout his short stories. As Richard Lansdown describes them, the characters in Kelman's third short story collection, *Not Not While the Giro*, are "lost in the underclass: beyond the economy, stranded in welfare and habituated to a peculiarly modern, state-subsidised kind of vagrancy, between lodgings, dole and pub" (2014, 78). Hunter argues that, due to their structural indeterminacy and room for narrative experimentation, short stories are the best genre to accommodate Kelman's artistic and political agenda (2010, 45). Not only is Kelman's linguistic and narrative experimentation especially refined in this form, but also his intention to provide particular glimpses into working-class life is more effectively executed in a short length format.

The indeterminacy and diversity of the marginal spaces that Kelman's characters inhabit have several political undertones worth considering. Yet his approach towards location is varied and has shifted over time. At the beginning of his career, Kelman's focus on Glasgow is clearer. As he explains in his essay "The Importance of Glasgow in My Work," his initial aim as a writer was to write stories derived from his own socio-cultural experience: "I wanted to write as one of my own people, I wanted to write and remain a member of my own community" (1992, 81). In fact, some of the stories he writes before the publication of *Translated Accounts* and even after that of *Kieron Smith, Boy*, are, according to Manfredi, semi-autobiographical (2015, 214). For instance, as explained in the introduction to this section, Kelman worked as a bus conductor, like Rab Hines in *The Busconductor Hines* and, like Tammas, the main character of *A Chancer*, he often gambled after returning from the US. In the afterword to the 2007 edition of *An Old Pub near the Angel*, Kelman reveals that, in the writing of *A Chancer*, the Glasgow gambling clubs and snooker halls he had discovered when he came back to Glasgow from California at age eighteen inspired the clubs Tammas goes to (2007, 135). In this vein, Glasgow spaces appear as an artistic source. Indeed, in his first four novels, as well as in *Kieron Smith, Boy* and in some short stories, Kelman follows the aim he stated in a talk at the Glasgow School of Art of writing a "self-contained Glasgow, not subject to the yays and

nays of ruling authority” (qtd. in Jackson and Maley 2001, 25). It is crucial to understand that while Glasgow is acknowledged as a literary referent for Kelman, particularly present in *The Busconductor Hines* and *A Chancer*, specific place names are sometimes omitted or slightly altered. An example of this local distortion can be found in *The Busconductor Hines*, in which the peripheral districts of Drumchapel and Knighstwood are respectively called District of D and Zone K, simultaneously standing for Glasgow and a delocalised non-Glasgow (Kövesi 2007, 16).

Yet, understanding Glaswegian working-class history can enhance our interpretation of at least one part of Kelman’s literary politics. To begin with, the Glasgow location may be important to understanding that Kelman’s politics are rooted in class politics. His position in the world as a Glaswegian working-class man was his first experience of what his identity meant culturally and his first notion of the implications of writing from his own experience. In fact, one of the levels of Kelman’s literary validation of his own culture is a challenge to the English literature portrayal of working-class Glaswegians:

How do you recognise a Glaswegian in English literature? He —bearing in mind that in English literature you don’t get female Glaswegians, not even the women— he’s the cut-out figure who wields a razor blade, gets moroculous drunk and never has a single solitary ‘thought’ in his entire life. He beats his wife and beats his kids and beats his next door neighbour. And another striking thing: everybody from a Glaswegian or working-class background, everybody in fact from any regional part of Britain – none of them knew how to talk! (Kelman 1992, 82)

Despite acknowledging Glasgow as a literary reference and the importance that the city’s culture has in Kelman’s class and linguistic politics, Kelman has also claimed that Glasgow itself “isn’t important” as a motivation in his artistic politics (1992, 78). While Glasgow is in fact important in order to understand the configuration of Kelman’s aesthetics, interpreting Kelman’s spatial politics solely through the local would be insufficient. As a migrant in Pasadena, California, when he was a teenager and as a worker in London, Manchester and Jersey, Kelman’s socio-cultural experience expanded beyond Glasgow and beyond Scotland (Kelman 2007, 99). While his first attempts at writing strived for the self-determination and validation of his own family and culture, his experiences as a reader expanded his literary horizons (Kelman 2002, 39; Kelman 2007,

101). He has claimed that his inability to find literary models of his own culture during his youth led him to start reading American or translated Russian, German and French works. In this search for inspiration, “the whole world became available” (Kelman 1992, 83). In addition, throughout his career, Kelman further broadened his cultural horizons by acquainting himself with other radical authors writing marginal literature in English, like the Trinidadian poet John La Rose, Nigerian authors Amos Tutuola and Ken Saro-Wiwa or South African author Alex La Guma. In the essay “Say Hello to John La Rose,” a detailed account of his own relationship with this writer, Kelman describes how he found out about these non-Western authors. It was in 1979, while he worked, for the first time, as a writer-in-residence at the Paisley Central Library that Kelman noticed a full section in a shelf under the title “Ethnic,” which included the writings of: “Ayi Kwei Armah, Amos Tutuola, Alex La Guma, Okotp’Bitek and others” (Kelman 2002, 227).

Kelman was drawn to these writers because, like himself, they “were NOT working to assimilate their own cultural experience within standard prose form (...) they were attacking and the attack was formal and methodical” (2002, 227). As Kelman made clear in his Booker Prize speech, he views himself, his work and his socio-cultural experience as part of the indigenous colonised cultures in which these authors, like Tutuola or Saro-Wiwa, work. Consequently, Kelman often draws parallels between his own work and that of Caribbean and African Black writers (Böhnke 1999, 15). Through these comparisons, he emphasises the internationality of his movement for self-determination and decolonisation and his position as an ally in radical black and anti-racist movements. The books found in the “Ethnic” section of Paisley Central Library belonged to the Heinemann catalogue for the African Writers Series, as well as to the 1979 New Beacon catalogue (Kelman 2002, 227). Once he found out about New Beacon’s selection of Caribbean and African writers, Kelman established contact with John La Rose and Sarah White, directors of the New Beacon bookshop in Finsbury Park, London (Miller and Rodger 2011, 142). This encounter encouraged Kelman’s collaboration with the network of radical black rights activists around the New Beacon bookshop and his own participation in events like the International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books.

Together with his selection of themes and locations, James Kelman’s particular approach to language and narrative voice is a pivotal component of his conception of literature as a political activity. The locales depicted in Kelman’s literary work are not always Glasgow and even when it is, the spatial references are altered and, if not

acknowledged by Kelman himself, void of locally identifiable motifs (Klaus 2004, 19). Consequently, language acts as a clearer sign of a Glaswegian location in Kelman's prose. In fact, as J.D. MacArthur argues, "it is the language which establishes the setting. It is clear that Glasgow is important for Kelman, not as a physical location but as a way of thinking in relation to class and language, a 'socio-cultural experience'" (2004, 2). The West of Scotland vernacular included in some of his novels enhance Kelman's representation of the local sphere of his own socio-cultural experience. As Kelman himself explains in *Three Glasgow Writers* (1976), a collection of short stories written by Alex Hamilton, Tom Leonard and Kelman himself:

I was born and bred in Glasgow
I have lived most of my life in Glasgow
It is the place I know best
My language is English
I write
In my writings the accent is in Glasgow
I am always from Glasgow and I speak English always
Always with this Glasgow accent
This is right enough. (1976, 51)

Aiming to represent a working-class Glaswegian identity in his writing, Kelman dismisses the English normative characterisation of Glaswegian dialect as untamed "gobbledygook (...) a strange hotchpotch of bad phonetics and horrendous spelling" (Kelman 1992, 82). Instead, he attempts to represent the language of his own community in its full range, a decision shared, among others, by his contemporary writer Tom Leonard and younger ones like Janice Galloway and A.L. Kennedy. As Kennedy states: "When I was a child, if you wanted to be successful, you had to sound anglicised or English. (...) Leonard and Kelman produced work that celebrated their right to sound like themselves and extended that courtesy to the reader" (2011, n.p.). As far as the local and rooted aspects of Kelman's language are concerned, the use of elements of a working-class Glaswegian vernacular constitutes an act of political resistance against the imposition of an upper-class Southern English linguistic model within Britain and throughout the Empire. As he describes it, the English-speaking world is characterised by a linguistic one-dimensionality, enforced by the upper class, that does not match the

multiplicity of its varieties: “throughout the Commonwealth, throughout the English-speaking world there is the one voice, the voice of English literature and it’s not your voice, unless you’ve managed to go through uni and start to speak as if you came from Hampstead Heath” (qtd. in MacLean 1985, 68).

As has been observed in the analyses of characters like Rab Hines in *The Busconductor Hines* and Pat Doyle in *A Disaffection*, Kelman is interested in defying the use of social realism as a default genre to frame working-class narratives. Instead, ordinary themes are explored through the use of artistically elevated and highly crafted literary techniques (McMunnigal and Carruthers 2001, 59). This artistic approach certainly applies to Kelman’s use of language. As Miller and Rodger argue, the notion that Kelman writes in a realistic reproduction of vernacular dialect is not entirely correct, since only some of his novels and short stories are written in an identifiable version of a West of Scotland dialect (2011, 35). Rather than seeking to provide an accurate anthropological rendition, Kelman constructs an amalgam of working-class idiomatic elements to create a specific individualised language for each of his texts and protagonists (35). Taking its originality and innovation into account, Simon Kövesi defines Kelman’s language as “quasi-phonetic,” “polyvalent,” “a style of his own making” (2007, 7). He also warns us that neither “dialect” nor “vernacular” are valid terms to define Kelman’s radical attack on the political hierarchies and the constraining terminologies of literary discourse:

In application to Kelman, neither term is fully appropriate because his language use — and the politics of discourse which are expressed through it— question the viability of any hierarchies implicated between language types. Indeed, the fluid, heteroglossic hybridity of language in his novels brings into question the comfortable definition even of language typologies. (2007, 167)

This hybrid language simultaneously documents the individual subjectivity of marginal characters and is employed for artistic innovation, producing an experimental literary “art-speech” (Hames 2010c, 98) or, as Kövesi terms it, his own “Kelmanese” (2007, 7). Accordingly, Kelman’s characters transgress cultural-based linguistic confinements moving “across the full scale of expression from the crudely vernacular to the most highly wrought and literary” (Craig 1996, 194). Hence, Kelman’s language manifests the working-class artist’s right both to transcend social realism as the only

possible genre and to liberate the working-class voice from the chains of elitist mainstream literary hierarchies.

Another aspect of Kelman's literary artistry that corresponds to his own political view is his construction of narrative voice. In order to resist the domination of oppressive English-language hierarchies, Kelman writes in a style that aims to "obliterate the narrator," the authorial voice (McLean 1985, 80). This obliteration stems from two crucial ideas expressed in his interviews and political essays. First, he associates the third person omniscient narrator with the authorial voice of the imperial elitist establishment. The political superiority of the third-person omniscient narrator is reflected at a textual level, according to Kelman, by its know-it-all persona and its presupposed objectivity. As he told Kirsty McNeill: "people (...) take for granted that it is unbiased and objective. But it's no such thing (...) Getting rid of that standard third-party narrative voice is getting rid of a whole value system" (1989, 4). Any external narrative perspective or authorial interference that assumes to know everything about the characters and their personal circumstances is regarded by Kelman as the representation of a colonising force that imposes certain restrictions on the text. He aims instead for total literary freedom from value-systems and political perspectives external to the text. As he puts it: "Whether it's from a feminist point, a heterosexual male point, a middle-class point, any point at all. Get rid of it" (4). According to him, only a "free value text" striving for total objectivity would guarantee freedom from oppression and colonisation.

Second, Kelman aims to subvert the political hierarchy he finds in the textual separation between the voice of dialogue and the voice of the narrator. He notes that vernacular speech has been normally confined to dialogue, peripheral vis-à-vis the centrality of the narrator, mostly written in Standard English. As he ponders in his essay "The Importance of Glasgow in my Work" (1992):

Whenever I did find somebody from my own sort of background in English Literature there they were confined to the margins, kept in their place, stuck in the dialogue. You only ever saw them or heard them. You never got into their mind. You did find them in the narrative but from without, seldom from within. And when you did see them or hear them they never rang true, they were never like anybody I met in real life. (1992, 81)

For Kelman, the distinction between dialogue and narrative was a textual discriminatory hierarchy, which constituted "a summation of the political system"

analogous to the social and political marginalisation of those whose voices were textually restricted to the dialogue (2002, 41). As a result of this subversion, Kelman merges dialogue and narrative, spoken and written, in a free indirect discourse that allows him to explore the interiority and self-reflection of his characters in their full complexity (Craig 1993, 103). Moreover, Kelman also shifts the narrative perspective between first and third person in order to expand the characters' view and enrich their scope. As he sees it, changing from the first person to the third and then back to the first to write about the characters' inner consciousness enables a degree of sophistication which the "I-voice" hindered (Kelman 2007, 149). In this vein, in the epilogue to the 2007 edition to *An Old Pub near the Angel*, Kelman explains how the confinement of upper-class Standard English to the voice of the narrative and the occasional use of phonetic fabrications for the working-class in the dialogues made him notice how the imperialist value-system present in society is reflected in the structure of literary texts:

My original intention in 'Nice to be Nice' was to use the phonetic transcription only for the narrative. I thought to apply Standard English form for the dialogue. It was an attempt to turn the traditional elitist assumption on its head. I was irritated by so-called working-class writers who wrote third-party narratives in Standard English then applied conventional ideas of phonetics whenever a working-class character was called upon to say a few words. When a middle-class character entered the dialogue all attempts at 'phonetics' disappeared; his or her lines were transcribed in standard form, leading to the extraordinary presumption that Standard English Literary Form is a literal transcription of Upper-Class Orature. (2007, 109)

Kelman radicalised his narrative experimentations over the course of his career. According to Scott Hames, the reversal of registers and narratorial textual positions proposed in "Nice to Be Nice," one of his first short stories, amounted to a total dissolution of "class-based discursive hierarchies" (2016, 507). Kelman blurs the textual distinction between Scots vernacular varieties as the sole language of the dialogue and Standard English as the sole language of narration, as well as between first person and third person. Thus, in Kelman's exploration of a free-value objectivity and interiority, the subjecthood of the marginal characters inhabiting the pages of each of his novels and short stories is individualised and examined as a particular life experience isolated from major social categories, so that "the larger rhythms of majority life," and a supra-

individualist sense of group belonging “can seldom be heard” (Hames 2016b, 507). In Kelman’s work, the voices, lives and spaces of the dispossessed are often represented in isolation. This is done with the aim of exploring the subjectivity of these entities without the interference of a classist and imperialist value-system. If in Kelman’s novels and short stories the narrative needs to be unmediated by the aesthetic and linguistic hierarchies of the discriminatory and oppressive value-system, so should political resistance beyond the literary page be effected outside of and against the political parties and legal bodies that, for Kelman, constitute the establishment. In the following section, I will explain how and through which types of political organisations Kelman articulates his anti-establishment political resistance.

3.3.2. Political Resistance

In his battle against controlling structures of authority, Kelman fluctuates between pessimism and optimism. His fiction tends to offer a diagnostic of bleak conditions and the possibility of change through communal solidarity often seems difficult to achieve. In contrast, in a few instances of his polemical essays and in some interviews, Kelman conveys an optimistic view on people’s chances to succeed against power. He believes that direct human action and an active awareness of contemporary injustices channelled through dissidence in every social sphere can enable social change. In his own words: “Radical change is possible. Society can always be transformed” (Kelman 1992, 45). This, according to Schoene, generates a contradiction between Kelman’s critical politics and his fiction: “Despite its apparent radicalism, then, Kelman’s work could also be interpreted as profoundly defeatist” (2009, 93). Another ambivalence that can be found in Kelman’s politics is the reconciliation of the individual and the collective. As Miller and Rodger argue, “one of the seeming contradictions in James Kelman’s work lies between his insistence upon the universality and autonomy of the individual, on the one hand and the importance of the communal and social on the other” (2011, 66). While Kelman’s prose is characterised by its individualism and the isolation of his characters, in the context of grassroots activism, Kelman sees strict individualism as a political obstacle (1992, 76). Indeed, in his essays, he encourages collective action, especially when organised in plural campaigning groups, as a tool for self-determination.

Committed to an anti-establishment and anarchist position, Kelman believes that change must occur from the bottom up (Kelman 2002, 31).

Most of his political essays were first delivered as talks at events related to campaigns involving collaboration with groups as geographically varied as Friends of Kurdistan and Friends of Palestine (Kelman 1992, 69-77), the Clydeside Action on Asbestos (Kelman 1992, 59-63; Kelman 2002, 194-216) and the Scottish Campaign Against Racism and Fascism (Kelman 2002, 348-368). If there is a common feature among the campaigns that Kelman has been a part of as speaker and/or activist, it is his two-pronged purpose of validating the rights of those who have been politically marginalised for class-based, cultural or racial reasons while simultaneously condemning the censorship, repression, unaccountability and brutality executed by the current political establishment against these groups.

For Kelman, the main hindrance to the validation of marginal rights is a set of civic authority structures he often terms “the establishment” (Kelman 1992, 4). The establishment consists of various elements: political parties in national and local positions, electoral processes, monarchy and institutional bodies dependent on the government—such as the military and the police—, the media, the education system—including universities and the literature approved by them—and arts foundations. Any party, no matter their ideology, is susceptible to reproduce the discriminating politics that characterise the establishment. As Kelman puts it: “There was little to choose between Labour Party policy at local Government level with the Tory Government at national level: when in doubt attack the poor” (2002, 5). In this vein, the imperialist authority Kelman reacts against from his writer-activist position enforces a dominant structure that operates across party politics, no matter the supposed ideology each party claims to have.

Contrary to representative democracy and closer to an anarchist perception of parliament, Kelman’s approach in his activism is rooted in self-determination. For him, self-determination lies in the right to represent yourself rather than be represented, taking freedom rather than asking for it. Kelman’s own understanding of self-determination differs from independence in that it derives from the people rather than from an authority superior to them (Hames 2012, 124). Self-determination is taken by the people for the people, responding to their own interests rather than to collective aims imposed by the establishment. Kelman views claims of collective representative offered by the establishment to justify certain policies or decisions, like the “national interest” (Kelman 2002, 127) or what is “good for Scotland” (Hames 2012, 124), as political fallacies. In

his questioning of these politically fabricated homogenisations, Kelman asks: “What do we actually mean when we talk about the ‘interest of the country as a whole’? At what point do the interests of the individual citizens who actually live there enter the argument?” (2002, 127). For Kelman, representative bodies ignore the demands of those represented and constrain the ability of the individual to actualise self-determination.

As Kelman understands it, self-determination should be built first on self-respect, on one’s own perception of oneself and one’s culture as legitimate and worthy of recognition (Klaus 2004, 57). Community-based networks that are grounded in the principles of radical self-determination and civil disobedience should fight through active “public resistance” channelled outside of “existing structures or government and state-funded bodies” (Kelman 1992, 67). In Kelman’s descriptions, grassroots activism is imagined as extremely demanding guerrilla warfare where victims must be constantly focused on their goals, alert and ready to respond to the attacks thrown against them. Marginalised people are involved in a constant battle against the powers that oppress them and engaging in this battle is urgent. As Kelman puts it: “there is no time for games and meaningless babble (...). People are being abused, they are being tortured and they are being killed. And it’s all happening while we speak. They must be supported immediately” (Kelman 1992, 68). For him, awareness and the vigilance derived from critical mistrust are of the utmost necessity when facing political authorities. As he recommended to the attendants of the opening of the Edinburgh Unemployed Workers’ Centre, victims of establishment-led attacks on human rights should take control of their own struggle, “admit reality” (Kelman 2002, 93-4) and harness this very awareness in their fight against inequality. Accordingly, justice will not be achieved if ordinary marginal people hope for the best and trust the efficiency of official political representatives that Kelman distrusts.

Concerned about vindicating the culture of marginal people both in his fiction and in his political participation, Kelman became part of the nucleus of Workers City group in 1990 (Miller and Rodger 2011, 133). As explained in Section 3.2.3 regarding Alasdair Gray’s engagement with this same organisation, Workers City was a grassroots local network active from 1987 to 1993; informed by an anarchist and anti-capitalist perspective, the organisation protested against what they viewed as a commodification of the city’s culture by the Labour Party-led City Council. Their protests concentrated mainly on two specific events: the year-long celebration of European City of Culture 1990 and the attack towards Elspeth King and Michael Donnelly as curators of the Glasgow

working-class history museum People's Palace. The proclamation of Glasgow as European City of Culture 1990 was, in the eyes of Glasgow Labour, a step towards a much-needed rebranding: the city would go from have an infamous and fundamentally working-class reputation to one promoting a vibrant and cosmopolitan outlook capable of elevating Glasgow to the status of Florence or Paris (Spring 1990, 41-2). For the Workers City and for Kelman, the city council's aim to polish the image of the city and get rid of its perception as a derelict and dangerous gang-ridden place entailed a kind of yuppification. The City of Culture event was viewed as "a sham accolade to help grease the wheels of capitalist enterprise" rooted in the commercially attractive goal of transforming Glasgow into a tourist bait, an image curated for foreigners in which the financial distress and high levels of unemployment and homelessness in the city were airbrushed out (1988, 1). Kelman believed that by attempting to render Glasgow more attractive, the Labour authorities leading the city council was pushing a narrative of the city's reinvention to a bourgeois audience; in doing so, these leaders forgot about Glasgow's fundamental working-class heritage and about the workers still living in the city.

In their first anthology, *Workers City: The Real Glasgow Stands Up*, the group's founder, Farquhar McLay, asserts that their resistance to the masking of Glasgow's working-class history carried by the City Council was rooted in:

the tradition of working-class people refusing to be passive and cowed and mute, compliant victims of the political bureaucracy (...) the tradition of grassroots solidarity and total distrust of power and officialdom: of uncompromising resistance to the State's authority in every sphere of life and no matter who is wielding it. (1988, 3-4)

The group's interest in defending workers against dominant power centres, which they firmly perceived as corrupt, situates them within the ideological tradition that strives for the self-determination of marginal subjectivities, something Kelman references in his Booker prize speech. Indeed, by partaking in the Workers City group, Kelman was actively condemning the dismissal of working-class rights and the legacy of Glasgow's City Council, led by Lord Provost and Labour Party's Scottish politician Pat Lally. Kelman considered the 1990 Culture Year and its promotion of a palatable commercial image at the expense of major cuts in the city's public funding to be "a quite ruthless assault on the cultural life of the city" (1992, 32). In the essay, "Art and Subsidy and the

Continuing Politics of Culture City,” Kelman condemns the private interests of the event, which ran counter to the general interests of the Glasgow public, especially of workers (1992, 34). Within his perception of political parties and government authorities as inherently repressive, the government’s criticism of Workers City protests against the Year of Culture celebrations reinforced Kelman’s anti-establishment position.

Kelman further denounced the institutional injustices against the working classes when serving as a researcher and advisor for the Clydeside Action on Asbestos charity between 1990 and 1992. This charity, later renamed Action on Asbestos, was established in 1985 to provide emotional as well as legal support to individuals and families affected by asbestos-related diseases.¹⁰ Rather than belonging to any official circuit or being supported by any major trade union, this charity was founded by victims of asbestos and supported by volunteers and individual donations and thus suited Kelman’s interest in doing politics outside of the establishment. Kelman’s interest in revealing the health risks workers undergo in the workplace had already appeared in the short story “Acid,” included in his collection *Not Not while the Giro*. In it, a young man falls into a vat of acid at a factory in Northern England, where, as Kelman states in the first sentence of the story, acid was an essential working material. Similarly, but with slower effects than acid, asbestos was a harmful material whose use in factories was widespread and was authorised by the government despite knowledge of its potential damaging effects.

As Kelman notes in his essay “A Note on the War Being Waged by the State against the Victims of Asbestos,” a crucial part of the work of the charity was to explicitly name asbestos as a cause of death and disease and also to support the victims’ families in their fight to obtain economic compensation from employers through legal channels (1992, 62). Helping victims of asbestos is especially linked to Glasgow working-class politics because, as Kelman explains, “the Glasgow area is one of the ‘black spots’ on the world map of asbestos-related diseases” (194). Through his contribution to both Workers’ City and Clydeside Action on Asbestos, Kelman challenged “from the ground upwards” what he saw as the corruption and negligence of the Glasgow Labour government of the late 1980s and early 1990s (1992, 62). It is at the bottom, surrounded by those affected by situations like this, where committed politics lie for Kelman. His speech at the opening of the Edinburgh Unemployed Workers Centre, which can be read in *Some Recent Attacks* (88-94) and his participation in the protests against the selling of

¹⁰ More information on Action on Asbestos can be found in their website <https://www.clydesideactiononasbestos.org.uk/>

a third of the Glasgow Green Park, a symbol for the city's working-class history and a place for public community gatherings, to a private company in 1990 are also among the activities demonstrating Kelman's firm commitment to grassroots working-class engagement.

Yet, Kelman's solidarity extends beyond working-class Scottish communities. In his essay "Oppression and Solidarity" (1992, 69-77), which addresses how to resist cultural assimilation and imposition in Glasgow, Palestine and in Kurdish homelands, Kelman defends the need to establish networks of solidarity among global minorities. He writes: "It is basic that the struggle for human rights is shown solidarity by those engaged in other struggles (...) every struggle has a context. Every struggle has its own culture" (Kelman 1992, 76-7). Along with classism, one of the discriminatory practices he associates with the establishment is an entrenched structural racism (Kelman 1992, 38). Lending support to victims of racially motivated attacks and racial harassment, Kelman has attended events and participated in campaigns in defence of the social role of the Citizens Rights Office (1992, 37-45), addressed the situation of refugees after the passing of the Asylum Bill in Britain in a debate organised by Amnesty International (1992, 64-68) and denounced particular cases of racist murders that occurred in Scotland and Britain, like the killing of Kuldip Singh Sekhon in London (Kelman 2002, 103-119) and of the Somalian refugee Ahmed Sheikh in 1990 in Edinburgh (Kelman 1992, 66), both of which have received little press coverage.

Kelman's political agenda identifies parallels between a working-class culture threatened by the forces of imperialism and capitalism in the United Kingdom and the violence suffered by racially and culturally marginalised people within the UK and worldwide. For him, there are visible similarities between the struggle of victims of asbestos-related disease and the victims of racism. As he states: "Just as each and every victim of asbestos-related industrial disease must fight to demonstrate the cause of his or her imminent death, so too must a victim of racist violation fight to demonstrate that the people responsible for the violation were motivated by race-hatred" (1992, 76). In this vein, for Kelman, both class and race are categories in which discriminatory mechanisms operate in a similar fashion. The anti-racist aspects of Kelman's politics are further visible in the author's connections to the Caribbean Artists Movement and the New Beacon bookshop. In his review of Anne Walmsley's book, *The Caribbean Artists Movement 1966-72*, written for *Variant* magazine in 1992 and reprinted in *And the Judges Said...*, Kelman describes the Caribbean Artists Movement as a community-based and anti-

assimilationist organisation (2002, 260). Despite the diverse foci of Caribbean art, institutional racism and workers' rights, all of the campaigns and political groups to which Kelman has contributed share the motivation, as he asserted in the Booker prize speech, of autonomously validating marginal cultures against dominant centres of power.

In this struggle, gender politics are crucial to understand Kelman's ethical and aesthetic proposal. Considering that the majority of his characters are men, I will revise next the analyses that have been offered on Kelman's masculine constructions and on their tensions and correspondences with hegemonic masculinity. My examination of Kelman's male characters' relation with their own emotions and bodies, their position in relation to their wives and girlfriends and their situation as regards the gender binary anticipates information that will serve as a foundation for my study of gendered spaces of solidarity.

3.3.3. Gender Dynamics in James Kelman's Fiction

Throughout his work, James Kelman depicts men who present an insecure sense of subjecthood. Set in a background of deindustrialisation and socioeconomic instability, the gendered dimension of Kelman's fiction shows men in a state of transition. According to R.W. Connell, the gender system tends towards periodical stages of crisis or, as she terms them, "crisis tendencies," in which gender configurations are disrupted or transformed (2005, 84). Due to the gradual incorporation of women to the labour market and the economic impact of deindustrialisation, the late twentieth century has come to be considered as the beginning of a stage of crisis for working-class masculinities. In "Class and Masculinity," included in the *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities* (Kimmel et al, 2005), David Morgan argues that, since the beginning of industrialisation until the late twentieth century, class and class practices were fundamentally associated with masculinities. In this vein, the socio-political shifts regarding gender, as well as the increasing spectrum of social categories such as race and ethnicity, sexualities, age and disability, have destabilised and obscured the ontological security and power base of white working-class men (2005, 175-6). In the Scottish context, Carole Jones identifies the devolutionary period as a timeframe in which a crisis of masculinity permeates the pages of Scottish authors. Termed by Jones as a "moment of disorientation," this concept,

paired with the idea of the gender system's "crisis tendencies," is essential to understanding James Kelman's portrayal of gender issues (2009a, 11). For Jones, gender disorientation manifests in those men struck by the shift in gender power dynamics as a "profound sense of dislocation" and a "nostalgia for the certainties and stabilities of traditional gender relations and identities" (2009a, 22). The gender shifts occurring in post-war times regarding the growth of the feminist movement and the decline of male-dominated heavy industries created a fluid and unexplored scenario where men and women, with their traditional gender roles in a state of decay, had to find new social positions. In this section, I will contextualise the gender disorientation of James Kelman's male characters by explaining how it is illustrated in three particular aspects. The first aspect I will discuss is how Kelman develops the subjectivity of his marginal male characters through the exploration of their inner voices. The second aspect I will examine is how Kelman portrays his characters' bodies and the political significance of the movement, or lack thereof, of these bodies. Finally, the third aspect I will focus on is Kelman's construction of female characters. By describing how the women appear in Kelman's work in relation to the men and as their opposites, I will examine the question of whether Kelman performs a gender role reversal and its potential implications from a gender perspective.

3.3.3.1. The Inner Voices of Working-class Men

In order to depict a sense of both gender and class identity disorientation, Kelman situates his characters in a space of temporal transition that can be viewed as anachronistic. According to Hames, "in Kelman's Glasgow the poor still live mainly in tenements, rather than tower block and working men wear boiler suits to mind-numbing factory jobs. There are no tracksuits, no call centres, no American fast food and no Buckfast tonic wine" (2010b, 3). In the transition between the glorious industrial past of Glasgow and the industrial decline and instability starting in the 1970s, the central identity marker of these male working-class characters —namely, their work— is threatened by deindustrialisation and unemployment, turning them into ghosts of a recent past.

Although Kelman's characters belong to the lower-classes and their lived experience is tied to working-class culture, it is crucial to underline that, as victims of the deindustrialisation process, they encapsulate the transition between "the days when the working classes could find work" and the precarious and contemporary "out of work culture" (O'Hagan 1994, 8). In this context, the working-class marginal origins of Kelman's characters are crucial to their gender identity.

Due to the state of tense and contradictory social transition, James Kelman's portrayal of gender dynamics is highly ambivalent and complex. According to McMillan, Kelman's exploration of gendered subjecthood mainly through male narrators is "balanced precariously between subjectivity and alterity, self-presence and lack, masculinity and femininity" (2001, 54). One of the main ways in which the author reflects a complex and particularised narration of masculine subjectivity is through his experimentation with the masculine inner voice, the narration of a male character's subjective consciousness. In their minds, Kelman's male characters suffer from a chaotic mental clutter, "the disorder of their inner worlds," which suffocates them and complicates their subjecthood (Hames 2007a, 69). Through the acknowledgement of a fragmented and inconsistent subjecthood, Kelman's male characters have been defined for their weakened self-perception as "non-subjects" (Jones 2009a, 45) or as "vulnerable subject(s)-in-process" (Knights 1999, 186). Unlike the rationality and self-control attributed, for instance, to a Victorian masculinity, Kelman's male characters suffer in their powerlessness and inability to achieve a stable subjecthood.

Kelman's use of the masculine inner voice is considered innovative in its exploration of the psyche of post-industrial marginalised men by critics such as Cairns Craig (1993), Scott Hames (2007a) and Carole Jones (2009a). Craig considers that, due to their diverse and contradictory aspects, Kelman's male characters possess an inner voice that constitutes "the site in which the community's voices happen," an individualised account of the collective preoccupations of the socially marginalised post-industrial community Kelman's work aims at voicing (1999, 103). Craig's interpretation is highly problematic as it considers a limited set of white masculine voices can stand for a whole community. This gender gap is identified by Neil McMillan, who argues that the masculine individualism of Kelman's representations actively omits other marginalised voices, namely, female ones, rather than voicing a whole community. According to Neil McMillan, in his preference for masculine dispossessed voices, Kelman is confronting an elitist bourgeois value-system, the establishment, while at the same time replacing it by

another closed value-system, completely masculine, without interferences from any third person narrator and thus without diversity:

The trouble is that this strategy bears traces of a masculinist value system of bourgeois individualism in which men have always claimed to be the one and only. I have no wish to undermine Kelman's artistic project in the name of an unthinking critique of identity politics, but the manner in which Kelman's fictional subjects claim their voices itself reflects an unthinking attitude to gender representations. (2001, 43)

As McMillan sees it, by choosing a mainly masculine narrative, Kelman is reproducing a patriarchal hierarchy that privileges the masculine perspective over the feminine one, conforming to "the traditional gender binarism of subject/other" (2000, 127). While Kelman offers a flattening of narrative perspective, between first- and third-person narration, in order to render the text as free as possible, the fact that none of his characters, (at least at the time when McMillan did his analysis) was female demonstrates a limitation of the voices represented. Conscious of Kelman's narrow masculine scope, but also aware of the diversity of masculine voices that appear in his work, Carole Jones argues that Kelman challenges a monolithic masculinity by portraying the complex subjectivity of male characters —something that had been largely omitted from previous masculine accounts, which were often rooted in a universalised rationality (2009a, 36). Jones takes the concept "universalised rationality" from Peter Middleton, who observed that, while men "have written plenty about their subjectivity and power (...) they have constantly universalised it at the same time and assumed that the rationality of their approach was the sum total of rationality" (1992, 3). By escaping the totalisation of rationality, which Kelman equates with the dominant value-system, the self-exploration of Kelman's male characters challenges the correlation among masculinity, humanity and rationality and explores an uncertain male subjectivity full of doubts, questions and discomfort. However, although Carole Jones does see the masculine inward gaze in a generally positive light, given its challenge to the monolithic and rational discourse of masculinity, she also pinpoints, as McMillan does, how problematic it is to consider that a masculinised narration that omits female voices can be representative of a whole community:

[T]his model of the self continues to be problematic as it is still only a partial description of both the self and the community. If this is not one man talking to himself (which in the popular imagination indicates “madness”) but an “inner dialogue of competing voices” where “the community’s voices happen,” then it is a dialogue between men only. Women play no part here; it is men talking amongst themselves, a community of men. After all, this continues to be a masculinised model of the self. (2009a, 44)

The exclusive focus on men’s inner fragmented and confusing psyches is extrapolated to Kelman’s portrayal of the male body as anxious and vulnerable.

3.3.3.2. Vulnerable Male Bodies

In order to emphasise the pathos of his male characters as victims of a crisis in traditional working-class male values, Kelman constructs male characters who are emotionally vulnerable, helpless and prone to attacks of hysteria. The presence of hysteria in *The Busconductor Hines* is analysed by Ben Knights, who contends that the fact that hysteria, an emotional state traditionally associated with women, is attributed in *The Busconductor Hines* to a male character is highly relevant (1999, 190). In *Marked Men: White Masculinity in Crisis*, Sally Robinson discusses a series of American novels that present the bodies of white American men in crisis as vulnerable and wounded. For Robinson, discussions of male masochism and pain and of their embodiment as wounded are at the forefront of the discourse of masculinity in crisis (2000, 12). Through their internalisation of crisis, men become marked as gendered beings and, consequently, increasingly conscious of their ailments and problems. Indeed, as men in crisis themselves, the body is portrayed as a problematic dimension for Kelman’s characters.

Characters like Rab Hines in *The Busconductor Hines* (1984), Pat Doyle in *A Disaffection* (1989) and Sammy Samuels in *How Late it Was, How Late* (1994) are shown to be vulnerable and excessively self-reflective, living in “ideologically feminine spaces of interiority, passivity and pathos” (McMillan 2001, 41). In these masculinities, the barrier between the mind and body has partially lost its rigidity. Rather than a realm separate from the mind, the body is a constant obstacle for Kelman’s men. The emotionality and weakness of these characters is described by Jones as “an encroachment of flesh into consciousness traditionally associated with women” (2009a, 46). Masculine

rationality is interrupted by traditionally feminine neuroticism and emotionality manifesting as a lack of control. As explained by Ben Knights, “their identity is subject to invasion from without as well as lack of governance within” (1999, 188). According to Jones, both in *The Busconductor Hines* and *How Late it Was, How Late*, the action of crying is described as a problematic nuisance for the male protagonists (2010, 115). Although the body is incorporated into the relationship of these men with themselves, Hines’ inability to cry and Sammy’s disconnection with emotions signal a disconnect: rather than merging in a fluid relationship, mind and body, interrupt one another, thus interfering in these male characters’ attempts at both mental and bodily control. Instead of controlling their bodies, Kelman’s men are at “at the mercy of their body’s whims,” interrupted by an excessive self-awareness of the burden of their human bodily imperfections (McNeill 2012, 77). The obsessive and anxious relationship that Kelman’s characters have with both their minds and bodies, both of which are constantly in a state of tension, reconfigures them as masculine models of interiority, self-reflection and crippling stasis, thus inverting the dominant ideal of men as active, adventurous and confident beings.

The crisis of Kelman’s male characters is further accentuated by their restricted access to social and political agency. In *The Busconductor Hines*, Rab Hines’s attempt at a strike does not work and in *How Late it Was, How Late*, Sammy Samuels’ attack against the police does not change his uncertain status as a marginal ex-convict. These instances illustrate, for Jones, failed attempts to achieve self-aggrandisement and male success through action (2009a, 52-3). However, in the case of Sammy, as Jones puts forward, his beating of the police might not be so straightforwardly interpreted as a violent action intended to obtain social and political visibility for the marginalised subject. Instead, considering the consequences it has for Sammy, it could be understood as a strategy of liberation through social invisibility, “a protest against the fixing that visibility brings” (Jones 2009b, 281). In this sense, Jones argues that the conceptualisation of male violence in *How Late it Was, How Late* may have opposite intentions to the ones it had in the 1930s gang novel or in William McIlvanney’s work: invisibility rather than visibility, interiority and reflection rather than exteriority and dominance. In *The Busconductor Hines*, the political self-assertion of male subjecthood consists of “waiting, looking,” showing “a deeply unpatriarchal ability to survive what counts as failure” (Knights 1999, 193-4). The rejection of violence and action as the main method for the self-determination of working-class masculinities in Kelman’s fiction situates his precariously employed and

marginalised men against the “dominant masculinist class politics that identifies working-class men (...) as ‘politically conscious’ only if they follow the masculine-centric logic” (Satayaban 2016, 75). Accordingly, for both Jones and Satayaban, Kelman propounds a pacific and reflective model of working-class masculinity that clashes with previous hard men models. While mostly absent from Kelman’s fiction, his female characters, normally wives or girlfriends of the male protagonists, are independent breadwinners, standing in stark contrast to their unemployed and passive male partners.

3.3.3.3. Strong Female Breadwinners and Weak Unemployed Men: A Gender Role Reversal

An assessment of James Kelman’s whole oeuvre to date reveals that it is only in his 2012 novel *Mo Said She Was Quirky* that a female perspective is voiced through Helen, the main character. The women who appear in the rest of his fiction in the roles of wives, girlfriends or love interests do not have agency of their own. The presence of women on the page in these works is completely dependent on the male voices and how frequently they refer to them. As Jones points out: “We never have privileged access to a female consciousness in Kelman’s work” (2010, 116). Mediated through the narration of their male counterparts, Kelman’s female characters have been interpreted as caregivers or breadwinners. According to Whyte, the character of Sandra, Rab Hines’s wife in *The Busconductor Hines*, follows the gang novel trope of the wife as a helper who supports her husband and maintains harmony in the family home (1998, 274). Moreover, Alison in *A Dissaffection* is regarded by Pat Doyle as the answer to all his afflictions. As Ben Knights argues, through the role of breadwinner, depicted as rational and responsible women, the men in crisis are recentred and balanced (1999, 192). Neil McMillan identifies shared aspects between Kelman’s gender politics and the gender politics of the Glasgow urban gang novel of the 1930s. As he contends, the ambitious work-driven attitude of Sandra in *The Busconductor Hines* and of Alison in *A Dissaffection* along with their middle-class family background, groups them with the women in the Glasgow gang novels, whose bourgeois aspirations were negatively portrayed. This separation of male/female class politics as unpicked by McMillan perpetuates the distance between men and women in the gender binary, relegating women to an “other space” and

emphasising the idea that the tensions endured in a poor working-class environment have a crucial gendered dimension (2001, 48). For McMillan, the desire of these female characters for social and economic improvement brings them closer to the establishment Kelman's critical writings overtly oppose, consequently underlining the political distance between men and women and portraying women as accomplices of the bourgeois value-system.

Not only are Kelman's female characters typically middle-class and decidedly more ambitious, but they are also the household breadwinners. Masculinity has been traditionally associated with the role of economic provider of the family. The gender role reversal found in Kelman is illustrative of one of the circumstances that developed from the deindustrial weakening of men's attachment to the labour market and the strengthening of women's attachment to it: the decline of the masculine breadwinner model. As David Morgan argues, one of the consequences to ensue from this decline was reconsideration of class as a measure of individuals rather than a category defining the household (2005, 173). This individualisation is clearly present in Kelman's gender representations. The male protagonist and their female partners remain separate and different and rarely see each other. The explorations of gender and class identity are focused on the individual and when the household is depicted, the atmosphere is of tension and a lack of understanding.

Moreover, Kelman's women, while disenfranchised from the narrative voice, have masculine attributes: they are more confident than their male counterparts, more hardworking and more ambitious, therefore challenging traditional gender constructions. They are closer to masculine rationality and far from feminine instability and hysteria. Conversely, as has been explained, Kelman's men are unstable, needy and hysterical, thus showing a stereotypically female behaviour. According to Jones, this reversal of gender roles elucidates questions regarding Kelman's position towards the gender binary (2009a, 40). This reversal in gender expression could be analysed as part of the search for alternative gender models in the midst of this "moment of disorientation" or instead, as a re-routing of a masculinity in crisis, which employs victimhood to place men at the centre. According to Ben Knights, it is the latter. As he argues, Kelman's men participate in an "appeal to sympathy and even a perverse kind of claim to centrality" (1999, 192). Due to the difficulty of completely overcoming a binary model that considers the masculine gender a universal and fixed entity, Kelman's texts are "on the border of masculinity," focused on the deep exploration of the crises and tensions emerging from a conflicting

sense of subjecthood (Jones 2010, 119). Yet even on the verge of non-subjecthood, Kelman's men remain at the centre of their own narration.

In his analysis of *The Busconductor Hines*, Ben Knights identifies how the occupation of a feminine space is not a comfortable one for Hines and that when confronting powerlessness, "he will sulk, his characteristic pose being to play infantile and self-defeating games with anyone who occupies a position of authority" (1999, 192). This analysis suggests that patriarchal gender hierarchies remain a haunting presence in the gender dynamics found in James Kelman's work. Hegemonic masculine expressions of virility and self-confidence, even if challenged, are maintained as structuring principles of the characters' gender subjecthood and dynamics. The gender reversal realised by Kelman is not presented as a fluid exchange of roles, but rather as a source of further unease. For instance, in *The Busconductor Hines*, the main character, Rab Hines, does not feel comfortable staying at home with his son Paul alone nor can he accept the fact that Sandra earns more money than he does working a better job. As Carole Jones observes: "Instead of a nurturing space, the domestic realm adds to Hines's anxiety and feelings of inadequacy" (2009a, 41). Gendered spaces and, specifically, their configuration through a masculine perspective represent a key aspect of this PhD thesis that I will explore further in Chapters 5 and 6.

While displaying a more emotional, vulnerable and less rational and rigid gender expression, these men have a sense of subjecthood and social dynamics that is dependent on the limitations and structures of hegemonic masculinities. Kelman's conceptualisation of femininity as experienced by his male characters is inscribed within a male narrative in which femininity "continues to be defined in opposition to the ideals of hegemonic masculinity" (Jones 2009a, 57). According to Sally Robinson, white masculinities have presented themselves in prolonged state of crisis since the 1960s (2000, 10). In her view, crises in the gender system may provoke a myriad of reactions, from the remasculinisation and reproduction of previous masculine models to the recoding of masculine expressions in ways that retain some of the old elements but incorporate new ones (2000, 10). Within the complexity and the open possibilities of their state of crisis, Kelman's men occupy a patriarchal feminine space in the sense that their weaknesses and vulnerabilities are experienced as problematic sites of conflict (Jones, 2009a, 60). In this light, Kelman's portrayal of gender dynamics mostly reflects a crisis in which the old models are disappearing and the new ones appear as problematic sources of anxiety. In this context, solidarity and the spaces where it occurs or is impeded become crucial to understanding

James Kelman's approach to gender relations and his own vision of how men politically organise themselves.

CHAPTER 4. MASCULINE SPACES OF SOLIDARITY

Between the two of them, Alasdair Gray and James Kelman authored numerous works of fiction; this PhD thesis pays attention specifically to those in which space occupies a significant role as a medium that inscribes the characters' identity, development and social and political relations. In Chapters 5 and 6, I explore the idea that the engagement of the characters of Gray's *Lanark* (1981) and *1982, Janine* (1984) and Kelman's *The Busconductor Hines* (1984), *A Chancer* (1985) and *A Disaffection* (1989) with the spaces portrayed in the novels and these characters' potential for establishing or participating in networks of solidarity is shaped by gender and class, as well as cultural parameters. Accordingly, this chapter defines the theoretical ideas on space, geographies of masculinities and philosophical and political considerations on the concept of solidarity which serve as a framework for my literary analysis of the selected corpus. As such, Section 4.1. illustrates the theories on the configuration and dynamics that shape urban space. After an introductory overview of urban studies from the modern to the postmodern and to the global city, this section is divided into two parts. Part 4.1.1. revises theories on the political and class-based hierarchies that structure space and that are significant for my research. The next part, 4.1.2., explains key theories on the characteristics of urban mobilities. Section 4.2. starts with a contextualisation of the sociological theorisation of masculinities as gendered, plural and context-dependent to later concentrate on the application of the relational definition of masculinities in the study of space. While feminist geography has usually addressed urban space from the perspective of women, Section 4.2. analyses research that has examined the interaction of masculinities with space. This section culminates with subsections 4.2.1. and 4.2.2. The first one discusses the research conducted on the specific studies, historical and literary, of Glaswegian masculinities and traces the connection between them and this thesis. In the segment that follows, theories on working-class masculinities and the masculinities reproduced and connected to the workplace are examined, since class and the workplace are, in fact, two crucial dimensions of my study. Finally, Section 4.3. considers the concept of solidarity. In the first part, 4.3.1., I revise how solidarity has been defined and the social contexts and relationships that have been characterised as examples of solidarity. In the second part, 4.3.2., I explore the dark side of solidarity, as well as the limitations to achieve it in an unequal world.

4.1. From a Social to a Gendered Conceptualisation of Space

One of the key axes of this PhD thesis is the analysis of the representation of space in the city of Glasgow and its surroundings. Space and particularly urban space has been examined from the perspective of the social sciences since the late nineteenth century. As the transition from rural to urban areas developed, social scientists such as Émile Durkheim, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels aimed to explain the changes this transition would bring upon humanity and society. From a Marxist perspective, urbanisation coincided with the development of capitalism and the division of the population between bourgeoisie and proletariat. In this vein, Engels defined the growth of cities as concomitant with social division and as a cause of feelings of indifference and selfishness. As he argued, the crowded urbanisation of the metropolis fostered “the brutal indifference, the unfeeling isolation of each in his private interest (...).The dissolution of mankind into monads, of which each one has a separate principle, the world of atoms, is here carried out to its utmost extreme” (1993, 37). For Durkheim, while society was normally maintained through solidarity, urbanisation and its subsequent changes could bring what he called *anomie*, an anti-social detachment from social norms that Durkheim explains through the phenomenon of suicide. Anomie can appear, as Durkheim argues, as a deviation from social harmony and solidarity whenever “traditional rules have lost their authority” in the event of an abrupt socioeconomic change, but he believes that in the spheres of trade and industry it has chronicised (2002, 214-215). As he explains it, writing in 1897, the deregulation of markets and the lack of government control on industrialisation created the possibility of limitless economic prospects which, together with the impact that the loss of power of religion had on the sense of community, helped strengthening the potential for social competitiveness, disorder as well as disaffection in the modern city.

At the turn of the century, the individual experience of the modern city continued to be theorised by the *European Social Theory* school of thought (Menéndez Tarrazo 2010, 32). One of the members of this school was German philosopher Georg Simmel. Aiming to capture the urban experience, in his essay “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” first published in 1903, he examines the effects that the social shifts associated to the emergence of the modern city had in the psychology of the individual. For Simmel, the social problems derived from the rise of the metropolis had to do with “the attempt of the individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the

sovereign powers of society” (2010, 11). As such, the focus on Simmel’s investigations were the relationship between the individual and the collective in the context of the modern metropolis, as well as the resistance of the individual to avoid being engulfed by the homogenising forces of society. The inhabitant of the modern city is characterised by Simmel as someone disconnected from his surroundings who intellectualises and rationalises existence (12).¹¹ This metropolitan intellectualisation is, for Simmel, an extension of the logic of metropolitan money economy to all dimensions of social life. While in the small-town economy the close relation between producers and purchasers inevitably caused an emotional relation based on the appreciation of individuality, in the metropolis producers and purchasers do not know each other. This economic distance is mirrored in metropolitan social relations, characterised by the indifference, objectivity and matter-of-factness of money (12-13). As Simmel explains it, “intellectual relationships deal with persons as numbers, that is, as with elements which, in themselves, are indifferent, but which are of interest only insofar as they offer something objectively perceivable” (12). This detached attitude is encapsulated by two of Simmel’s concepts: the *blasé outlook* and the *stranger*. The *blasé outlook* derives from metropolitan overstimulation —metropolitan individuals are exposed to many more rapidly changing stimuli than small town or rural dwellers— as well as from the money economy. Being *blasé* entails feeling indifference towards new stimuli and objects to the point they are perceived as meaningless (14). The *blasé outlook* is understood by Simmel as a metropolitan form of socialisation, one that, through indifference and antipathy protects us from the chaos of relations and stimuli of the modern city (15). Moreover, the figure of the stranger is defined by Simmel as a person who is fixed within a group but whose position within this group is anchored in his lack of belonging: “strangeness means that he, who also is far, is actually near” (1950, 402). The concepts of the stranger and the *blasé* intertwine in Simmel’s interpretation of the metropolis. According to Fran Tonkiss, in the life of the modern city as theorised by Simmel, many people are strangers to one another due to the “tacit social language of indifference” (2005, 116) that connects people who do not know one another in a shared metropolitan space. Unlike the inhabitants of small towns who know and acknowledge each other whenever they meet, the citizens of

¹¹ I use the pronoun “his” when talking about the surroundings of Simmel’s modern citizen because Simmel conceives of it as male in his original theories. The geographical subject was seen before the development of feminist geography as masculine by default. In my revision of these theories, I respect the masculine pronoun in the original sources, but in my analysis I try to use more inclusive language, except when the identities explored are clearly defined as masculine only.

the large metropolis walk down the street as a mass of people who are detached or blasé from one another.

The relation between the individual and the city at the dawn of modernity was further theorised in the German context by Walter Benjamin. In his work *The Arcades Project (1927-1940)* (2002), Benjamin situated the emergence of a capitalist economy in 1822, after the construction of the Parisian arcades. For Benjamin, the consumerist lifestyle of the arcades encapsulates the spirit of the modern city. He defines the arcade as “a city, a world in miniature, in which customers will find everything they need” (2002, 873). Due to its centrality in the increasingly fast process of consumerism and commodification, according to David Ferris, the modern city is understood by Benjamin as a *phantasmagoric* dreamland in which the display and consumption of commodities extends beyond the places devised for selling and shopping and into the realm of social relations (2008, 117). As Benjamin states, the arcades are “structures in which we relieve, as in a dream, the life of our parents and grandparents, as the embryo in the womb relives the life of animals. Existence in these spaces flows then without accent, like the events in dreams” (2002, 881). The correlation between the European modern city and the growth of capitalism as theorised by Benjamin goes hand in hand with a specific type of citizen: the *flâneur*. In the dreamlike space of the arcades, “Flânerie is the rhythmic of this slumber” (881). The figure of the *flâneur* has key class connotations. For Benjamin, the *flâneur* is a product of modern capitalism: “abandoned in the crowd” he is “in the same situation as the commodity” (2006, 31). Despite its intrinsic connection with the modern metropolis, the *flâneur* has an ambiguous class position within and simultaneously outside the middle classes. As Elizabeth Wilson puts it, the mid-nineteenth-century *flâneur* is “a gentleman; at this period he has retained at least some private wealth, yet he is subtly *déclassé* and above all he stands wholly outside production” (1992, 95). He has enough money to use his time to roam around observing the material and aesthetic imprint of urbanisation in the new buildings and people of the city. Yet, he is a marginal and solitary individual, a loner whose position is detached from connections with specific bourgeois professions or families.

Another aspect of the *flâneur* that has been heavily discussed is its underlying gender associations. The masculine gender of the *flâneur* is representative of the historical narration of cities from a predominantly masculinist perspective in what Michael Keith terms a “phallogocentric city narrative” (2003, 418). Additionally, the freedom of the *flâneur* to access public space without fear has been analysed as a symbol of masculine

freedom. In order to reveal to what extent urban space has been dominated by men, feminist scholars Janet Wolff (1985), Griselda Pollock (1988) and Elizabeth Wilson (1992), among others, have juxtaposed the freedom of the flâneur, as a man, to walk alone through the streets with the restrictions women have had to access public space. For instance, in “The Invisible Flâneuse,” Wolff characterises the modern metropolis as a dominantly masculine space from which women were excluded: “The public sphere, then, despite the presence of some women in certain contained areas of it, was a masculine domain. And insofar as the experience of ‘the modern’ occurred mainly in the public sphere, it was primarily men’s experience” (1985, 35). However, for Wilson, the figure of the flâneur did not signal the prevalence of masculine mastery over public space but the diminishing of its power as a consequence of the anonymity within the crowd brought by urbanisation. As she suggests: “The flâneur represents masculinity as unstable, caught up in the violent dislocations that characterized urbanisation” (1992, 109). What arises from Benjamin’s discussion of the modern metropolis and the flâneur is the significance of urbanisation as a process that unsettled previous economic, class and gender social parameters, contributing to the materialisation and study of new spaces and spatial engagements.

As capitalism expanded and developed, urban space became increasingly complex. In the 1970s, a new subfield of studies focusing on the political and economic networks that constitute the city emerged. Manuel Castells (1977) and David Harvey (1989) stand out among the thinkers who introduced Marxism in the analysis of the city as an expression of capital. As it will be further explained in Section 4.1.1..., both Castells and Harvey see the city as a dimension of the production and accumulation dynamics of capitalism. Moreover, since the 1990s the development of technology motivated a restructuring of economy that allowed the circulation of money and information to become faster than ever at a worldwide level and beyond national borders. This socioeconomic shift was discussed under the term *globalisation*. The evolution of cities under this new socioeconomic paradigm has been theorised by Manuel Castells as well as by sociologist Saskia Sassen, who coined the term *global cities*. For Sassen, global cities are those strategic urban hubs that concentrate economic activities from the service and finance sectors, which constitute the bedrock of the corporate globalised world (2003, 170). Here, elite firms occupy a central space in the configuration and use of the city. Due to this centralisation, Sassen contends, class, gender and racially diverse workers are marginalised in the global city, being displaced from prestigious positions in the labour

markets as well as being overlooked in mainstream globalisation studies (175). In this same vein, Castells has claimed that, as a consequence of the Western expansion of neoliberal socioeconomic policies, cities have transformed into a dual city divided into corporal professionals, central to discourses on globalisation and low-level workers such as cleaners or security guards with flexible contracts and low salaries. For Castells, globalisation was a primary cause of the widening of inequalities. As such, the socioeconomic dual separation led towards spatial segregation. As he states: “societies were/are becoming dualized, with a substantial top and a substantial bottom growing at both ends of the occupational structure” (2010, 302).

The arrival of postmodernity in the 1980s entailed a challenge to previous urban studies. On the one hand, postmodernity has been examined as a new epoch coming after modernity. Therefore, studies on spatial and social changes derived from this shift have been central to postmodern geography and social sciences. In *The Condition of Postmodernity*, David Harvey understands postmodernity as a transition from modernity and as the cultural and socio-economic effects of the shift from Fordist to post-Fordist capitalism (1989). One of the aspects of the postmodern condition he highlights is the disorienting *time-space compression* according to which the accelerating flow of commodities and information shrinks global distances (1989). In the same vein, Edward Soja considers postmodernity a new period and identifies its characteristics by describing certain aspects of Los Angeles that he considers to be paradigmatic of the postmodern city (2000). Among these characteristics, the blurring of the division between real world and its representations is distinctive of postmodernism (Baudrillard 1994, Smethurst 2000).

On the other hand, postmodernity is also understood as a new analytical framework to examine space. According to postmodern theorist Jean-François Lyotard: “The postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unrepresentable within representation” (1984, 81). In looking for the unrepresentable, postmodern urban analyses are characterised by an “incredulity towards metanarratives” (Lyotard 1984, xxiv), that is, all overarching discourses rooted in scientific objectivity and Truth. Consequently, the binary conception of space and time as separate and absolute categories is challenged in postmodern geography. In contrast, space is reframed “as a conduit for difference, otherness and heterogeneity” (Doel 1999, 70-71), where the individual experience and practice of the city is key.

Difference within space has been examined from the perspective of gender as well as class (Cohen 2000). In the 1980s, urban space began to be analysed, within feminist studies. The gendered conceptualisation of the city understands gender as a social construct that stands in a mutually defining relation with space (Massey 1994, McDowell 1999). Within this approach, there are three key areas of study. The first focuses on the gendered public/private division (Spain 1992, Rose 1993). In *Feminism and Geography*, Gillian Rose contends that feminine space is seen as private and domestic, whereas masculine space belongs to the public sphere of “wage work and politics” (1993, 14). As such, women have been historically marginalised from public space. The fear felt by women when walking in public space has been analysed through a subfield of gender and urban studies termed *geographies of fear* (Pain 2001, Tonkiss 2005). The second area pays attention to the sexual configuration of the city. Liz Bondi’s work is prominent in this line of research. Bondi links gender, sex and sexuality and challenges the gender/sex separation to explain how the city is marketed and commodified under sexualised terms in her analysis of the gentrification of two Edinburgh neighbourhoods (1998). Finally, the third area investigates corporeality and the body as a socio-cultural system that interacts with the city. The leading author in this field is Elizabeth Grosz (1995), who, working from the perspective of bodies, identifies a correlation between conceptualisations of gender and space-time, claiming that, for an adequate representation of female corporeality to exist, an ontological revision of the inherently masculine idea of space-time is needed (1995, 100-101). In her essay “Bodies-Cities,” Grosz proposes a constitutive and bidirectional relational model to explain the interaction between body and city. For Grosz, neither bodies nor cities are holistic on their own, rather bodies and cities co-build one another as “a fundamentally disunified series of systems and interconnections, a series of disparate flows, energies, events or entities and spaces, brought together or drawn apart in more or less temporary alignments” (2002, 301). The study of the body is in line with the growing attention that, since the 1980s, has been paid to the individual and subjective perception of space.

Finally, another dimension of space that has been increasingly examined throughout the twenty-first century is mobility. Drawing from Michel de Certeau’s theory on the embodied act of walking in public space in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) and Henri Lefebvre’s study of rhythms in his book *Rhythmanalysis* (2004), theorists such as Tim Edensor (2000, 2010), Tim Cresswell (2006), Peter Merriman (2012) or Nigel Thrift (2008) have expanded the study of urban mobilities. From the centrality of space

and time as vectors of movement in Cresswell's *On the Move* (2006), as well as in Doreen Massey's *For Space* (2005), Merriman has proposed a new understanding of movement called *movement-space*, according to which mobility is not a consequence of space-time but is simultaneous to it and in interaction with vectors of "sensation, energy, affect, rhythm and force" (2012, 43). These two main conceptions of mobility, one fixed in space-time and another that considers movement as simultaneous and interrelated rather than secondary to space, have been used to examine the movements of the pedestrian (de Certeau 1984, Cresswell and Merriman 2011) or of automobiles (Featherstone, Thrift and Urry 2005).

As it has been revealed in this overview, since the late nineteenth century urban space has been examined from the economic and socio-cultural macrostructures of capitalism and patriarchy, from the perspective of class as well as gender difference and from the microstructures of everyday life that examine the psychological perceptions and reactions to the city and individual and embodied urban practices and mobilities. In what follows, I will explain in more detail the main theories of space I will employ for the literary analyses of Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis. These are divided into three subsections. The first one concentrates on theories that examine space from a political and economic perspective, in which power dynamics are central for the production and articulation of urban space. The second one revolves around urban mobilities. The third one considers the theories on the gendered configuration of urban space that will be relevant for my analysis.

4.1.1. Political and Economic Urban Theory

Until the 1960s, geography had conceived of space as an absolute, quantifiable and objective entity. Accordingly, geographical research mainly focused on descriptive studies of physical geography that measured spatial geometry from a mathematical perspective. Neil Smith and Cindi Katz attribute the Western conception of geographical space as absolute to the dominance of the ideas of Isaac Newton, René Descartes or Immanuel Kant, who posited that space was infinite, static and divisible in homogenous sections (1993, 75). This hegemonic understanding of space as absolute lacked the instruments and the methodology to expand its focus beyond physical geography and

explain the social, economic, cultural and political elements found in space that, in contrast with the absolute paradigm, were inherently dynamic as well as subjective. However, since the 1970s, the integration of Marxist theory in social theory and geography led to a *spatial turn*, in which space was reconsidered as a key dimension to examine society and was given equal importance as time. The insistence on the centrality of space for the development of social theory further grew in the 1980s with the introduction of postmodern geographies (Harvey 1989; Soja 1989). As a result, space was predominantly reconceptualised as social and subjective rather than absolute.

A pioneer in the understanding of space as a social construct was French philosopher Michel Foucault. While for Foucault the nineteenth century was centred upon the obsession with history and time, the second half of the twentieth century was “the epoch of space” (1986, 22). As he argues, until the second half of the twentieth century, “space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile. Time, on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic” (1980a, 70). In contrast with the fixed conceptualisation of space, Foucault describes space as a heterogenous set of autonomous and intertwined relations that are “irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another” (1986, 23). For Foucault, space is mediated and conditioned by hierarchies of power. In “Space, Knowledge and Power,” an interview conducted by Paul Rabinow, Foucault observes that “space is fundamental in any exercise of power” (1984, 252). In order to exemplify how power dominates and creates barriers in the use of space, Foucault coined the term *disciplinary technologies* (1977). Among the spaces mediated and modelled through disciplinary technologies, Jeremy Bentham’s *panopticon* (2011) serves as a paradigmatic example for Foucault. Yet, disciplinary technologies can take various institutionalised forms, from the school to the prison, the hospital, the asylum or the army (Rabinow 1984, 17; Philo 2010, 167). For Foucault, society does not operate through universal consensus, but through the imposition of the workings of power and control: “the phenomenon of the social body is the effect not of a consensus but of the materiality of power operating on the very bodies of individuals” (1980b, 55). Hence, in Foucault’s theories, architecture is conceived of as a tool exercised by power that determines the specific structure of social relations and the liberties or restrictions in the use of space.

Also in the French context, philosopher/sociologist Henri Lefebvre further contributed to the dismantlement of the centrality of abstract and logico-mathematical paradigms of space separate from social practice by asserting that “(social) space is a

(social) product” (1991, 26). Inspired by a Marxist framework and aiming to adapt the analytical tools of Marxism to the spatial articulation of social classes in rural and urban spaces, Lefebvre introduced the theory of space as a socially produced dimension in his writings *The Production of Space* (1991), “Right to the City” (1996), *The Urban Revolution* (2003) and *Marxist Thought and the City* (2016). In the latter, Lefebvre describes space as a social reality in itself, whose function is comparable to that of capital, both as a means of production and as a means of control and domination (1991, 26). Rather than aiming to create a unitary theory of space, Lefebvre identified the “codes” which configure it as a network of dialectically intertwined multiple intersections. As he explains it: “Codes will be seen as part of a practical relationship, as part of an interaction between ‘subjects’ and their space and surroundings” (17-18). For Lefebvre, space is both a social product and a social medium whose configuration is tied to capitalist dynamics. He understands capitalism as an ensemble of overlapping facets and markets such as land, commerce, finance, labour or knowledge. A key facet of capitalism is the hegemony of the bourgeoisie and their leading position in the control of space (1991, 10). Lefebvre calls the instrumentalisation of space by the bourgeoisie and by capital as *abstract space* (57). Despite the hegemony of the bourgeoisie and capitalist practices in the use of space, abstract space is prevented from becoming completely dominating thanks to the centrality of the class struggle. The tensions between the bourgeoisie and other social classes in their practice of space allow space to remain diverse (55). As such, in Lefebvre’s discussion, class struggle, rather than merely happening in space, is inscribed in it directly intervening, for instance, in the urban planning of a city.

In its malleable state, then, as a medium for domination as well as for subversion, space is subject to class and power. Thus, the interrelation between space and the people who produce and occupy it is bidirectional, their changes and fluctuations affecting one another. Lefebvre’s understanding of space in the 1970s as a dimension of the production and reproduction of the capitalist system sheds light on the state of society in that period in which, as he himself argues, natural space was being increasingly mediated by economic productive forces (1991, 30). Due to the relevance of class as a transversal dimension of my thesis, Lefebvre’s characterisation of space as an instrument for the perpetuation, as well as subversion, of capitalist hegemony is essential to illuminate the inscription of class tensions in my primary corpus.

In his theory of space as a network of multiple intersections, Lefebvre classifies space into the interconnected realms of *perceived*, *conceived* and *lived space*, as well as

into *spatial practice*, *representations of space* and *representational space* (1991, 38-39). Both triads are respectively linked. In this vein, spatial practice alludes to the different shapes space can acquire depending on each individual perception within a hierarchical socially-coded space, that is, a perceived space that is produced and reproduced. Representations of space are concomitant with conceived space and they encompass the agglutination of space through its mathematical, architectural or urbanistic properties. These representations encapsulate how space is conceptualised thus holding a political significance. Finally, representational space refers to how humans configure space through images, myths, symbols and names; it is the use we make of space as a lived experience. Through the theorisation of this double triad, Lefebvre challenges the concept of space as neutral and unaffected by relations of production proposing instead a multifaceted re-examination that understands space as an intersection of physical, mental and social dimensions in hierarchical simultaneity with the productive forces of knowledge, action and consumerism. In addition, it is key to highlight that Lefebvre employs his conceptualisation of space as socially produced to analyse the spaces of everyday life (1991). As such, he analyses both the interrelated macrostructures of urban space and the microstructures of daily life.

The connection between space and capitalist production has been further theorised by contemporary Marxist geographers working from the 1970s onwards. For instance, for David Harvey, material space —buildings, streets— holds a bidirectional relationship with the social processes —consumerism, work, domestic labour— inscribed within it (1985, 3). In this relational conceptualisation, Harvey takes a Marxist approach considering the ties between capitalism and space as his focus of study. In order to explain how class inequalities are inscribed in space, Harvey argues that the uneven accumulation of capital across society, as well as the social division of labour, directly produce the “difference” and “otherness” of certain groups in their use of space (1993, 5). As a result, the use of space is determined by socio-economic *positionality* within the capitalist system. According to Stuart C. Aitken and Gill Valentine, positionality is a term to define “the way that our own experiences, beliefs and social location affect the way we understand the world and go about researching it” (2015, 433). Within the dynamics of class struggle, Harvey argues: “those who command space can always control the politics of place even though (...) it takes control of some place to command space in the first instance” (1989, 234).

In his most cited book, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989), Harvey establishes a direct correlation between the ability to influence the production and the representation of space and social power (233). By commanding both the production and representation of space, capitalists have the power to convince workers of the idea that they are barred from intervening in space. Yet, Harvey takes historical examples to illustrate how workers have resisted the domination of the bourgeoisie in the command of space. For instance, the First International benefited from the union of workers from diverse political backgrounds as well as from the transfer of funds and materials to act as a serious threat for the bourgeoisie (232). The class struggle over the command of space then is relative and flexible, conditioned by the political and economic characteristics of each period (234). Through his Marxist study of geography, Harvey proposes a socio-economic structuring of space and of the varied and shifting uses that, depending on our positionality within the class system, humans are able to make of space.

Moreover, Marxist sociologist Manuel Castells has also worked to challenge the idea that space conditions the lives of urban dwellers independently of capitalist structures. Instead, he has argued that the space of the city mirrors the workings of capitalism and that these are not solely distinctive of urban space. Within the capitalist ordering of space, the city is, for Castells, a space of consumerism. As he defines it, the city is “a residential unit of labour power, a unit of collective consumption corresponding ‘more or less’ to the daily organisation of a section of labour power” (1976, 148). In *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach* (1977), Castells claims that the disregard towards the ideological and capitalist structuring of the urban in previous studies of the city hinders the profound study of how ideologically charged political interventions in the city in matters of planning, housing or transport stand in relation with those citizens affected by them (1). In this vein, he explores why the urban is prioritised as a dimension separate from capitalism in order to propose a model that understands urbanity as a capitalist product.

Edward Soja further contributes to the conceptualisation of space as a key sociological variable in the understanding of the capitalist system. In *Postmodern Geographies*, he argues that since the late 1960s the theoretical primacy of history over space —dominant in the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century— was upended by the inauguration of postmodernism (1989, 5-6). In order to specify that this book revolves around the idea that space and society are mutually constitutive, Soja employs the term *spatiality*. As he describes it, spatiality equates to the “created space of

social organization and production” (1989, 79), that is, the social dimensions of space. For Soja, spatiality differs from space in itself and space as a context in that it is an understanding of space and society as co-constitutive, holding a relation comparable to the social construction of time as it is concretised in history (80). The term spatiality encapsulates the relation between the spatial and the social and the principle that “social and spatial relations of production are both space-forming and space-contingent” (81). Following Lefebvre and Harvey, for Soja, the production and reproduction of space, as well as the forces of exploitation and domination, become tools for the class struggle (92, 98). In fact, one of the aims behind *Postmodern Geographies* is to insist on the spatial inscription of power, discipline and ideology in order to extend political awareness of its social and political construction. In Soja’s own words: “We must be insistently aware of how space can be made to hide consequences from us, how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into apparently innocent spatiality of social life, how human geographies become filled with politics of ideology” (1989, 6).

While most of *Postmodern Geographies* is devoted to theorising the idea of spatiality, the last two chapters of this book serve as examples of the applications of postmodern social theory and geography to the analysis of Los Angeles as the epitome of the postmodern capitalist city. Soja argues that, in the capitalist restructuring of socio-economic relations he links with postmodernism, the city is characterised by “more flexible systems of production, consumption, exploitation, spatialization and social control” (221). In his aim to propose a social theory that calls for the centrality of space as an inherent aspect of postmodernism, Soja further expands his ideas on the postmodern relations between space and society in his books *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-And-Imagined Places* (1996) and *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions* (2000). Two concepts connected to the analysis of space as social and society as spatial proposed in spatiality stand out in these books: the *trialectics of space* and *Thirdspace*.

Inspired by Lefebvre’s spatial triad, which divides space between perceived (physical, spatial practice), conceived (mental, representations of space) and lived (social, representational space), Soja identifies a *Firstspace*, a *Secondspace* and a *Thirdspace*. Firstspace and Secondspace constitute, for Soja, the two approaches towards space that dominated geography during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Firstspace encompasses an analytical, objective and material approach towards space (1996, 75). In contrast, Secondspace constitutes the imagined and subjective

representations of material space (1996, 79). In order to challenge the binarism of Firstspace and Secondspace, Soja coined the term Thirdspace, which encompasses the multiple meanings of space as a social construct at once containing and transcending physical (Firstspace) and mental (Secondspace) representations by incorporating the social dimension. As Soja puts it: “Trialectical thinking is difficult, for it challenges all conventional modes of thought and taken-for-granted epistemologies. It is disorderly, unruly, constantly evolving, unfixed, never presentable in permanent constructions” (1996, 70). For Soja, postmodernism initiated a process of deconstruction of modernist epistemologies of space introducing a more flexible poststructuralist critical theory, as well as a dismantlement of essentialist narratives in favour of a relative, eclectic and plural approach towards space (1996, 244). Following these ideas, Soja proposes six intertwined models that describe phenomena found in 1990s Los Angeles to set a paradigm for the understanding of the postmodern metropolis or, as he calls it, the *postmetropolis* worldwide. The six discourses of the postmetropolis are: *the Flexcity*, *the Cosmopolis*, *the Exopolis*, *the fractal city*, *the carceral archipelago* and *Simcities* (2000, 154-155).

The Flexcity is the product of the shift from a Fordist industry of manufacturing and assembly lines towards a post-Fordist re-industrialisation based on the service and technological sectors and characterised by cost-efficient practices and lower salaries (Soja 2002, 191). The flex- prefix derives from the flexible production and labour systems which characterise post-Fordism and which materialise in the configuration of the postmetropolis. The Cosmopolis is the term used to describe the new configuration of postmodern city-regions due to globalisation (192). Soja argues that, although discourses on the global city have mostly prioritised analyses of the business centre of New York and London, cities that maintain a manufacturing industry such as Tokyo and Los Angeles have also been restructured due to globalisation (192). The Exopolis simultaneously describes two interrelated processes: the construction of cities in suburban areas and the deconstruction of traditional cities in inner city areas (192). This reversal of the concept of the city as something inherent to urban centres unsettles the fixed conceptualisation of what is urban, what is suburban and what is non-urban (192). Furthermore, the fractal city or as Soja has also called it *metropolarities* encompasses the social restructuring of the postmetropolis as an effect of post-Fordism and globalisation. This social restructuring manifests in the widening of social and economic inequalities and an increasing polarisation around class and racial divisions (193). The potential consequences of the rising social differentiation are controlled by the urban structures that constitute the

carceral archipelago. Inspired by the work of Marxist thinker Mike Davis, the carceral archipelago constructs a metaphor of the postmetropolis as a fortress city where inhabitants are surveilled and controlled by capital and the state (194). Finally, Simcities refer to the precedence of simulations and simulacra in our daily lives over the realities they simulate (195). Drawing from Jean Baudrillard's idea of the *precession of simulacra* (1994, 1), Soja argues that, while simulations of reality have always existed—churches, theme parks—they used to merge with our lives when we voluntarily visited them. What has changed in the postmetropolis is that Simcities are no longer separate spaces and in them hyperreality takes over reality (195). All these six discourses characterise the postmodern city or postmetropolis for Soja.

Considering, not only the working-class Glasgow background of Alasdair Gray and James Kelman and that of the characters in the selected primary corpus, but also the intertwining between Scottishness and working-class identity in the British cultural imagery, class is a crucial layer in the representation of the spaces of solidarity I will examine. Consequently, the understanding of space offered by Lefebvre, Harvey or Soja, mediated by capitalism and thus structured according to class, is key to shed light on how class aspects influence the potential engagements with solidarity shown in Gray's and Kelman's novels. Space is portrayed in diverse manners as a medium of production and reproduction of systems of power throughout the primary corpus. As a result, theories of space that concentrate on its intersection with capital are fundamental to shed light on my analysis.

In this vein, the *capabilities* approach from the perspectives of urban space, class and masculinities can also help illustrate the way the male working-class characters of the primary corpus engage with the city. My use of this approach draws from Carla Rodríguez González's article "Resilience and Urban Capabilities in Denise Mina's Garnethill Trilogy" (2019). In this article, Rodríguez González applies the capabilities approach as theorised by Martha Nussbaum, Amartya Sen and Saskia Sassen to analyse the socioeconomic and individual struggles of the protagonist of Mina's trilogy, Maureen O'Donnell (see Section 2.2.5.). Considering some of the male characters of my primary corpus share with O'Donnell an uncertain and marginal existence, I believe the relation between the capabilities approach and Mina's trilogy established by Rodríguez González can be especially illuminating for my own analysis. The capabilities approach has been chiefly theorised by philosopher Martha Nussbaum and economist Amartya Sen. Sen led the approach based on capabilities working in the field of development economics (1992).

Rather than referring solely to capabilities, he talks about *functionings* and *capability*. On the one hand, functionings are a series of beings and doings that constitute the basis of a person's well-being (1992, 39). On the other hand, capability is concerned with the freedom to choose sets of functionings, "possible livings," which can lead to well-being (40). In Sen's own words: "In so far as functionings are constitutive of well-being, capability represents a person's freedom to achieve well-being" (49). Instead of making a distinction between functionings and capability, Martha Nussbaum centres her approach on the concept of capabilities. While she admits functionings are inherent to human life, she contends that "capability not functioning is the appropriate political goal" (2000, 13). As she explains it, while functionings are actions humans can do to attain well-being, capabilities operate in a space in which humans have the opportunities and freedom to choose from these actions. Hence, the relationship between capabilities, political justice and human rights is, for Nussbaum more direct than that between functionings and political justice.

For Nussbaum, *human capabilities* constitute what people "are actually able to do and to be" in a context of human dignity (2000, 5). These capabilities are individual: rather than treating people as instruments for other people's ends or forgetting about your own ends and supporting those of others, capabilities are based on "*a principle of each person as end*" (5). Rather than being related to levels of satisfaction or the economic resources, capabilities are concerned with what a person is actually capable of doing regarding their opportunities and liberties (71). Capabilities are thus connected to the individual: collective structures such as the state or families should guarantee the achievement of each capability to each of its members. In this vein, Nussbaum sees capabilities as a set of basic and universal fundamental human rights citizens could claim to their governments and inherently connected to justice (71). As she explains it: "What this approach is after is a society in which persons are treated as each worthy of regard and in which each has been put in a position to live really humanly" (74). If humans are below the threshold of any capability, they would be in a position of injustice.

Nussbaum's central capabilities are ten. The first one is life and it refers to life's expectancy and conditions. Humans should live healthy lives for a normal period of time (2000, 78). The second one, closely connected to the first, is bodily health. Humans should be granted shelter, food and healthcare infrastructures that ensure good health levels (78). Next, Nussbaum considers bodily integrity. Someone with bodily integrity has the agency to move around freely and their bodily boundaries are "treated as

sovereign” (78). This means that people with bodily integrity are secure against assault, sexual abuse and domestic violence (78). In the fourth position, Nussbaum lists senses, imagination and thought. This capability is related to intellectual and creative expression. Education is a key requisite in the development of this ability as is political, artistic and religious freedom (79). Nussbaum also connects this capability with the ability to have mostly pleasurable life experiences and with the ability to use the imaginative possibilities granted by education, freedom and health to individually search for one life’s meaning (79). The fifth capability is emotions. Humans should be able to form emotional attachments to people outside themselves in a healthy manner without their emotional development being impaired by overwhelming fear, anxiety or trauma (79). The sixth capability, practical reason, means humans should be able to develop one’s concept of what is good and spend time to plan one’s life in that direction (79). The seventh capability, affiliation, refers to two separate aspects. The first one is the ability to affiliate with other human beings and care for them. This capability is protected when institutions promote social affiliation and freedom of assembly and speech (79). The second aspect concerns ensuring mutual respect, recognition and non-discrimination in human relations (80). The institutional promotion of this aspect is also crucial to guarantee the first aspect. The eighth capability involves respect towards the animals and plants around us (80). In ninth place, Nussbaum considers the ability to have fun and enjoy recreational activities (80). Finally, the tenth capability is divided into political and material control over one’s environment. On the one hand, the capability to politically control one’s environment means being able to freely and effectively participate in the politics of one’s territory. On the other hand, having material control over one’s environment entails being able to hold property, seek employment and be free from unwarranted search and seizure (80). Nussbaum’s formulation of basic human capabilities is connected to the establishment of a series of human rights everyone should be granted in order to guarantee equality.

Saskia Sassen has applied the capabilities approach to city life by coining the term *urban capabilities* (2012). Urban capabilities are necessary to confront the socio-political challenges faced by urban dwellers (2012, 85). In the twenty-first century global context in which Sassen defines this concept, the urbanisation of war and anti-immigrant hatred and violence are exemplified as two of the crises which threaten basic urban capabilities and which require the development of new strategies and solidarities to overcome them (85, 92). Although Sassen does not list a series of urban capabilities as Nussbaum does in her definition of central capabilities, she mentions social welfare, education, health,

infrastructure development, economic regulation, planning and equal use and access to the city as key elements to maintain the civic order that is hindered by socio-political crises (91-93). Both Nussbaum's central human capabilities and the set of urban capabilities mentioned by Sassen in relation to the global city can be employed in the analysis of inequalities and injustice in the 1980s Glasgow spaces depicted in the primary corpus.

The main crisis portrayed in the selected novels is the dismantlement of the welfare state started by James Callaghan's Labour government and continued by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government. As it has been discussed in Section 3.2.3., constitutive elements of welfare such as healthcare or education were privatised at this time. From a capabilities perspective, hence, the attainment of bodily health and senses, imagination and thought capabilities (Nussbaum 2000, 79) was hampered for those who could not afford going to good schools or pay for specific medical treatments. Moreover, as it is also pointed out in Section 3.2.3. of this thesis, Thatcher also carried out politics of centralisation by concentrating local government bodies in Westminster. This restructuring of government interfered in the achievement of the capabilities of control over one's environment as Nussbaum describes it (79). For Nussbaum, the political aspect of the capability of control over one's environment entails effective participation in the political choices significant to one's life (80). Regarding specific urban capabilities, as Michael Parkinson explains, Thatcher's government put private companies in charge of urban planning taking the power away from local government bodies and the public sector in programmes of urban development (1989). These policies of privatisation and the reduction of public expenditure at housing, transportation or social services combined with the restructuring of economy towards the service sector widened class inequalities in British society in the 1980s (1989, 421-422). Parkinson explains how private-led projects of urban development aiming for wealth creation through the name of *urban regeneration* concentrated in certain parts of inner cities, leaving the state of urban decay in other areas unattended (438). From 1979 to 1989, the Conservative belief that it was the private sector rather than municipal initiatives and the distribution of welfare benefits what would solve the problems arising in the most neglected areas of the city worsened the living conditions and, thus, the capabilities of the working classes. As Parkinson states: "the underprivileged lost out at the expense of the affluent" (438). Leaning towards individualisation and deregulated economic competitiveness among citizens, the Conservative policies of 1979-1989 inaugurated an era in which basic urban capabilities

as granted by the welfare state were no longer guaranteed. Yet, as Kim Duff argues, the depletion of local power and welfare budgets also created conditions of unrest on which British and, in turn, Scottish cities, could become “fervent landscapes for resistance” (2014, 6). The interplay of restriction and resistance due to the socio-economic circumstances of the city and its denizens also plays a key role in the manner people move around the city.

4.1.2. Urban Mobilities

One of the most influential studies of human practices and movement in space is Michel de Certeau’s *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984). In this key work, de Certeau coins two opposing concepts to explain the interrelations and tensions between structures of power and ordinary people in their use of space: *strategies* and *tactics*. Strategies are “actions which, thanks to the establishment of a place of power (the property of a proper), elaborate theoretical places (systems and totalizing discourses) capable of articulating an ensemble of physical places in which forces are distributed” (1984, 38). This is a model followed by political, economic and scientific rationality that subjects of power such as businesses, an army, a city or a scientific institution employ in order to claim their own place for their own power (36). In this vein, strategies are traced by powerful organisations in the claim to control space and the knowledge of it. In opposition, rather than claiming their own place, tactics are characterised by “the absence of a proper locus” and, as such, operate in the space organised by the agents of the strategies, a space which is “of the other,” “organised by the law of a foreign power” (37). While strategies are planned by businesses, governments and scientific institutions, tactics are “an art of the weak” (37), of those who use the spaces as planned by the powerful and transform them from within. Tactics are understood as ruses and surprises put into practice by everyday people: “clever tricks of the ‘weak’ within the order established by the ‘strong,’ an art of putting one over on the adversary on his own turf” (40). While through the strategies of urban planning and rationalism institutions control space, ordinary people resist dominant strategies using tactics in their everyday life. Among these tactics, de Certeau includes ordinary everyday activities such as “dwelling, moving about, speaking, reading, shopping and cooking” (40). As I will explain further in Chapters 5 and 6, the main tactic

identified by de Certeau that intersects with the practices of urban space realised by the male characters of my primary corpus is walking. For de Certeau, walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language (47). The walker not only uses the possibilities of urban space but he also appropriates, acts out and actualises other possibilities which, as de Certeau points out, are of “an unlimited diversity” (99). As de Certeau puts it: “The street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into space by walkers” (117). By conceptualising the idea of tactics, de Certeau theorises how, by reappropriating space through their own significance, ordinary people can retain their autonomy from hegemonic power-bound uses of space.

A similar idea is conveyed by Lefebvre and Catherine Régulier in their article “Attempt at the Rhythmanalysis of Mediterranean Cities,” where they argue that:

Political power dominates or rather seeks to dominate space; whence the importance of monuments and squares, but if palaces and churches have a political meaning and goal, the townsfolk-citizens divert them from it; they appropriate this space in a non-political manner. Through a certain use of time the citizen resists the state. A struggle for appropriation is therefore unleashed, in which rhythms play a major role. (2004, 102)

According to this idea, rhythms and space can be used by ordinary people to resignify and depoliticise the meanings and practices of space established by political powers, thus challenging their domination. The article in which Lefebvre and Régulier make this contribution was included in 1992 in Lefebvre’s original publication *Éléments de Rhythmanalyse*, translated into English as *Rhythmanalysis* (2004), which inaugurates a new spatial perspective based on the study of rhythms. The two minimal elements of rhythm are repetition and difference. Lefebvre defines rhythm as a phenomenon which continuously repeats itself in a slightly different manner each time (2004, 16). Rhythms are relational meaning the speed, frequency and consistency of each rhythm is measured in relation with other surrounding rhythms (20). Moreover, rhythms are everywhere: they come from the body (breathing, heartbeat), the street (road crossings, cars, lights, passersby) or the cosmic (the sun, the moon) and they can be cyclical or linear (18). Cyclical rhythms are mainly found in the natural world and they are long intervals with a clear beginning and end (40). In contrast, linear rhythms consist of a succession of short repetitions and they are mainly found in the monotony of human activity (18). While cyclical rhythms are perceived positively, being associated with an ever returning

becoming and compared with the dawn as it appears in the sky every morning, in linear rhythms, according to René Crevel, “the returning is opposed to the becoming” (qtd. in Lefebvre 2004, 97). This means linear rhythms do not allow for a new rhythm to appear but rather a quasi-identical repetition of the previous one (97). In this vein, linear rhythms have been interpreted as a succession that becomes exhausting and intolerable, found, for instance, in work routines (85). As such, cyclical and linear rhythms are constantly intersecting.

The bundle of cyclical and linear rhythms takes various states: from polyrhythmia, eurhythmia and isorhythmia to arrhythmia. Polyrhythmia is the ensemble of a diversity of rhythms, which, when in accordance with how they present themselves in the everyday, are in a state of eurhythmia. In the exceptional event two temporalities of a polyrhythmia coincide, the state of these rhythms would be defined as isorhythmia. Finally, arrhythmia entails a state of crisis in which previous rhythms are disrupted and altered. Arrhythmia also intervenes in enabling the analysis of rhythms. The person who is examining rhythms, the *rhythm analyst*, according to Lefebvre, can be aware of all the surrounding rhythms when he reaches a state of pathology close to arrhythmia (2004, 25). Due to the difficulty to grasp particular rhythms when he is within the rhythms, the rhythm analyst must be simultaneously inside and outside rhythms in order to distinguish them from one another (37). Lefebvre proposes the window, which will be a key space for my analysis in Chapter 5, as a space that allows to identify rhythms simultaneously from inside and outside. As he explains it:

He who walks down the street, over there, is immersed in the multiplicity of noises, murmurs, rhythms (including those of the body, but does he pay attention, except at the moment of crossing the street, when he has to calculate roughly the number of his steps?). By contrast, from the window, the noises distinguish themselves, the flows separate out, rhythms respond to one another. (2004, 38)

The study of rhythms helped expand the analysis of spatial mobilities beyond the corporeal considering also the rhythms both inside and outside the bodies as parameters in our use of space. Spatial mobilities have also been examined by geographers David Harvey and Doreen Massey from a Marxist perspective. David Harvey discusses how social mobilities rooted in capital, power and class parameters condition spatial mobilities in the postmodern city through the concept *time-space compression*. Through this idea, which he links to the advent of postmodernity, Harvey aims to explain that those people

who are in control of the flows of commerce, travel or communication and in positions of power are those who benefit the most from the reduction of spatial and temporal distances in a globally connected capitalist world (1989, 284). A similar concept proposed by Massey who, unlike Harvey's explanation on time-space compression, considered gender as a highly relevant dimension, is *power-geometry* (1993). Understanding space as a network of hierarchically structured and dynamic social relations, Massey argues that "space is by its very nature full of power and symbolism, a complex web of relations of domination and subordination, of solidarity and co-operation" (1994, 265). In this vein, within space there are differentiated degrees of spatial access and mobility, depending on the position of groups and individuals in the power hierarchies. As Massey explains it: "Different social groups have distinct relationships to this anyway-differentiated mobility: some are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it" (1993, 62). This idea not only acknowledges how the configuration of space and each individual experience of it is mediated by our position of power in relation to class, gender or ethnicity, but how the spatial inequalities of power-geometry are in a dynamic state of interaction and struggle in which "the mobility and control of some groups can actively weaken other people" (1993, 63). Concerning the literary portrayal of spaces of solidarity, examining the particular positionality of characters within the spatial, as well as social power-geometry, is key to observe what types of solidarity networks or lack thereof appear in the primary corpus.

Urban mobilities have been further theorised in relation to the postmodern city by Tim Edensor. In "Moving through the City" (2000), Edensor defines movement as a performance, a repetition of actions through the body that can be performed in the city as its main stage (122-123). Despite their diversity, these performances are controlled and regulated by government and power dynamics. As he explains it: "Movement around cities is mediated by power relations, blocked by gendered, racialized, sexualized and classed notions of who belongs where" (126). Drawing from Sibley (1988), Edensor distinguishes between *purified spaces* and *heterogenous spaces* in order to trace a dividing line between controlled and free-flowing spaces. Purified spaces conform to social rules and normativity and they are devised to consolidate the limits of social acceptability. For instance, movements such as congregating in groups or resting on benches—a movement which is associated with the homeless—fall outside of the normativity of purified spaces (126). On the other hand, heterogenous spaces are less

constrained by regulations and, as such, provide further room for self-governance (124). Hence, heterogenous or marginal spaces are constituted by chaotic movements, opposing the harmony of purified spaces. Yet, the dividing line between purified and heterogenous spaces is not clear-cut. The postmodern city is defined by Edensor as “a place of comings and goings” that “promises the possibility of multiple connections and yet it is also mapped, surveyed colonized, possessed and regulated” (124). In this vein, it is suggested that the borders between both purified and heterogenous spaces often merge, opening up the possibility for them to be challenged.

Against the dominant uses of space as policed by the state, ideology or morality, people can perform their movement in space in alternative manners. As Edensor puts it: “It is the very movement of the city-dweller through the urban landscape, inhabiting and decoding the familiar signs and symbols whilst simultaneously subverting and transforming them, which disrupts dominant meanings” (2000, 130). Under those movements which subvert the normative uses of the city, Edensor lists the wandering and unpredictable exploration of the flâneur, the constant movement and placelessness of the nomad or practices such as skateboarding or breakdance which disrupt the verticality of city movements (131-133). As these disruptive activities occur in the same spaces which are being regulated or commodified, their subversive character is susceptible to be co-opted into the order of purified spaces. In this vein, within the postmodern city, urban mobilities operate in a constant tension between order and disorder, regulation and disruption.

Departing from this same idea —time-space follows “a mix of social ordering and disordering” (2010, 2)— Edensor introduces an application of Lefebvre’s theory of rhythmanalysis to a myriad of contexts in his collection *Geographies of Rhythm. Nature, Place, Mobilities and Bodies* (2010). The study of rhythms present in this collection encompasses the rhythms of people in their everyday lives, bodily rhythms, rhythms of mobility and the non-human rhythms of nature. According to Edensor, everyday rhythms fluctuate “between the dynamic and vital and the regular and reiterative” (2010, 10). Fixed in habit and daily routine, everyday rhythms can be almost identical and often, due to a change in the course of the routine, they may become something different. Rather than individual, everyday rhythms follow a collective order that relies on synchronisation (8). Concerning bodily rhythms, Edensor alludes to Henri Lefebvre’s concept of *dressage* to explain how bodily rhythms are regulated by power dynamics. Dressage is a term used to describe the ritualistic and rhythmic training bodies go through to fit normativity.

Lefebvre finds examples of dressage in military training, rites of politeness or the repetitive movements of business protocol (2004, 48). According to Edensor, despite the power of dressage, the body produces place apart from adapting to it (5). As such, it has the capacity to improvise new rhythms and move in disagreement with dressage.

Moreover, Edensor identifies three ways in which rhythms of mobility constitute place. First, diverse types of mobility, fast, regular or slow contribute to the spatio-temporal character of places (5). Second, constant linear rhythms of mobility can create a sense of mobile place (6). Third, each style of travel constitutes a specific mobile place of rhythms even within the same vehicle (6). The example Edensor provides of this idea is the distinction of the exterior and interior of a car as two different but interrelated places of rhythms in which the cosy interior clashes with the fast exterior. There is a key aspect of rhythm which intervenes in both everyday, bodily and mobility rhythms which is crucial for my analysis, the regulation of rhythms by capitalist power. According to Edensor, who follows Lefebvre's ideas, rhythms are classified as positive and normative or as chaotic and anti-social following the prescriptions and impositions of capitalist centres of power. For instance, Edensor explains how, under a discourse that praises capital accumulation and economic productivity, the rhythms of the unemployed are labelled as "unproductive" and are socially condemned (11). In contrast, commercial activities that contribute to economic growth are defined as "productive" and are socially rewarded (11). The analysis of rhythms sheds light on the interactions between authority and freedom in society and on the strength the imposition of certain rhythms holds against their conscious or unconscious disruption. As Edensor argues: "it is important to avoid the inference that the quotidian is thus a sphere of entrapment and stasis" (13). Despite the imposition of capitalist rhythms or our unconscious adaptation to them in order to fit in, there exists what Edensor calls *resistant rhythms*, which defy conventional and productive uses of space-time. He exemplifies this idea through the *slow life* movement, constituted by people who aim to resist the competitiveness and fast rhythms of labour by practicing a slower work and life pace (17). What Edensor's analysis reveals is the idea that urban rhythms and mobilities operate, in the postmodern city, in a constant tension between regulation and freedom.

Another crucial layer that conditions the use of space and spatial mobilities is gender. As my explanation of the interrelation between space and capital shows, the most renowned Marxist geographers and sociologists, since the 1970s —Lefebvre— until the 1990s —Harvey, Soja, Castells—, have centred their studies upon the variables of

capitalism and class, consequently ignoring other components which equally affect and are affected by space. In this line, feminist geographer Doreen Massey considers the ideas discussed in Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989) and Soja's *Postmodern Geographies* (1989), which theorised a socially produced conception of space where all socio-spatial phenomena are contingent on and mediated by capitalist relations of production, to be incomplete. In spite of the postmodern focus of these works, both books fail, in Massey's view, to register the multidimensionality that characterises postmodernism, overlooking in their analyses how ethnicity, gender and the other socio-cultural axes, interrelated but independent from capitalist relations of production, operate in space (1994, 164, 225). Massey argues that, similarly to the bidirectional relation held between capitalist social processes and space, as proposed by Lefebvre, Harvey, Soja or Castells, gender and space mould one another:

The only point to make is that space and place, spaces and places and our senses of them (and such related things as our degrees of mobility) are gendered through and through. Moreover, they are gendered in a myriad different ways, which vary between cultures and over time. And this gendering of space and place both reflects and has effects back on the ways in which gender is constructed and understood in the societies in which we live. (Massey 1994, 186)

Acknowledging the deeply gendered configuration of space, as well as the spatial articulations of gender variation and doing research with a spatial gender awareness in mind is, for Massey, crucial to achieve a more nuanced understanding of how both male and female geographical variations influence and are shifted by regional as well as national socio-economic processes (1994, 189). As this PhD thesis examines the literary representations of space, masculinities and solidarity, the idea asserted by Massey that "feminist geography is (or should be) as much about men as it is about women" (1994, 189) is crucial for my theoretical approach.

In its inception, feminist social and cultural geography mainly contributed to examining space from the perspective of women, who had been until then excluded from the field. In one of the early articles that explained the reasons behind this void of representation, Wilbur Zelinsky, Janice Monk and Susan Hanson claimed that: "The geographer must view reality (...) through the eyes of both men and women, since to do otherwise is to remain more than half-blind" (1982, 353). Indeed, according to Gillian

Rose, geography had traditionally been a “masculinist” (1993, 8) discipline that prioritised knowledge produced from the position of men on the basis that it provided a universal and complete geographical understanding of the world. As Bettina van Hoven and Katrin Hörschelmann also put it, “geography has long been a discipline dominated by men and one about men” (2005, 1). In order to differentiate this highly patriarchal configuration of geography and the geographical studies on complex and multiple masculinities, van Hoven and Hörschelmann distinguish between “Geographies of Men” and “Geographies of Masculinities” (2005). In the next section, I will trace the conceptual shift from a one-dimensional conceptualisation of masculinity to a relational and multiple one and explain how this new approach has been applied to studies on the intersection between masculinities and space.

4.2. The Spatial Dimensions of Masculinities

Although initially feminist geographers mainly explored space from the perspective of women in their challenge to masculinist geography, their ideas and methodology opened up the path for the emergence of geographical studies on masculinities that reformulated the masculine subject away from its dominant, disembodied and objective position. Before the development of feminist philosophies in the 1960s and 1970s, the dominant understandings of gender came from psychoanalysis and sex-role theory. Both theories presume an innate set of psychological and biological characteristics men and women possess. In psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, for instance, asserted that all children had an underlying pleasure-seeking drive they were born with that manifested in different manners for men and women upon growing. As Nigel Eldley and Margaret Wetherell explain, while in the origins of psychoanalytic theory men were regarded by Freud as the superior sex, in the psychoanalysis of the 1960s and 1970s men were reconceptualised as fragile and in need of a constant gender reassertion: “Men (...) appear to be in a constant state of uncertainty about their own gender identities; always in a state of having to prove themselves as men” (1996, 99). On the other hand, sex-role theory assumed there were specific roles for men and women ingrained in their sexual differences. In “Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity” (1987), Tim Carrigan, R.W. Connell and John Lee revise the main ideas of sex-role theory exposing the reason why it was a limited theory to better

understand the complexity of gender. Sex-role theory failed to register diversity within sex and gender following a binary structure that was rooted in the essentialist belief that men had a normative personality and that the personality of women was opposed but complementary to it (1987, 68).

In opposition to the taken-for-granted biological essentialism of psychoanalysis and sex-role theory, feminist philosophy proposed an understanding of gender as a social construct. Within this school of thought, Judith Butler's theory of *gender performativity* is crucial to understand the feminist challenge to sex-role theory. In her book *Gender Trouble* (1999), Butler defies the idea that gender is a pre-existing internal structure arguing that it comes into existence when it is performed "through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body" (1999, xv). As such, gender identity is performed through gendered acts instead of preceding them. The constitution of gender identity through performance renders gender unstable. As Butler herself explains it: "gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts" (179). This theory disrupts the consideration of gender as a monolithic and binary structure, claiming it is constructed through constant bodily performance. According to Andrew Gorman-Murray and Peter Hopkins, the social constructionist model of gender contends that normative gender roles are acquired and reinforced through socialisation (2014, 6). Our attachment to institutions such as the family, the school or the workplace is fundamental in the process of gender socialisation. The social constructionist model turns gender into a dynamic social system that can be constructed and reconstructed in relation to other entities as well as challenged.

Following this change of paradigm, masculinities have been reevaluated from a constructionist perspective in a discipline that has been termed *critical men's studies*. As Michael Kimmel has explained it: "Men's studies responds to the shifting social and intellectual contexts in the study of gender and attempts to treat masculinity not as the normative referent against which standards are assessed but as a problematic gender construct" (1987, 10-11). Against a conceptualisation of the masculine as normative, homogenous and universal, studies on masculinities have employed a feminist analytical and critical approach towards gender to examine masculinities as social constructs rooted in a system of gendered power relations. The idea that masculinities are complex, plural and configured in relation to permanently shifting gender power relations is encapsulated in R.W. Connell's concept of *hegemonic masculinity* (1987, 183), which I have already

discussed in Section 3.2.4.1. of this thesis. While critical men's studies began developing in the 1980s, their aims and ideas were incorporated in the field of geography in the late 1990s.

Geographers of masculinities take as a point of departure of their research a definition of masculinities as plural, relational and “temporally and geographically contingent” (Berg and Longhurst 2003, 352).¹² Relationality consists in conceiving of masculinities as a construct within a gendered system whose configuration is dependent on its relation with other social systems such as class, race, bodies, history, space or place. As Anneli Häyrén and Helena Wahlström Henriksson contend, the relational aspects of masculinity take different meanings depending on the “ontological and epistemological levels” from which they are examined (2016, 3). One of these ontological levels is space and place. In her review of the research on the geographies of masculinities that had been published before 2000, Robyn Longhurst identifies three particular areas that focus on the spaces of masculinities: feminist cultural and social geography, geographies of sexuality and other areas of geography (2000, 440). According to her, within the “other areas of geography” category, urban geography stands out, followed by geographies of disability and postcolonial geographies (443). In 2003, Longhurst, together with Lawrence D. Berg, added economic geography and geographies of employment to the list (354). The widening range of spaces and places geographers of masculinities have explored is accounted for in two key collections in the field: Bettina van Hoven and Kathrin Hörschelmann's *Spaces of Masculinities* (2005) and Andrew Gorman-Murray and Peter Hopkins' *Masculinities and Place* (2014).

Yet, despite the emergence of this line of inquiry in the late 1990s and its evolution and growth since the 2000s onwards, various geographers have argued this field is still underexamined. For instance, van Hoven and Hörschelmann diagnose a “lack of attention” in feminist and gender-oriented geography towards masculinities (2005, 5). Moreover, in their contribution to Gorman-Murray and Hopkins' monograph, Hearn et al. argue that, in fact, “a social un-placed or de-placed model” (2014, 27) has prevailed in the study of men and masculinity. Conducting research that further develops the focus on space in studies of masculinities is pivotal for various scholars in the fields of geography as well as critical men's studies. According to Berg and Longhurst, due to the deeply

¹² I have already explored the relational model of masculinities in the introduction to Section 2.2.4.1., when I discussed how, in his gender dynamics, Alasdair Gray problematises the national, local and class dimensions of the masculinities portrayed in his novels.

fluctuating dynamics and fragile nature of masculinities, the spaces in which certain masculinities take shape are key to understanding how these masculinities are constructed, as well as how our frameworks of analysis of these masculinities vary (2003, 352). Moreover, for Peter Hopkins and Greg Noble, promoting the analysis of the spatial dimensions of masculinity is crucial to explore “not simply how masculinities are played out in different spaces, but how those spaces shape the very nature of the experience of masculinity and how it articulates with other key dimensions of social relations” (2009, 814).

Following a relational and multiple conceptualisation of masculinities, a wide range of analyses of the dimensions of masculinity in specific spaces and places—local, national, global or transnational—has been offered in the field of geography from rural areas (Little 2002; Cloke 2005; Gibson 2014), employment and working-class culture (Jackson 2001; McDowell 2003; McDowell 2005; McDowell, Rootham and Hardgrove 2014), the spaces of home (Atherton 2014; Cox 2014), fatherhood (Marsiglio et al. 2005) and urban areas (Nayak 2006). It is worth pointing out that geography is not the only research area from which spaces of masculinities have been examined. Masculinities and its spaces have been studied from the fields of sociology (Mac an Ghail 1996; Kimmel, Hearn and Connell 2005), anthropology (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 2017) and literary studies (Armengol et al. 2017). Yet, despite the diversity of theoretical approaches, all these works come under the field of critical men’s studies, masculinity studies, as some prefer to call it attending to the plurality of the concept and studies on men and masculinities. Within this approach, this PhD thesis examines how the local (Glaswegian), national (Scottish) and class dimensions of the masculinities portrayed in the primary corpus intersect in a relational manner with these spaces. The spaces I will focus on concerning their connection with the masculinities in the primary corpus are the space of the school, the workplace, gambling spaces and spaces of transportation. Instead of developing all of them here, I will centre on the theories related to these areas in Chapters 5 and 6.

4.2.1. Scottish and Glaswegian Masculinities

The space wherein the masculine relations of solidarity of my primary corpus are inscribed is the city of Glasgow. From a national perspective, Scotland has been historically associated with gendered rhetoric of masculinity. As Christopher Whyte

remarks, Scotland is constructed as masculine in the continuous anti-Union references to the loss of independence as a process of emasculation, leading to the interpretation of pre-Union Scottishness as a highly masculine nation (1995, xii). Indeed, Scottishness has been represented by a majority of masculine narratives. As Barbara Littlewood has argued: “the heroes and villains of our popular histories, with the exception of Mary [Queen of Scots], are invariably male and alternatives only replace kings, lairds and politicians with the equally male dominated roster of the Red Clyde heroes” (qtd. in Breitenbach, Brown and Myers 1996, 45-46). In fact, as Carole Jones argues, due to the representation of Scottishness through historical accounts of men, “a generic Scot has been a masculine male” (2009a, 20). Glaswegian identity is no exception to the predominance of masculinity. As Chapter 2 of this thesis illustrates, Glasgow is associated with an imagery of industrialisation, crime and street violence, all activities related to masculinity and performed fundamentally by men (Damer 1990). Even in contemporary works, such as Darren McGarvey’s part political commentary/part memoir *Poverty Safari* (2019), it is shown how in a working-class Glasgow environment—in McGarvey’s case, the Glasgow housing scheme of Pollok—while strong hyper-masculinity coexists with more sensitive masculinities, it is a masculinity characterised by shame and scorn towards masculine emotionality, which stands as the hegemonic model.

In line with van Hoven and Hörschelmann’s and Hearn et al.’s observation that the spatial dimensions of masculinities are an underexamined field of research, not only in geography, but also in the rest of disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences that engage in masculinities, the academic outputs on Scottish and Glaswegian masculinities are scarce. In the field of history, two collections stand out. Alison Chand’s *Masculinities on Clydeside: Men in Reserved Occupations during the Second World War* (2016) focuses specifically on the Clydeside area, whereas Lynn Abrams and Elizabeth Ewan’s collective volume *Nine Centuries of Man, Manhood and Masculinities in Scottish History* (2017) takes the whole of Scotland as its object of study. From a relational perspective that explores the everyday patterns of male subjectivity, Abrams and Ewan examine Scottish masculinities from the twelfth to the twenty-first century. On the one hand, this volume pays attention to the importance of certain historical periods and institutions such as the Scottish Enlightenment, Scottish industrialisation and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, as well as to place and landscape—the Highlands, the industrial heartland or the urban post-war housing states—for the formation of Scottish masculinities. On the

other, it reveals the subjectivity and contingency of this process, emphasising the idea that, in their interaction with sociocultural values from within and from outwith Scotland, “each man must construct his version of masculinity for himself” (2017, 14). In this vein, it aims to show that, despite the significance of certain socio-political, economic and cultural aspects inherent to Scotland, there are no fixed and homogenous models of Scottish masculinity but diverse and evolving perceptions, representations and experiences of what it is to be a Scottish man. Among these diverse and evolving masculinities, this collection includes a wide range, from sixteenth-century courtiers (Dunnigan 2017, 21-38), eighteenth-century civilised men from Edinburgh and Glasgow (Carr 2017, 58-79), nineteenth century poor men as represented in the begging letters they sent to elite patrons (Barclay 2017, 142-159) or male prostitutes in post-war Scotland (Meek 2017, 242-257).

This collection devotes two chapters to Glasgow masculinities: Tanya Cheadle’s chapter on the music hall scene of Victorian Glasgow and Angela Bartie and Alistair Fraser’s chapter on Glasgow’s youth gangs from 1965 to 1975. Considering that the timeframe of my primary corpus is the second half of the twentieth century, Bartie and Fraser’s chapter is the more relevant of the two for my analysis. One of the most pervasive images of masculinities connected to the city of Glasgow, as has already been elucidated in the description of the Glasgow gang novel (Section 2.2.2.) as well as in the discussion of whether Alasdair Gray’s and James Kelman’s male characters reinforce or diverge from this trope (Sections 3.2.4.1 and 3.3.3.), is the image of the hard man. A great majority of historical and sociological studies on Glasgow masculinities focus, in fact, on hard men and gang masculinities. In their chapter, Bartie and Fraser characterise the figure of the “hard man,” also referred to as “gemmae,” as a man who is fearless, violent and willing to fight against all odds (2017, 258). This image is associated with the whole city of Glasgow and, more particularly, to working-class tenement areas like the Gorbals or housing schemes like Easterhouse. Indeed, Bartie and Fraser take the young men living in the Easterhouse scheme from 1965 to 1975 as the object of their case study. While, as they illustrate, not all Easterhouse young men were involved in the gangs or gang-related violent activities, there exists a correlation between working-class Glasgow masculinities and a hegemonic model based on physical strength and bravery (2017, 273). The study of Glasgow masculinities also tends to be restricted to the context of the gang when carried out in the fields of criminology (Fraser 2015, McLean and Holligan 2018), public

health sciences (O'Brien, Hunt and Hart 2009) and critical men's studies (Rafanell, McLean and Poole 2017).

Notwithstanding, as the novels of my primary corpus show, Glasgow masculinities are far more diverse than gang masculinities. An article that registers this diversity, from an ethnic perspective, is Peter Hopkins' "Responding to the 'Crisis of Masculinity': The Perspectives of Young Muslim Men from Glasgow and Edinburgh" (2009). Yet, as the masculinities of both Alasdair Gray's and James Kelman's novels are white, I will not follow the line of inquiry proposed by Hopkins. Regarding the white, as well as working-class, dimensions of the masculinities examined in this PhD thesis, it seems it is mainly in literary studies that white Glasgow working-class masculinities unrelated to criminality have been explored. The study of Glasgow's literary masculinities has been contextualised in Chapters 2 and 3. Considering the pervasiveness of the violent hard man, literary scholars ranging from Whyte (1998), Schoene (2002), McMillan (2003) and Jones (2009a) have examined to what extent devolutionary Glaswegian literary masculinities follow or differ from the hard man trope. Following the trajectory traced by these scholars, this thesis aims to expand the study of Glasgow masculinities beyond the gang, concentrating instead on masculinities that typically refrain from physical violence and from action.

As has been already mentioned in Section 3.2.4.1., the specific intersection between working-class and masculinity is at the heart of a patriarchal national model of Scottishness. Within a nationalist paradigm, in which the Scottish/English binary opposition intersects with other social systems of identification, class is a key factor in determining whether a Scottish man belongs to or diverges from this national model. As Neil McMillan argues, the correlation between middle-class status and English values is so strong in the national-bounded conceptualisation of masculinity that middle-class Scottish masculinities are interpreted as denationalised and feminised (2003, 69-70). While Scottishness and working-class masculinity are closely connected within a national framework constructed upon the Scottish/English dichotomy, this connection is also sustained in the relation between masculinity and employment, as will be illustrated in the following section.

4.2.2. Masculinities in the Workplace

Due to its belonging to the public sphere in the traditional gendered division of space—public as masculine and private as feminine—the workplace has been perceived as a

masculine domain. The system of relationality that intertwines masculinity and labour and the shifts in masculine identifications that depend on the type of job a man has, the professional level and whether he is employed or unemployed have been analysed in critical men's studies across the disciplines of geography, sociology and anthropology. As Linda McDowell asserts:

Until recently (...) the association of masculinity with the sphere of waged work in capitalist societies has been taken for granted. The very definition of hegemonic masculinity in industrial societies is bound up with labour market participation. Being a real man involves paid employment, whether in the embodied spaces of manual labour or the cerebral spheres of high-tech industry, business services or science. This association between men and the labour market has been so dominant that until relatively recently the complexities and changing nature of the association has been under-theorized. (2005, 17-8)

As McDowell states in this excerpt, the study of the complex power relations that link work and masculinities further contributes to the feminist-led dismantlement of the correlation between masculinity and neutrality. Rather than approaching the connections between work and masculinities from an uncritical standpoint in which masculinity is the norm, feminist geography as well as critical men's studies argue for a gendered perspective that focuses on the relational and co-constitutive dialectic between work and masculinities.

According to Cecile Jackson, the position of masculinities on a spectrum, with empowerment at one end and vulnerability at the other, is conditioned by their working lives (2001, 8). On the one hand, for Jackson, employment outside the home, due to its connection to the hegemonic role of the provider and breadwinner, is an element that contributes to men's adherence to gender expectations and, thus, to full manhood (20). When the workplace was male-dominated, employment gave men access to an exclusive homosocial environment experienced by many as a space of pleasure, refuge and male-empowering solidarities (21). On the other hand, unemployment hinders the coincidence between men's gender expectations and their lives, hence problematising their gender identities. As Jackson further contends, considering the symbolic association between manhood and public spaces, those adult men who, after using the street to establish their manliness in their youth, do not manage to enter the workplace and become household providers often remain in the streets performing a marginal and violent hyper-masculinity

(20). This hyper-masculinity, described by Jackson as a consequence of men's adult unemployment, resonates with the masculinities of unemployed Glasgow hard men who, unable to achieve the role of the breadwinner, resort to violence as an available conduct for the reassertion of masculinity. Moreover, in a male-dominated work culture, unemployed men are excluded from the socialising benefits of the homosocial environment of the workplace; this scenario can lead not only to marginalisation in the street but also to alienation in the home (21).

Working-class consciousness and masculine solidarities went hand in hand throughout the twentieth century in Britain and in Scotland. Before deindustrialisation, the Scottish economy was mainly based on traditional heavy industries such as steel, textile manufacturing, docks and shipbuilding, where work often involved manual labour associated with the strength and endurance of masculinity. Paul Willis describes daily work in traditional industries as a sort of subordinate "self-damnation" to hard and dangerous work, but one which was seen as a heroic form of resistance and bravery, aligned with the traits of the hegemonic powerful man (1977, 3). Not only was employment a key aspect of the identity of these men but so too was the connection between heavy industries and male camaraderie. In his analysis of manual workers in an English heavy vehicle manufacturing company, David Collinson defines the workplace as a space that contributed to the reproduction of a specifically bonding culture among male workers (1992, 79). Union membership, as well as the co-dependence among workers to reaffirm their identities as working men, were key elements of socialising and identity reinforcement in what Collinson terms *instrumental collectivism* (79-80). The workers of the vehicle manufacturing company examined by Collinson used degrading and playful jokes, sexual references and gambling as routines of camaraderie that perpetuated the connections between shop floor work and masculinity (1992). As such, the industrial space of the shop floor, where workers were in charge of the factory or the company's production, served as a homosocial space of socialisation. The heavily local and close-knit community spirit that characterised the factory examined by Collinson reinforced the perpetuation of this dominantly male culture (1992, 6).

Other key spaces separate but heavily linked to the workplace that will also be part of my analysis are the pub and gambling spaces. Although conducted from an American perspective, in his study of automotive shop floors from the 1930s to the 1960s, Stephen Meyer identifies leisure activities, such as drinking alcohol and gambling and the workplace as remains of a rough working-class masculine culture characterised by

risk-taking, violence and challenging authority (1999, 121). Both drinking, either within the workplace or in nearby pubs and gambling were two activities used to numb the monotony of work as well as to test the limits of the rigid schedules of the shop floor. As Meyer argues: “Masculine play sometimes meant simply not working dutifully and consistently at one’s routinised job. In their individual and collective forms of illegal or illicit behaviour some workers ate, read, drank alcohol, read books or newspapers, fought or gambled” (121). Examining the Glaswegian context of heavy industries in the same period, Ronnie Johnston and Arthur McIvor define spending time with work mates in the street and in the pub as key male bonding aspects of the Clydeside workplace (2004, 141). In this geographical and historical context, hard drinking as well as heavy smoking were symbols of both Scottish highly masculine culture and specifically of Scottish male-dominated working-class culture. As Johnston and McIvor point out, one of most praised signs of masculinity related to drinking and the workplace was being able to hold one’s liquor (142). The cultural limits between the pub and the workplace were often so blurred that in some industries wages were distributed in the pub (142). Yet, in Clydeside heavy industries, coexisting with this rough hard man culture was a more respectable and sensible type of masculinity, one that was less prone to the heavy drinking, bravado and violent conduct associated with the working-class hard man model (143).

Trade unionism and political participation have helped create another crucial sphere for the reproduction of working-class masculine culture. Regarding the Clydeside area, Arthur McIvor highlights how the labour movement and trade unionism were pivotal in the upholding of working-class masculinities. As he asserts: “Being a man also involved standing up for your rights against authoritarian management and the bosses – whether individually or collectively, through the union” (2013, 87). Two examples of the Clydeside area in the early 1970s identified by McIvor clearly illustrate this idea. The first concerns the speech of Glaswegian trade union activist and Union of Clydeside Shipbuilders (UCS) spokesman Jimmy Reid at the mass meeting of UCS workers at Clydebank. In a direct correlation between working-class consciousness and collective protest with masculinity, his speech included the sentence: “We build men” (87). The second example, also from 1971, is the all-male photograph of the UCS demonstration in Glasgow Green, in which left-wing Labour politician Tony Benn stood linking arms with eight leaders of the UCS campaign; the photo represents, as McIvor defines it, “an enduring image of such class-conscious male solidarity” (87). Indeed, as McIvor contends, in Clydeside heavy industries from the 1930s to the 1970s, “work provided an

important site for the incubation, reinforcement and reproduction of *macho* values and attitudes —especially those encapsulated in the ‘hard’ Glaswegian working man of this era” (2004, 136). Yet, with deindustrialisation began a gradual decline of men’s dominant position in British workforce, which, along with economic restructuring, provoked a shift in the social and gendered power dynamics of the workplace and working-class communities.

In the second half of the twentieth century, large traditional industry factories and manufacturing companies began to close, giving way to new service sector industries. This industrial restructuring caused great numbers of unemployment across Britain and in Scotland specifically. As Anoop Nayak argues, as deindustrialisation moved forward in British society, finding a stable and secure job became increasingly difficult (2006, 814). The increased flexibility of the employment market and the consequent rise of part-time contracts and salaries below the adult minimum wage shifted traditional mechanisms in the formation of masculinities (813). As men had been the chief workforce, unemployment was a new and shocking change in their lives as well as in their gender expectations, which equated masculinity and hard work. As John Benyon illustrates, although work was alienating for men, “nothing has proved more damaging to them and their sense of the masculine than unemployment, which took away independence and control over family finances” (2002, 87). Glasgow and the Clydeside area stand as a specifically fast and radical example of deindustrialisation and subsequent unemployment, as W.F. Lever’s research shows (1991). In terms of figures, between 1952 and 1987, employment fell from 844,000 to 615,000 jobs (Lever 1991, 988). The employment slump was even bigger in the manufacturing sector, with a decline from 424,000 jobs in 1952 to 142,000 in 1987 (988). Unemployment was not the sole social change unsettling the gender identity of working-class men. The service jobs on the rise since the 1980s were the opposite to the dangerous, risk-taking and deeply masculine tasks of the factory shop floor. In this vein, Chris Haywood and Máirtín Mac an Ghaill explain how, there developed a cultural association between the intellectual and polite — as opposed to the physical and aggressive— work culture of service jobs with femininity; this shift towards the service sector was perceived by old industrial workers as a “feminisation of work” (2003, 25-28).

Moreover, from 1979 to 1989, the decade in which the novels of the primary corpus were published, Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative government cut public expenditure on welfare, worsening the living conditions of those unemployed as well as

further raising unemployment levels. In his analysis of British unemployment policies from Margaret Thatcher to Tony Blair, Bernhard Rieger explains how in 1981, Thatcher launched the “Enterprise Allowance Scheme,” an entrepreneurship programme that aimed to reduce unemployment by creating government aids to unemployed citizens who wanted to start small companies (2021, 117). Simultaneous to the privatisation of measures to reduce unemployment, Thatcher’s Conservative government lowered wages and introduced welfare system reforms that restricted the opportunities of workers who received Unemployment Benefit (120). The rationale behind both measures lay in the highly conservative and neoliberal idea that it was the workers’ full responsibility to find a job without state intervention and that “fiscal discipline, individualism, self-dependence and hard work” were political and cultural virtues (120). In this period as well, trade unionism began its decline. According to Brian Towers, between 1979 and 1989 trade union membership was reduced by over 20 per cent (1989, 163). Towers identifies various factors — including the shift towards a service economy, the increasing numbers of women and white-collar workers, the introduction of more flexible, part-time and temporary labour contracts and the decline of workplaces with a large workforce such as factories— as possible causes that increasingly rendered workplaces throughout the 1980s less favourable for trade unionism (180). The loss of the workplace as dominantly masculine and the decline in membership of the political structures that represented their rights as workers ran parallel to the shift of the pattern of male identity and solidarity linked to heavy industries.

Space, gender and class are three aspects that directly intervene in Gray’s and Kelman’s characters’ ability to extend solidarity to others. Historically situated between post-war Glasgow and 1989, the masculine working-class identities of the authors’ characters and these individuals’ ability to extend solidarity is set within this backdrop of increasing unemployment, labour restructuring and socio-political fragmentation. In order to illustrate the importance of these variables for the formation of networks of solidarity, the next section focuses on contemporary theorisations of the concept of solidarity relevant for my analysis.

4.3. Theorising Solidarity

Considering the socio-political dimensions that characterise the oeuvre of Alasdair Gray and James Kelman and the relevance these dimensions take in this PhD thesis, assessing

how solidarity is represented in their work further sheds light on the intersection between fiction and politics wherein this piece of research is situated. Despite its pervasiveness in the political arena as well as in conversations on the moral and ethical implications of our daily actions, scholars agree that solidarity is an underdefined and undertheorised concept whose various meanings often overlap (Bayertz 1999; Pensky 2008; Featherstone 2012; Prieto López 2023). Indeed, even when defined, it is not a unitary concept. As Barbara Prainsack and Alena Buyx argue, due to the myriad of interpretations given to solidarity, including its understanding as an emotion, a moral ideal, a characteristic inherent to groups or societies, a political idea and an empty rhetorical label, establishing an exact meaning of the concept is difficult (2017, 1). From the late eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century, solidarity was examined in relation to the process of urbanisation and the modern rural exodus. Social theorists such as Adam Ferguson and Ferdinand Tönnies established a correlation between modernity, urbanity and social fragmentation. Under a catastrophic and nostalgic light, Tönnies praised the small communities of the past for allowing a “genuine” and “real” form of coexistence against the “irreal,” artificial and fleeting coexistence characteristic of modern societies (qtd. in Bayertz 1999, 13). Also, the Communitarians —among whom Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor stands out— advocated for a reconstruction of genuine communities unmediated by an individualistic and goal-oriented understanding of the state as a means to guarantee the survival of democracy (qtd. in Bayertz 1999, 14). Within an anti-urban and anti-modernity paradigm, Ferguson, Tönnies and the Communitarians shared the idea that modernity led to a process of desolidarization.

In contrast, Emile Durkheim’s theory on the connection between the shifts in relations of solidarity and the introduction of the social division of labour proposes that rather than a process of desolidarization, as Ferguson, Tönnies and the Communitarians suggested, modernisation entails a change in social configuration. Durkheim distinguished two types of solidarity: *mechanic solidarity*, a pre-modern model based on similarities and *organic solidarity*, a modern model rooted in the social division of labour and, in turn, in difference rather than similarities.¹³ As the social division of labour was introduced with industrialisation, organic solidarity and, thus, a social organisation cemented on difference and individualism increased (qtd. in Bayertz 1999, 12). However,

¹³ A more thorough explanation of both mechanic and organic solidarities can be found in the English translation to Émile Durkheim’s *The Division of Labour in Society* (1933).

for Durkheim the individualisation associated with modernity, industrialisation and the growth of the city was not a negative outcome of a rural exodus that would lead to social isolation, but rather a shift compatible with solidarity. The tensions between modern individualism and solidarity that lie at the heart of early theorisations on solidarity are essential not only to understanding the concept of solidarity itself, but also to comprehending the types of solidarity that were identified in the late twentieth century and twenty-first century. The novels that constitute the primary corpus of this thesis are all narrated by an individual male protagonist with a fragile sense of group belonging. In this vein, my explanation of the contexts of solidarity and their differences will go from the smallest to the largest social unit. Before explaining the contexts of solidarity, I will provide two main definitions of solidarity that differ in terms of the centrality given to the group.

4.3.1. Solidarity: Definitions and Contexts

Most definitions of solidarity connect it to group cohesion and to the mutual effort among group members to maintain this cohesion. Arto Laitinen and Anne Birgitte Pessi describe a relation of solidarity as one of reciprocity, completely opposed to coercion or the maximisation of self-interest (2014, 2-3). Its basis is a *we-thinking* separate from egocentrism but also from asymmetrical help towards the other, which they see as being closer to altruism and Christian charity (2). For Kurt Bayertz, solidarity is also mutual and it functions at two levels: the factual level of the common ground shared between the solidary individuals; and the normative level of a reciprocal duty to help one another (1999, 3). The fact that this support is mutual and intrinsic to the functioning of groups has also been highlighted by Larry May in his book *The Socially Responsive Self* (1996). May identifies five overlapping elements present in solidarity: “(1) conscious group identification, (2) bonds of sentiment, (3) interest in the group’s well-being, (4) shared values and beliefs and (5) readiness to show moral support” (May 1996, 44). Andrea Sangiovanni and Juri Viehoff use the term *solidarity among* to categorise this definition of solidarity as an element of group cohesion (2023, n.p.). Here, solidarity is based on principles of egalitarianism and collectivity. As such, it carries the expectation that the moral support extended towards members of the group will be reciprocated. This aspect

is highlighted in German philosopher Andreas Wildt's definition of solidarity. Wildt states that for an action to be considered one of solidarity, the agent "assumes at least the possibility of analogous situations in which the recipient acts, has acted, or will act in analogous ways towards him or third parties" (1999, 218). The fact that conscious group identification, equal mutual obligations and expectations that the solidary act will be reciprocated in an analogous situation are considered as requisites for solidarity problematises the existence of solidarity itself in contexts with a weak sense of group belonging and rampant inequality.

As I will examine in Chapters 5 and 6, my primary corpus depicts contexts of extensive class and gender inequalities, with profit-driven and individualistic governments that further widen these gaps; the main characters struggle to belong in groups, sometimes to the point of actively rejecting participation. Accordingly, it is crucial that I also consider a definition of solidarity that does not discard individual and asymmetrical actions of help towards others. Andrea Sangiovanni and Juri Viehoff call unilateral and asymmetrical definitions *solidarity with* (2023, n.p.). Solidarity with differs from solidarity among in two key aspects. First, solidarity with describes a relation between an individual and another individual or between a group and another group in which there is no shared membership. Second, reciprocity is neither needed nor expected. An example of solidarity with considered by Sangiovanni and Viehoff is an NGO donation to an earthquake, where it is not expected that the earthquake victim reciprocates (2023, n.p.). Sangiovanni and Viehoff argue that solidarity with problematises the egalitarianism at the core of the concept of solidarity, consequently becoming almost indistinguishable from "humanitarian aid, charity, benevolence, or support for a good cause" (2023, n.p.). Although I believe this theoretical concern to be justified, in the socio-politically unequal context my primary corpus shares, considering solidarity with as a valid definition of the concept will allow me to categorise as solidarity those instances of help that arise when conscious group belonging and mutual responsibility fail.

My explanation of the contexts in which solidarity may appear is rooted in the solidary actions' motivations. The structure I will follow, as explained above, goes from the smallest to the largest social unit. The first context of solidarity is the one where the solidary action is extended among individual people even if they do not belong to the same group. Barbara Prainsack and Alena Buyx call this type *interpersonal solidarity* and they define it as the "willingness to carry costs to assist others with whom a person

recognises similarity in at least one relevant respect” (2017, 54). The example they use to illustrate this concept is that of a woman they call Ayse, who used to suffer from back pain when she was pregnant and offers her bus seat to a man called Ivo, who looks like his back is hurting while standing up (54). Ayse’s solidary action is based on the recognition of a shared experience between Ivo and herself, back pain and a willingness to assume the costs of offering a seat engendered by her identification with Ivo’s pain. Both costs and similarity are crucial in Prainsack and Buyx’s definition of interpersonal solidarity. The solidary action involves a costs for the solidary action —be it time, effort, money or emotional investment (52). As Prainsack and Buyx’s see it, the readiness to assume the costs associated with each solidary action is mobilised thanks to *similarity in a relevant respect* (53). The relevance of similarity means that the similarity between the agent and the recipient that motivates the solidary action is contextual, depending on what is most important for the agent in a specific situation. For instance, as Prainsack and Buyx explain, if a flight is delayed and the passengers worry about not making it on time for whatever they had planned at their destination, shared worry may be a more relevant similarity between two passengers than their nationality or their ideology (53). In the event that something happens inside the airplane and the passengers have to assist each other, their shared status as passengers and their shared experience of the flight will be more relevant to mobilise solidarity than their differences. In Prainsack and Buyx’s view, solidarity is rooted in commonalities rather than differences (54). This is interesting in the sense that, although joint membership to the same group is not necessary for interpersonal solidarity, a similarity between agent and recipient identified by the agent is what motivates the action.

In the context of the dyad, solidarity can also be employed to define the relation of mutual care in intimate relationships of family and friendship. Although these relations can have a dyadic structure —two friends, two romantic partners, two siblings— their affectional basis is stronger and more stable in time than the relations described in Prainsack and Buyx’s interpersonal solidarity. In order to refer to the type of solidarity that arises from intimate relationships of love and friendship, Jodi Dean coined the term *affectional solidarity* (1996, 18). In this case, solidarity is rooted in the feelings of mutual care that sustain these relationships and in the mutual expectations that result from them. In affectional solidary bonds, it is expected that each member of the relationship is willing to put the other person’s needs before their own. Dean defines this type of solidarity as primary, particular and universal. It is primary because our ability to care for those with

whom we have affectional connections has been developed since our early childhood experiences (18). It is particular because it focuses on caring for the individuality of the other in a deep manner that cannot be extended to infinite others (19). As Dean herself exemplifies by describing how she and her friend Caroline care for one another, affection brings two people closer than they would be to a different other towards whom they do not feel affection(18). Finally, it is universal because within the microlevels of this tie, we are willing to recognise and validate all the potential facets of who this person is (19). The theorisation of an affectional solidarity is particularly important to understanding why we sometimes care more deeply about our parents, friends or significant others than for our neighbours or people we do not know and how the configuration and costs of solidarity change from one context to the other.

Beyond the dyad, solidarity can be the glue maintaining the social cohesion in communities. The structure I will follow to explain group-based contexts of solidarity is inspired in Paola Prieto López elaboration on Kurt Bayertz and Sally Scholz's solidarity types in her PhD thesis *Black Women Centre Stage: Diasporic Solidarity in Contemporary British Theatre* (2021) and in her book *La diáspora africana en el teatro contemporáneo: Solidaridad Creativa* (2023). To define the solidarity binding the specific communities in modern society, Kurt Bayertz coined the term *solidarity and society* (1999, 9). The configuration of this type of solidarity differs depending on the groups it holds together. While in personal relations the basis for solidarity is blood ties, love and feelings of affection, in modern societies social relations are largely anonymous, standing as a coalition of diverse strangers joined by instrumental agreements made under the same political framework (11). As Bayertz puts it, in a modern society: “‘the others’ cease to be ‘friends’ for whom one would like to do something good for their own sake; they become —if not competitors— then merely business partners” (11). Bayertz's term *solidarity and society* has been renamed *social solidarity* by Sally Scholz. Like Bayertz, Scholz considers that the degree of social solidarity of a group and the mutual obligations that sustain it vary depending on the characteristics of each group. As she states, in the context of social solidarity: “the moral ties pertain to day-to-day responsibilities to others in the community and are not explicitly aimed at alleviating injustice or oppression” (2008, 21). In this vein, a family or a group with shared group consciousness like a political party have a higher degree of both interdependence and obligations than bus passengers or attendees at a sporting event (21-22)

Both Bayertz and Scholz regard the relation between individuality and community as the heart of social solidarity. Bayertz considers whether solidarity is compatible with the highly instrumental and individualistic characteristics of Western modern society. Relying on Durkheim's idea that the social division of labour can sustain solidarity despite differences among individuals, Bayertz argues that individualism and solidarity are compatible (1999, 9). Scholz expands this idea, highlighting the importance of collective consciousness in Durkheim's definition of organic solidarity. In a state of organic solidarity, interdependence among different people is maintained through more than shared interest (23). In this context, reciprocity and a shared consciousness rooted in the combination of individual differences are needed for organic solidarity to form (23). The compatibility or incompatibility of individualisation and solidarity in the contemporary world is an issue that I will further explore in Chapters 5 and 6 regarding its portrayal in the work of Alasdair Gray and James Kelman. As I will explain, in different manners, both authors overtly question how and why masculine individualism and self-isolation are produced; their work reveals the hierarchies and values that undermine the solidarity between their male protagonists and their surroundings.

Solidarity can be extended beyond specific communities and to the whole of a city or nation. In this context, solidarity is expressed on the basis of a joint citizenship. Due to the definition of welfare as a state-driven sort of solidarity among citizens, Bayertz has termed this type *solidarity and the welfare state*. The belief that welfare is linked to solidarity comes from the premise that citizens of a state share moral obligations with one another, which, as Bayertz indicates, they do not have towards the citizens of other states. Solidarity and welfare is then, for Bayertz, an intra-state form of solidarity that understands citizens as one large family. In his definition of this type, Bayertz questions whether welfare should imply solidarity or whether the term "justice" would be a better alternative. This question on the adequacy of the linguistic term stems from what he sees as the coercive nature of the welfare state in which, if citizens do not contribute through taxes, they receive penalties. For this coercive character, Bayertz defines solidarity and the welfare state as *quasi-solidarity*. As Bayertz states: "termining what is coerced from the taxpayer under the threat of authoritative measures 'solidarity' amounts to no less than a euphemism" (1999, 25). While Bayertz is not opposed to the welfare state, which he actually considers likely to be the most effective system to help those in need on a major scale, its compulsory aspects render it a doubtful expression of solidarity for him.

Solidarity and welfare have also been explained by Scholz under the name of *civic solidarity* (2008). Her definition goes beyond the structure of the welfare state. For Scholz, civic solidarity defines the relation between citizens belonging to a political state (27). The state is the framework of action through which citizens can extend their civic solidarity to one another with the aim of shrinking the needs of the most vulnerable so that the civic society can be strong. In Scholz's words: "civic solidarity presumes that when individuals lack the basic necessities, society as a whole suffers" (27). Rather than perceiving the welfare state and civic solidarity as systems that threaten individual autonomy, Scholz sees welfare as a safety net that, despite legally forcing people to pay taxes, ensures our protection from the tyranny of an extremely competitive and individualistic economic system (29).

In social solidarity and civic solidarity, solidarity appears as an action performed to ensure the cohesion of pre-existing groups: a friendship, a family, a social group with shared values or a nation. However, the term solidarity is also used to refer to the relations of a group that comes to exist in the joint fight against injustice. Kurt Bayertz calls this type *solidarity and liberation*. There are various situations in which this type of solidarity can be distinguished, but for the purpose of this thesis, I will be focusing on its use in social movements organised around a shared goal. In the context of social movements, solidarity is the relationship the members share to foster unity in their fight for justice. Bayertz defines it as a network brought about by "emotional cohesion" and "mutual support (...) in the battle for common goals" (1999, 16). This type of solidarity binds those minority groups who battle against their shared oppression. For Bayertz, this type of solidarity should be constantly activated and renewed since, even in states of democracy, basic human rights are not always guaranteed (1999, 16).

Sally Scholz devotes her book *Political Solidarity* (2008) to developing a theory for the second type identified by Bayertz. Scholz emphasises that, instead of being grounded in interdependence and group control, like social solidarity and civic solidarity respectively, *political solidarity* is based upon "individual conscience, commitment, group responsibility and collective action" (2008, 33). Instead of being grounded in given and involuntary similarities, like belonging to a family, a society or a group of people attending the same event, participating in a group joined by political solidarity makes the conscious decision to fight against a common injustice (34). Here, the joint struggle against oppressive and exploitative systems glues people together by means of political solidarity. There are three aspects in Scholz's definition that distinguish political from

social and civic solidarity. The first aspect is its oppositional nature. The individual members of the political solidary group consciously decide to join the group because they oppose the same injustice as existing members. Rather than being bound by interpersonal relations or external similarities —belonging to the same nation, state or society— they are bound by their shared protest against what is usually a larger or more powerful group (36, 34). The second aspect is that the basis of their unity is their common goal of liberation. For Scholz, the solidary group needs to share a vision of what the future outcome of their protests and activism will be in order to function. This outcome can be, for instance, liberation from oppression in some cases or equitable distribution of rights and privileges in others (36, 34). The third and last aspect is that the solidary bonds originate in the members' mutual responsibility to one another. Whereas in social and civic solidarity, it is the social bonds of similarity among the solidary that create moral obligations to one another, in political solidarity it is the moral obligations of the politically rooted group that generates the social bonds (36). In the political solidary group, there are duties and responsibilities revolving around the political action carried out by its members as well as moral duties towards the rest of members of the group (35).

Political solidarity has also been theorised by David Featherstone in his book *Solidarity: Hidden Histories and Geographies of Internationalism* (2012). Employing the term solidarity, instead of political solidarity, Featherstone defines this concept as a relation of political struggle and challenge against oppression (5). For him, under these terms, solidarity is transformative, opening up the possibility of constructing new relations across differences, diverse places, activists and social groups, rather than grounded in similarities. It is also a practice that, contrary to popular belief, can be fostered from the margins in what Featherstone terms *solidarity from below* (5). Moreover, solidarities are “inventive” in that they hold the capacity to configure new political relations and spaces (6).

Finally, the possibility that solidarity can be extended to the whole of humanity has also been explored by Bayertz and Scholz. Within his typology, Bayertz has called this type *solidarity and morality*. The potential for humans to be solidary towards one another revolves around the idea that humans have universal moral obligations towards other humans on the basis of a joint human essence (1999, 5). Bayertz identifies the modern roots of this idea in John Stuart Mill's utilitarian philosophy, which considered the protection of collective well-being as a prerequisite for individual well-being (1882). Sally Scholz calls solidarity and morality *human solidarity*, as she classifies it as a

subcategory of either social, civic or political solidarity. The reason for this is the ongoing controversy surrounding the discussion in political philosophy of the principles that unite humans under humanity, as well as the diverse configurations human solidarity may take depending on the communities it unites and their moral obligations (2008, 27). Both Bayertz and Scholz have diagnosed certain key limitations of human solidarity that I will consider below.

4.3.2. The Dark Side and the Limitations of Solidarity

In Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis, I will analyse the problems inherent to solidarity as well as the obstacles to attaining an egalitarian solidarity in an unequal world. Accordingly, it is crucial that in this theoretical chapter, I consider the sometimes exclusionary and immoral side of solidarity as along with its limitations. All the types of solidarity that I have described so far may have an exclusionary us vs. them structure constituting what Jodi Dean terms *conventional solidarities*. Conventional solidarities are built on the expectations embedded in belonging to given identities or in membership to a particular group. The inherent worth of these given identities or groups sharing common values surpasses the individuality of each group member. As Dean states:

As they bind the group together, these mediations delimit the self-understanding of the group. They provide boundaries beyond which one as a member cannot go. The expectation that one will adhere to the norms of the group is the primary attribute of membership, of being validated as one of “us”. (1996, 19)

Group membership is managed through a collective adherence to specific criteria in a way that stifles difference and dissent. If a member goes against a group rule, they risk marginalisation. Conventional solidarities share with affectional solidarities, as defined by Dean, the property of particularity. This means that solidarity is extended to a particular group of people with the same given identity or shared aims and withheld from those beyond (20). For supporters of conventional solidarities, despite limiting outward communication, it is strong group cohesion what characterises solidarity (20). In contrast, critics of this conception of solidarity argue that it is oppositional and exclusionary as it

isolates the group from an outside other and stifles difference within the group itself (20). While affectional solidarities are grounded in feelings, conventional solidarities can be based on “habit or training, the product of education or consciousness-raising, or the shared perception of common needs and suffering” (23). In this vein, Dean argues that they are less open to the potential universality within an other and more homogenising, not based on individual and complex people but on members (23). Indeed, while Bayertz contends that individuality and solidarity were compatible under the framework of Durkheim’s organic solidarity, the us vs. them rigidity of conventional solidarities as theorised by Dean complicates the simultaneity of group belonging and an individual disagreement with the group’s values.

The potential for group solidarity to gain strength through opposition to other groups is connected with the fact that solidary actions are not necessarily directed towards morally positive ends. Actions like warfare, for instance, with a clear us vs. them structure, contribute to group cohesion while promoting violence against other groups. In this vein, the moral value of solidarity has been widely discussed. While some theorists disagree about using the term solidarity to describe groups with unjust goals (Scholz 2008), others argue that the cohesion maintaining the social bonds within groups like the Nazis (Kolars 2016) can be categorised as solidarity. According to Avery Kolars, a concept of solidarity that excludes from its definition examples of solidarity that have been directed towards injustice is too narrow, because it makes the situation of Nazis helping each other to build the concentration camps conceptually impossible (2016, 6). Kolars argues that, although this example of solidarity is morally wrong, it is still solidarity, as it is based on supporting the main goal of the group whatever that may be (6). As such, if the aims of the group are immoral, the solidarity employed and maintained to achieve them may also be so. The potential immorality of solidarity is linked to the importance of group order within the concept of solidarity itself. As Laitinen and Pessi describe it, solidarity is often used “to describe and explain the normal order and normative social integration in societies or communities, as opposed to chaos and conflict and as opposed to order based on coercion or maximization of self-interest” (2014, 2). When the normal order of a social group involves equality among its members and respect towards their differences, then the collective effort of maintaining solidarity is directed towards morally positive ends. However, the prominence of order in the perpetuation of group cohesion becomes problematic when the group’s normal order and their moral

compass is driven towards morally wrong goals. This issue is pointed out by Paul Spicker in his book *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*. As he puts it:

The principle of solidarity is based strongly in an existing structure of obligations – a structure which people are bound into by virtue of their position, about which they have little say and which implies that they have duties whether or not they consent and whether or not they benefit. This is the same kind of argument which was used to support a static, oppressive feudal society, the world that the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity were intended to overthrow. And those principles hold the key to the problem. Without a principle of liberty, solidarity has the potential to be illiberal. Without a principle of equality, it may be inegalitarian. It is only if solidarity is reconciled with liberty and equality that its dangers can be resolved. (2006, 138)

In this vein, for solidarity to have a positive moral and social value, the normal order in which it is contextualised needs to follow the principles of liberty and equality. Taken on its own as the glue for social cohesion, solidarity runs the risk of perpetuating exploitative and unequal social dynamics. As will be analysed in Chapters 5 and 6, the compliance with an illiberal and inegalitarian conceptualisation of solidarity for the sake of social order is a preoccupation shared by both Alasdair Gray and James Kelman.

Most theories of solidarity offer a definition of what solidarity is, the contexts in which it appears and the motivations behind it. While very few illustrate in detail the obstacles that undermine it, some authors do indicate some potential barriers. Both Kurt Bayertz and Sally Scholz view the achievement of human solidarity with scepticism. For Bayertz, the issue with human solidarity lies in a utopian and essentialist vision of humanity that obviates the frequency of conflict over solidarity throughout human history (1999, 6-7). Due to the high rate of conflict among humans Bayertz does not believe there is a real prominence of human solidarity in the world. Moreover, Scholz contends that a key obstacle to human solidarity is the diversity of cultural conceptions of what being human is. She points out how, in some traditions and historically, women have been considered sub-human and have been consequently excluded from expressions of human solidarity (2018, 240). According to Scholz, the possibility for human solidarity is undermined not only by cultural values but also by socio-political structures and psychological biases. For instance, she views individualism as “the hallmark of many Western democracies” (240) and as an obstacle to human solidarity. Scholz also observes

that the likelihood that solidarity is extended or not is rooted in the existence or lack of sympathy and empathy for others (241). In this regard, actions of solidarity are more likely among people who share day-to-day interactions (233). Philosopher Richard Rorty has also noted how similarity and dissimilarity among individuals are crucial variables in the formation of solidarities that are historically contingent (1989, 192). As David Featherstone has observed in his interpretation of Rorty's idea, "rather than being ahistorical forms of identification, ways of articulating solidarity are always partial, limited and situated" (2012, 22). The similarity and dissimilarity binary hampers solidarity from expanding beyond pre-existing common traits and becoming, as Featherstone suggests it could, a transformative, productive and creative relation forging networks grounded on diversity (2012, 5). Hence, humans' conflictive tendencies, the consideration of some people as sub-human, individualism, a lack of familiarity and difference are crucial obstacles for the achievement of solidarity.

Throughout my readings on solidarity, I have found particularly interesting the work of two sociologists who have explicitly focused on the limitations of solidarity. The first one is Siegwart Lindenberg and his *framing* approach of solidarity, developed across various publications, mainly in "Solidarity: Its Microfoundations and Macrodpendence. A Framing Approach" (1998), "Prosocial Behavior, Solidarity and Framing Processes" (2006) and "Solidarity: Unpacking the Social Brain" (2014). The second one is Søren Juul, who has analysed the tensions between solidarity and individualism in modernity in his book *Solidarity in Individualized Societies* (2013).

Lindenberg defines solidarity as more than kindness towards others. Instead, it is a "set of established norms that together enhance the ability of groups to produce collective goods" (2014, 30). As such, Lindenberg's approach has a behavioural focus. For him, solidarity is constituted of a repertoire of behaviours realized in specific situations. While in his 1998 and 2006 publications he lists five behaviours that, together, count as solidarity, in his 2014 publication he expands these to six. These six behaviours are divided into three basic norms and three additional norms. The basic norms are *cooperation*, *sharing* and *helping*. A person fulfils the norm of cooperation when they cooperate in a situation that requires effort in such a way that effort is divided (37). If collective goods are equally distributed among the members of the community, then the solidary norm of sharing is respected (37). Sharing entails distributing goods among all members of the community, not just among the members of the subgroup who cooperated to get those goods. Finally, helping forges solidary relations in situations of need.

Solidarity is maintained when “those in need are helped by those not (or less) in need” (37). These three basic norms are supported by three additional norms. The first of these is *making an effort to understand and be understood*. For Lindenberg, it is important that people who are trying to be solidary not only show empathy towards others but communicate openly with those who are listening. Putting the effort into attentively listening to others and communicating in an understandable manner locates humans towards the collective rather than towards the individual (39). The second one is *trustworthiness*. Being trustworthy is key, as trust among the members of a group strengthens their ability to cater to the collective good (39). The third additional norm is *considerateness*. Lindenberg defines considerateness as one’s ability to care about those beyond oneself: “to show one cares for the externalities of one’s action on others, to avoid harm for others and to apologize when things go wrong rather than show denial or reticence” (40). These three additional norms are crucial not only to being solidary but also to communicating one’s willingness to follow these norms without taking advantage of other people’s cooperative aims (40). Lindenberg calls an individual’s ability to indicate their willingness to behave in a solidary manner *relational signaling* (1998, 85). Fulfilling the three added norms shows to the group that the three basic norms will be more stable than if individuals fail to arrive at understanding, be trustworthy and be considerate (89). If a person acts appropriately and follows the six solidary norms contributing to the collective good, then they are activating what Lindenberg calls the *normative frame* (2006, 35). The stability of this frame and the likelihood it will be mobilised is hampered by various factors and activated by others.

The instability of the normative frame is explained by a human cognitive practice Lindenberg calls framing (1998, 78). The core idea behind framing is that humans are myopic in the way they process the world around them because they are unable to consider all choice alternatives simultaneously. Instead, they focus their attention on specific situations and behave according to particular goals they attach to each situation (77). As Lindenberg explains, the situation we focus on and our own understanding of that situation will guide our own behaviour. Our activation of a specific frame and behaviour goal due to our own understanding of the situation pushes other behaviour goals to the background (77). In this vein, the myopic tendency to focus on the short-term and what is immediate may undermine solidarity. Although behaving according to the three basic norms of solidarity —cooperation, sharing and helping— might be in our best interest long-term, the short-term perception of a situation may suggest we do otherwise.

Unless our own goals and the basic solidarity norms are aligned and their relationship is strong, solidary goals can escape our attention (77). As Lindenberg explains, it is for this reason that: “people may breach agreements, although this is against their long-term interest. They may also fail to fulfill obligations, although this is against their long-term interest” (77). Our behaviour and framing of each specific situation is also connected to what Lindenberg calls a *mental model* of the relationship we have with the other (2006, 25). The mental model is described as a prototype of what the rules and expectations associated with each relationship are (28). For instance, the expected sacrifices in a friendship are higher than those between neighbours (27). The idea of the mental model is key to understanding those relations in which, like the ones I will describe in my analysis of solidarity in Gray’s *Lanark*, social rules and expectations are ambiguous. As Lindenberg claims, when relationships are vague, the normative frame risks being displaced (38). With the normative frame in the background, actions become motivated by more individually and less solidarity-oriented frames.

The normative frame is in tension with two other main frames, the *hedonic frame* and the *gain frame*. While the normative frame is oriented to “acting appropriately”, the hedonic frame is “oriented towards caring for the satisfaction of fundamental needs and thus to feeling good/better” and the gain frame towards “improving one’s resources”, not only in terms of goods and money but also power and status (2014, 38). Both the hedonic and gain frames have the potential to destabilise the group’s fulfilment of the normative frame. The first reason behind this destabilisation is the a priori order of the three frames in evolutionary terms. Lindenberg considers that in general conditions humans would choose to fulfil the hedonic frame first, the gain frame second and the normative frame last (2014, 43-44). This is because, as Lindenberg contends, “in evolutionary terms, the group is there for adaptive advantages of the individual and not the other way around” (48). It is mainly through special supports that the normative frame of solidarity can be more salient than individual needs. According to Lindenberg, activities that reinforce group cohesion such as social rituals or intergroup conflict in the context of war may help increase the strength of group solidarity (44). Interestingly, as Dean points out in her definition of conventional solidarities, intergroup conflict intensifies ingroup solidarity, but it does it by decreasing solidarity towards the outgroup. The conforming behaviour of other members of the group to solidary norms may also increase the stability of the normative frame. As Lindenberg puts it: “when others visibly conform to norms, it is generally interpreted as a cue that strengthens the normative goal (...)” (44). By contrast,

when others do not keep to norms, it is generally interpreted as a cue that weakens the normative goal, especially if these norm breakers are people with higher status (44-45). Finally, external sanctions punishing norm violations may also contribute to the maintenance of the normative frame (46).

A second factor that may destabilise the fulfilment of the normative goal is the size and heterogeneity of the group. If group solidarity is extended to other groups making a larger one, the costs and expected sacrifice of solidarity decrease and solidarity will weaken (2014, 42). The weakening of the solidarity costs is, in contexts in which solidarity is extended to diverse and heterogeneous groups, paired with the prominence of the interests of individuals or subgroups over those of the whole group (2014, 42). An increasing inclusivity and reach of the solidary group also renders solidarity more abstract and open for interpretation and hypocrisy (42). The ambiguity of solidarity criteria further increases the likelihood that a person will behave according to individual rather than collective interests (42). This idea is connected to the importance Lindenberg gives to the clear signalling of the rules and expectations each person has in a relationship and to the obstacles to solidarity he finds in relational ambiguity and normative vagueness.

It is not only the stability and mobilisation of the normative frame of solidarity that can be hampered, but also the reach of solidarity is limited by framing. Due to our myopic framing, we give priority not only to certain goals and situations but also to certain groups. Solidarity is extended to the group that is salient in each situation, the group “whose goals I help realise” in a given moment (41). There are groups that are salient more often and over longer periods of time, such as family, romantic partners and friends (42). This means that solidarity depends on group identification and it varies according to the salience we attribute to each group in different situations. Accordingly, the lack of identification with a specific group severely limits the reach of solidarity (41). In light of the social fragmentation James Kelman portrays in his novels, the complex relationship between group identification and solidarity pointed out by Lindenberg will be further analysed in Chapter 5.

Framing also explains why on some occasions the hedonic or gain frames are chosen over the normative one. Lindenberg calls this phenomenon a *decay of solidarity motivation* (1998, 80). As Lindenberg has explained, the strength of solidarity can be defined as directly proportional to the sum of its costs, defined as “the legitimately expected sacrifices in trying times” (64). As such, the normative frame of solidary decays when people involved are not willing to pay high costs and the hedonic or gain frames

become dominant (80). It also decays when the efforts of being solidary are too high and if the solidary action is rarely rewarded (80). As has been already mentioned, external support is crucial for maintaining the normative frame over the hedonic or gain frames. In this sense, if the state is corrupt and does not follow the normative frame itself, for instance, this will give citizens the sense that cheating is not so negative, lowering the salience of the solidarity frame (103). Another example Lindenberg provides of how the state can contribute to the decay of solidarity rather than to its salience is how the market mechanisms give prominence to values connected to individual profit gain (2014, 46). If individual social success is measured by our capacity to earn money and the less the communal good is shared the more money we have individually, the gain frame takes over the normative frame (46). Both the hedonic and gain frames are more individually- than group-oriented and therefore weaken the collective sense of solidarity promoted by the normative frame. In this scenario, the main way of maintaining a prominence of the normative frame over the hedonic and gain frames is social and governmental support. As Lindenberg puts it: “What is particularly damaging for solidarity is not so much the weakening strength of the normative goal, but the increasing strength of the competing hedonic and gain goals that pertain to the individual rather than to the group” (49). The dependence of the normative frame on external support and its risk of decay if the hedonic and gain frames seem more attractive and beneficial show to what extent, for Lindenberg, solidarity is precarious.

Søren Juul has further explained what happens to solidarity when the socio-political values of people and institutions are not aligned towards the collective. He situates these values in modernity and, in order to explain how certain modern ideas challenge solidarity, he first provides his own definition of solidarity. For Juul, solidarity is rooted in *recognition*. As he states: “to show solidarity in inter-human relations means to recognize the person in question as an equal and worthy partner of interaction” (2013, 182). Juul defines recognition as a principle contrary to independence and individualism. Its core idea is “to see oneself in the other” (148). As such, it stems from a collective rather than atomised vision of humanity as a network of relations in which each is mutually dependent on their own recognition as equals. Juul’s principle of recognition guides political decisions and morality in a solidary society. In this vein, solidary institutions should guarantee a just distribution of the chances for recognition and a solidary society should prioritise recognition as a main principle of their decision- making (182). Equally distributed recognition is seen by Juul as “a precondition for social

cohesion” (182). Due to the connection between solidarity and social cohesion, the fulfilment of recognition strengthens solidary ties within a group. Considering this definition, Juul dissects a series of modern values and shifts that go against the centrality of recognition as a key moral principle. His explanation of these values derives from the theories of philosophers on modernity who have explored these questions such as Charles Taylor, Ulrich Beck, Zygmunt Bauman and Richard Sennett.¹⁴

The first question Juul analyses is the positivist philosophy of modern science. Juul connects positivist scientific philosophy with August Comte’s ideas in 1840s France and with the logical positivist theories of the 1920s Vienna circle philosophers Moritz Schlick, Rudolf Carnap and Otto Neurath (192). Logical positivism challenged metaphysics and attempted to establish a science based on objective, value-free evidence (192). For the sake of trying to grasp reality from a measurable and empirical approach, subjective conceptions were pushed to the background. Regarding the Scottish context of this thesis, it is important to point out that Juul also links positivist philosophy to the empiricism of Scottish philosopher David Hume, who advocated for the preference of quantifiable utility and certainty against the vagueness of more subjective methods to access reality (192). Although the prominence of objective and quantifiable methods to approaching reality has contributed to technological progress, these methods have not helped moral progress; on the contrary, according to Juul, they have prevented it (193). Positivist objectivity narrows progress to the technical, considering morality and ethics subjective matter, which makes them lose their authority (193). This is problematic for the strength of a solidarity understood as recognition. In the context of Juul’s definition of solidarity, morality promotes the importance of social cohesion, human collective dependency and the idea that we have a duty towards others (194). As these moral values become subjective, they become individualised and open to interpretation, weakening their influence as a society-wide moral compass (194). As a consequence of their weakening and individualisation, they become replaced by more easily measurable norms such as efficiency, planning and the reduction of costs (194). In this vein, instead of being a moral obligation, according to positivist principles, solidarity follows an *ethics of utility* in which collective recognition clashes with the values of cost-efficiency and productivity (194). The main priority is no longer the recognition of all humans involved, but rather

¹⁴ Instead of directly explaining the theories of these thinkers in this theoretical framework, I have chosen to describe Juul’s own interpretation as he is the one who explicitly makes a connection between these ideas and solidarity.

the ability to do as much as possible as fast as possible (194). As I will explore in Chapter 5, the prominence of utility over equal recognition resonates with the neoliberal and profit-driven agenda of Westminster since 1979 as described by Alasdair Gray in his pamphlets (see Section 3.2.3.).

The second question Juul considers is the modern ideal of authenticity. He takes the ideal of authenticity from Charles Taylor's definition of it in his book *The Malaise of Modernity* (1991). According to Taylor, authenticity means "being true to myself (...) being true to my own originality" (qtd. in Juul 2013, 198). In this definition, authenticity is connected to self-fulfilment and self-realisation. Although for Taylor this general idea is positive, it becomes problematic for solidarity, as Juul highlights, when it is distorted towards egocentrism (197). Deriving from the work of Taylor but also Ulrich Beck (1997), Juul argues that modernity is characterised by a "disembedding from traditional meaning-giving communities," leaving the individual free to choose but also morally disoriented (197). It is in this morally disorienting context that authenticity may lead towards a prioritisation of individual benefits, such as wealth and power, for the sake of the improvement of the self, leaving aside solidarity towards others (197-198). In order to explain how an egotistic vision of authenticity is characteristic of modernity and threatens solidarity, Juul also refers to the ideas in Christopher Lasch's book *The Culture of Narcissism* (1991). In this book Lasch defines what narcissism is and extrapolates it from the individual to the whole of American modern culture. Leveraging Lasch's ideas, Juul explains that narcissism is characterised by competition and meaninglessness. Competition is at the centre of narcissism. Rather than partners in a solidary group, others are seen as rivals in the struggle of "all against all" (199). Due to his constant focus on the struggle and his competitive activation, the narcissist lives in the present. Juul points out that, while the narcissist is always focused on his self at the present time, this lack of connection with past and future and with his surroundings connects his existence with feelings of meaninglessness (199). If, as Lasch argues in his book, narcissism is a trait of modern society, it goes against the principle of recognition and mutual duties inherent to solidarity. Constant competition, struggle and life's meaninglessness do not characterise a solidary society but rather "a society in dissolution" (199). Without a clear moral compass, modernity is defined by Juul as a culture of individual survival rather than collective problem-solving, in which narcissism prevails through a "winner mentality" (199). This is completely opposite to the just distribution of recognition towards others that Juul sees as a requisite for solidarity.

The third modern value that undermines solidarity is radicalised individualisation. In order to explain what radicalised individualisation entails in modernity, Juul draws from the ideas of philosophers Ulrich Beck, Zygmunt Bauman and Richard Sennett. According to Juul, these three authors identify in similar ways a new modern era coming with deindustrialisation, which is characterised by a disembedding from tradition and stable communities (2013, 200-201). Each author has coined a term to define this new period. Beck refers to a *second modernity* coming after the *first modernity* of industrialisation and the creation of the capitalist system (Beck and Lau 2005). Bauman refers to a *liquid modernity*, characterised by unpredictability, which challenges the stability he associates with industrial *heavy modernity* (2000). In the same vein, Sennett talks of the culture of *new capitalism* to define the transformation from a more predictable *old capitalism* (1999). As Juul explains it, for both Beck and Bauman, second and liquid modernity leave humans rootless as, after the crumbling of previous and more stable values, there is no process of value re-embedding (2013, 201). Instead, humans, detached from stable communities that guide their identities and life paths, have to find their way on their own in a disorienting world. In order to define the high-risk consequences that radicalised individualisation brings, Beck has also employed the term *risk society* (1997, 2001). Juul describes how, in Beck's vision of the risk society, human problems are privatised and no longer considered a collective but an individual responsibility (201). For instance, while unemployment was once seen as a problem originated in the flaws of the economic system, through the culture of radicalised individualisation, it becomes a problem for the individual, connected to their abilities to make the right choices (201). Individualisation is also connected to a contempt for dependence and stability. In the new era of modernity, these three authors describe how flexibility has replaced stability. According to Juul, Bauman theorises that the unpredictability of rules due to a lack of re-embedding provokes a fear of being easily discarded and becoming useless (202). Juul also describes how, in Sennett's *The Corrosion of Character* (1999), the author argues that flexibility extrapolates also to social relations: "What it's about is to keep floating, not to stick to anything solid or firm. Any dependence is perceived negatively and must be avoided" (203). If solidarity is based on the principle of mutual and collective recognition, then radical individualisation and the derision of dependence go against it.

The individualisation of social problems goes hand in hand with the individualisation of its solutions. Juul puts the dismantlement of the welfare state in 1980s Britain and the United State as a key example of systemic individualisation and of the

contempt for dependence that goes with it. This example is particularly relevant for my research concerning the timeframe of the primary corpus (1981-1989) and the working-class status and economic circumstances of the majority of the male characters I will analyse. As Juul describes it, the scrapping of the welfare state responded to the idea that this form of social support made people dependent, consequently stifling their initiative and turning those who benefited from it into social parasites (205). Juul claims that the undoing of welfare symbolises a refusal to acknowledge human vulnerability and our need for solidarity towards one another. In this vein, he argues that solidarity “fundamentally breaks with a cultural judgement that turns social problems into a matter of privacy. A recognizing judgement neither stigmatizes nor radiates indifference towards socially poor people and just institutions make an effort to recognize them as ethical and legal persons on equal terms with others” (206). Accordingly, Juul sees radicalised individualisation as incompatible with solidarity (206). Only an individualism that breaks with egocentrism and recognises the self while simultaneously recognising others is compatible with an ideal of solidarity based on mutual recognition.

The fourth issue Juul explores is instrumental reason. As he describes it, instrumental reason is, in its social and moral consequences, closely related to positivist philosophy. Juul draws from Zygmunt Bauman’s definition of modern rationality to explain what he means by instrumental reason. In *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989), Bauman defines modern rationality as a “bureaucratic culture which prompts us to view society as an object of administration, as a collection of so many ‘problems’ to be solved, as ‘nature’ to be ‘controlled’, ‘mastered’ and ‘improved’ or ‘remade’” (1989, 18). Due to the technical and practical aims of instrumental reason, the ethics of an activity may be undermined for the sake of progress, no matter the immorality behind said progress. Bauman links instrumental reason to the Holocaust seeming to be not only a possible solution, but a “reasonable” one for those who participated in it (18). Juul contends that Bauman’s idea warns of the absence of built-in ethical limitations inherent to instrumental reason. In the absence of an ethical balance, instrumental reason has the potential to produce inhuman acts and justify them (2013, 207). Bauman associates instrumental reason not only to inhuman historical episodes like the Holocaust, but also to the whole of modern civilisation (207-208). In fact, he associates it with the flexibility, constant innovation and downsizing in the name of productivity and efficiency, or what he terms liquid modernity (210). In this vein, Juul argues that instrumental reason remains a

contemporary social tendency that negates solidarity based on a morality of recognition, which promotes engagement with others in conditions of equality.

The last modern shift Juul considers in relation to solidarity is globalisation, whose negative impact is closely related to the socio-economic inequalities that undermine solidarity, a primary concern in the works I analyse in this thesis. Here, Bauman's definition of globalisation as an economically polarising phenomenon is crucial. For him, globalisation entails a strengthening of the differences between the rich and the poor, since capital and finance concentrate among a powerful few while deprived people grow in numbers (Juul 2013, 215). Due to their increasing separation as a consequence of globalisation, the rich and the poor are becoming less interdependent, now living in different worlds (216) that are spatially differentiated. While the richest are able to benefit from time-space compression (see Section 4.1.2.) and move faster and more easily around the globe, the poor "are chained to place" (Bauman 2001, 307). Bauman claims that before globalisation, the rich and the poor were in a relation of mutual dependency. For instance, charity towards the poor was promoted from a Christian perspective as a means to save one's soul (310). The contribution of the poor to the production of wealth both as workers and potential consumers was also key (310). With globalisation, the consideration of the poor and the potential sentiment of solidarity towards them has disappeared. As Bauman explains it: "The unity/dependency which underlay most historical forms of the rich/poor division used to be in all times the necessary condition of that — however residual — solidarity with the poor, which inspired the — however half-hearted and incomplete — efforts to relieve the poor's plight. It is that unity/dependency which is now missing" (310). Thus, globalisation widens class inequalities, challenging the consideration of the poor as equal and worthy of solidarity.

In his analysis of modern values that directly oppose his own definition of solidarity, Juul shows how the positivist ethics of utility, authenticity understood as egocentrism, radical individualism, instrumental reason and the widening of inequalities through globalisation promote an atomised, insecure and immoral world, one which undermines the values of collectivity, equality and a morality that recognises the worth of others. At the beginning of this section, I have explained how some authors like Avery Kolers (2016) consider how solidarity can be used for immoral ends. For my literary analysis in Chapters 5 and 6, I will employ a definition of solidarity as a basis for social

cohesion that contemplates the potential for it to be used with morally wrong and problematic aims.

In this section, I have shown solidarity to be a fragile social phenomenon challenged by limitations that range from the cognitive to the social. The novels I analyse in this thesis explore the dark side of solidarity and the struggles of individuals as well as societies to maintain a version of solidarity oriented towards the recognition of each other as equals. In order to define the solidarity that emerges despite these limitations and its particular characteristics, I draw from Siegwart Lindenberg's identification of the *precariousness* of solidarity and Judith Butler's intersected theorisations of *precariousness* and *precarity* in *Frames of War* (2009) to propose what I will term *precarious solidarity*. Lindenberg employs the word precariousness to explain the low salience degree of the *normative frame* —his term for solidarity— in general human conditions. If solidarity is not externally supported, short-term —hedonic— and long-term —gain— individual goals are activated more frequently than collective-oriented goals, thus decreasing the likelihood of solidarity. For Butler, precariousness is a characteristic of all lives, in the sense that human survival is not guaranteed and it is dependent on the care of others (2009, 14). Despite being shared by all humans from birth as an inherent property of life itself, precariousness is differently allocated among the populations and some lives are more precarious than others (3). In order to explain how some populations are especially at risk, Butler refers to precarity, which she sees as a politically induced condition caused by systemic inequality (28). Due to the unequal distribution of wealth and to sociopolitical marginalisation, some groups are “at heightened risk of disease, poverty, starvation, displacement and of exposure to violence without protection” (26).

These are my points of departure to argue for the viability of the term *precarious solidarity*, with which I acknowledge the temporary and unstable nature of solidarity. This will allow me to explore how solidarity can be doubly precarious: first, when it is not externally supported, as Lindenberg argues and second, because of the socio-economic and political precariousness of the situations in which it arises. I refer specifically to contexts of poverty and class inequality where the normative frame of solidarity is unsupported due to individualist and instrumental values. Precarious solidarity suggests that, even in these situations, a morally positive idea of solidarity based on recognition can exist. However, it is weak, fleeting and in constant tension with individual interests and with the sense of competition caused by inequality. Accordingly,

I use precarious solidarity to define the brief and fragile examples of solidarity that arise in an unequal world in which governments prioritise profit over collective welfare and in which citizens are increasingly individually oriented, having lost faith in the power of collective alliances.

In this chapter, I have discussed the concepts of space, masculinities and solidarity, as well as their interrelations. Space and solidarity are connected in the sense that they are both subject to social dimensions and their study has evolved with structural shifts in society. This is visible, for instance, in the connection between studies on solidarity and urbanisation in the work of Émile Durkheim and in the linkage between the ideas of Doreen Massey and Zygmunt Bauman on how globalisation marginalises the powerless both spatially and politically. Solidarity is also related to the construction of masculinities. As Robert Wilton and Joshua Evans contend, independence and, hence, autonomy and individualism are associated with a hegemonic masculinity that is constructed oppositionally against a model of women characterised as dependent and more prone to friendship and solidarity (2014, 346). In the next two chapters, I will use the ideas presented in this chapter to offer a reading of Alasdair Gray's and James Kelman's selected novels based on the concept of precarious solidarity.

**CHAPTER 5. SOLIDARITY IN
EXPLOITATIVE SCENARIOS:
ALASDAIR GRAY AND THE
OBSTACLES TO LIVING
COLLECTIVELY**

5.1. Individualism, the Objectification of Women and the Ethics of Utility as Limitations to Solidarity in *Lanark*

As I have explained in Section 2.2.4. Alasdair Gray's debut novel *Lanark* has a particularly intricate structure. It comprises four books arranged in a way that flouts chronological order—first Book Three and then Books One, Two and Four. The novel, which begins in media res, has a dual protagonist: a man called Lanark is the protagonist of Book Three, set in the surreal city of Unthank, whereas Books One and Two are presented as Lanark's past life in Glasgow, when he was called Duncan Thaw. When Thaw's life in Glasgow ends in Book Two, the narrative returns to the fantastic world of Unthank and to Lanark as its protagonist in Book Four. Due to the fact that Duncan Thaw's life is presented as Lanark's past life in Glasgow and Lanark's life as Duncan Thaw's afterlife, I consider both characters to be two versions of the same person in different stages of his life. For that reason, I follow a chronological structure in my analysis, from Duncan Thaw's childhood and his death as a young man in 1950s Scotland to his rebirth as Lanark and his growth in a fantastic and apocalyptic world where Unthank and also Provan are the main cities. In order to make the analysis clearer, it is necessary to focus, first of all, on his development throughout the narrative.

Book One follows Thaw's life since he is a five-year-old boy from Riddrie, the Glasgow neighbourhood where Gray himself was born, until he enrolls in Glasgow School of Art as a young man. The book starts when the Thaws, Duncan's parents and his sister Ruth, have to evacuate Glasgow during the Second World War and move to the Highlands, where they live until the end of the War. Then, the family goes back to Glasgow where Thaw begins his studies at Whitehill Secondary School, where he befriends Robert Coulter and becomes infatuated with his classmate Kate Caldwell. Once he finishes secondary school, Thaw has to think about his working life. After considering becoming a designer at a box-making factory or a librarian at Glasgow's Mitchell Library, he gets a grant to study at Glasgow School of Art and pursue his dream of being an artist. Thaw has a very peculiar personality that conditions his worldview and his social relationships and Book One depicts the origins and formation of his character. For instance, on their way to the Highlands, Thaw suffers from his first case of asthma and eczema, two diseases that are linked to psychological problems as a doctor suggests further in the novel. His fragile health and its visible physical marks—he walks with a

hunched back due to the pressure of asthma in his lungs and his skin is full of eczema spots— makes him feel unattractive and heavily insecure, a bodily weakness he compensates with a vivid imagination and great intelligence. Although his low self-esteem makes talking to Kate Caldwell difficult for him, Thaw creates fantasies where he is able to get the attention from women he craves in his real life. Imagination also allows Thaw to dream of alternative realities where he is a powerful man revealing his wish to be different and superior to the rest of humanity. On the one hand, Thaw enjoys static pictures of women in advertising and imagines loving Kate Caldwell in a pure form. On the other hand, he is disgusted towards sex —“I wish to God I was self-fertilizing” (166)— showing his dislike for natural human experiences and his wish to be above them. Thaw’s school friend Robert Coulter also notes his wish to stand out from conventional people in his readings choices, of a higher intellectual level to that of most of his peers. In this vein, while expanding his inner world, his intelligence and his imagination reinforce his narcissism and his estrangement from society.

In Book Two, Gray continues narrating Thaw’s life from his first day at Glasgow School of Art to his descent into madness and his eventual suicide. Thaw’s health issues, his narcissistic tendencies and his inability to form relationships with women intensify in this part of the novel. At the Art School, Thaw struggles to follow the teachers’ instructions and he increasingly isolates from the classrooms as he gets an art studio with his friend Kenneth McAlpin to paint on his own. During a school party, he meets Marjory Laidlaw, who becomes, after Kate Caldwell, his new obsession. While Thaw only admired Kate in the distance, he goes on a few dates with Marjory, but she increasingly avoids him and does not reciprocate his feelings. Consequently, Thaw decides to break up with her. Extremely hurt after this, Thaw’s illness worsens and, too sick to carry a normal life, he becomes hospitalised. At hospital, Thaw meets the minister of Cowlairston Parish Church, who gives him a commission to paint the church once he leaves hospital. This commission is the beginning of Thaw’s demise. Totally immersed in the task and seeking a level of perfection that renders the process never-ending, he ends up moving to the church and completely isolating himself from his family and his few friends. As he forgets to properly eat, he loses contact with his surroundings and, in the middle of what seems a psychotic crisis where the division between reality and hallucination is blurred, he believes to have killed a woman. Disoriented and with nowhere to go, Thaw takes a bus to the Highlands and commits suicide drowning in the sea.

In Book Three, located at the beginning of the novel, Lanark is presented as a man newly arrived in Unthank, a hellish Glasgow-like city where there is no daylight or clocks to measure time and where people, who suffer from strange diseases connected to their emotional circumstances, disappear from the city when their health worsens. Lanark arrives in Unthank a nameless man in a train carriage ignoring the reason why he is there as well as his whereabouts. The first thing he does after arriving is getting money from Unthank's security place, a sort of welfare system. After this, he rents a room in the flat of a woman called Mrs. Fleck. Lanark finds out about the frequent disappearances when Susy, one of his neighbours, vanishes, leaving her three children alone in the building. Concerning the diseases of Unthank people, Lanark has dragonhide, a condition connected to his loneliness and emotional repression that hardens his skin, gradually transforming him into a dragon-like creature. Due to the absence of daylight, Lanark spends his days looking for it from the balcony of the Elite Café where he meets Sludden and his clique. Sludden is a man who epitomises the hegemonic masculinity model in Unthank. He embodies a hedonistic and dominant masculinity shown in his manipulation of other people, especially his fiancé Gay and other women like Nan, Frankie and Rima who still like him despite his cruel ways. Among the members of Sludden's group, Lanark falls in love with Rima, a very cold, pessimistic and sad woman who also has dragonhide. As Lanark's illness spreads and he starts being aware of the most hellish aspects of Unthank, he gets swallowed by a gigantic mouth that appears on the summit of a hill similar to Glasgow Necropolis and ends up in a sort of hospital called the Institute. At the Institute, he gets cured of dragonhide and gets offered to work as a doctor's assistant, called Ozenfant. During this time, he learns that this health institution uses the hopeless patients for food and power. Horrified at this discovery, Lanark has the opportunity to save a dragonhide hopeless case from being killed. This dragonhide patient turns out to be Rima, who had also disappeared from Unthank. Determined to leave the Institute and move to a sunnier place than Unthank and the institute, which was built underground and needing a companion to legally do it, Lanark wants Rima to be his partner. Yet before officially asking to leave the Institute to the authorities, Lanark and Rima listen to an oracle that reveals them their past lives. The oracle's narrative of Lanark's past life are Books One and Two.

Finally, Book Four follows Lanark's adventures as he travels from the Institute to Unthank and gets close to the political structures of this world characterised by corruption, disintegrating morality and a profit-driven mindset. Apart from the Institute,

the hospital where he is cured from dragonhide and where he finds Rima, this world is governed by the Council, a sort of parliamentary body and the Creature, a conglomerate of corporations that control all economic decisions made by both the Institute and the Council. When Lanark and Rima ask for permission to leave the Institute, the Council tells them they can go to Provan, a city in the same world with more sunlight than Unthank. But this seems impossible and Lanark and Rima have to return to Unthank. However, this Unthank is not the same one they once knew. As a Councilman called Wilkins tells Lanark, Unthank is no longer economically profitable and, as such, it will be destroyed by the Creature. Only when Unthank ceases to exist will they be able to move to sunnier Provan. Once Lanark accepts going back to Unthank and their departure is approved, Lanark and Rima travel along an Intercalendrical Zone, where space is warped and time goes extremely fast. During their trip, they realise Rima is pregnant with Lanark's child and upon their arrival she gives birth to their son Alexander at Unthank cathedral, the new government headquarters. In the new Unthank, now called Greater Unthank, Sludden is the new Lord Provost. When Lanark tells him about Unthank's impending destruction by the Creature, neither Sludden nor other men in Greater Unthank's government believe him. As Rima stays in the cathedral taking care of Alexander, Lanark goes out into town to try to find a job. He ends up finding one in a remodelled version of the old security place, now called job centre. When he goes back to the cathedral, he finds out that Rima has decided to leave him and move in with Sludden, taking Alexander with her. While Lanark's family falls apart, a car crash in the Unthank motorway causes dangerous chemicals to spread, putting the city and its inhabitants in great danger. Although Sludden acts as if he is not responsible for this, he is in fact working as the Creature's accomplice in the destruction of Unthank. To hide his real intentions, Sludden sends Lanark as Unthank's delegate to the general assembly of council states in Provan, where he is to defend the protection of Unthank during the chemical accident. Lanark believes that if he represents Unthank politically, he will help save Rima, Alexander and the rest of Unthank citizens. Yet, his appointment as delegate is a distraction manoeuvre executed by Sludden to achieve his goal. At the Provan general assembly, Lanark encounters a series of obstacles and fails in his intentions to save Unthank. When he returns to Unthank a tired and older man—he has to cross an Intercalendrical Zone to travel from Provan and this ages him faster than normal—Thaw reunites with his son Alexander, already a grown man and with Rima, who has remarried. From the Necropolis hilltop, he sees Unthank disappear in front of his eyes due to the

chemical disaster he was unable to prevent. At the very end of the novel, it is revealed to him that he will die soon and he waits death patiently as the sun, which he had been craving since his arrival in this dark world, shines in the sky.

Although there are indeed parallelisms between Thaw and Lanark—their skin diseases, eczema and dragonhide, their struggle to form relationships with women and their characterisation as social outcasts—these are not exact. Rather, they are slightly altered versions of one another: Lanark a more fantastic one and Thaw more realistic. Isobel Murray and Bob Tait call the interrelation between Thaw and Lanark a “Gray area” that characterises the author’s playful approach to structure: “we find ourselves in a Gray area: precisely so. It is both a joke and not a joke that the Thaw and Lanark sections of the novel do and do not interrelate” (1984, 221). Nevertheless, considering these parallelisms is crucial for my analysis. Not only is the Thaw/Lanark relationship significant to examine the novel from the perspectives of space, masculinities and solidarity, but also the strong connection between these characters and Alasdair Gray’s biography may further explicate the relevance of their construction as social outcasts.

Due to the specific focus on Thaw’s struggle to maintain social relationships and relationships with women in Books One and Two, I examine these two books from the perspective of solidarity towards their social relationships, what Sally Scholz has termed *social solidarity* (2008, 21). I divide my analysis of Books One and Two into two sections. In the first one, I explore how Thaw’s spatial movements further condition his estrangement from society and his ability to be solidary. In the second section, I examine what Thaw’s creation of imaginary spaces of gender reveals about his solidarity or lack thereof towards women. As Thaw’s anti-social personality is mirrored in his afterlife as Lanark in Books Three and Four, I continue my analysis of the main character’s relationship with women in a third section focused on solidarity between Lanark and Rima as a couple. Finally, I devote the last section to analyse whether, by coming into contact with the politics of his world, Lanark may get closer to a sense of solidarity.

5.1.1. Against Collective Rhythms and into Fantasy: Moving away from Solidarity

As I have explained in Section 4.3.1., solidarity entails an action of support towards another person whether they belong to the same group as you do—*solidarity among*

(Sangiovanni and Viehoff 2023, n.p.)— or they do not —*solidarity with* (2023, n.p.). When solidary does not stem from “feelings of sympathy and belonging together” (1999, 217-18), as Andreas Wildt defines it, it can be extended from one individual to another on the basis that the agent of the action empathises with the situation of the recipient and wants to help them. Having these definitions of solidarity in mind, as I will elaborate further later, Duncan Thaw’s active challenge to social belonging and his life as an outcast heavily hamper his ability to be solidary. In this section, I aim to focus on how Thaw uses space to marginalise himself evading the recognition of the needs of those around him.

A key aspect of Thaw’s impediment to solidarity is his challenge of collective rhythms. Although his walks with friends Robert Coulter and Kenneth McAlpin are narrated in the novel, Thaw’s preference for lonely walking is salient. When Thaw and Coulter are students at Whitehill Secondary School, Coulter tends to go with two other schoolmates at the park at night when it is forbidden. This activity, despite vandalic, creates among Coulter and his schoolmates a sense of group and of masculine bonding rooted in shared risk-taking. Instead of joining them, Thaw deviates from the social routines followed by the boys in his school and rambles alone around Glasgow embodying a marginal masculinity that is withdrawn from the normal rituals of male socialisation at his age. Not only does Thaw move differently from the boys in his school, but he also deviates from the use of space of most boys and girls in his age group: “boys of his own age strolled on the pavements in crowds of three and four, girls walked in couples, groups of both sexes gossiped and giggled by café doors” (169).

Thaw’s asthma, eczema and his peculiar appearance make him specifically self-aware of his presence in the street. Hearing the giggles coming from the boys and girls he walks by, he believes that they are mocking him: “Overheard whispers seemed to mock the absent look he wore to disarm criticism, overheard laughter seemed caused by the upright hair he never brushed or combed” (169). Consequently, his insecurity at the idea of being seen and laughed at makes hiding and darkness more appealing than visibility, which makes him change his route and hide in less crowded and darker streets. While in daylight he feels self-conscious and mocked about his difference, walking along dark streets makes him feel more confident: “His confidence grew with the darkness. His face took on a resolute, slightly wolfish look, his feet hit the pavement firmly, he strode past couples embracing in close mouths feeling isolated by a stern purpose which put him outside merely human satisfactions” (169). Although deviating from collective rhythms

and finding his individual route strengthens his confidence, it also places him closer to the margins and, thus, further from the potential of engaging in solidary relations.

Thaw also questions conventional school and work rhythms. At school, he has trouble with having to take subjects he does not enjoy conceiving education as part of what Michel Foucault calls *disciplinary technologies* (1977). Mathematics is portrayed as a rigid discipline that promotes order and obedience rather than freedom and where, as the teacher tells her students, “there was no room for dreamers” (151). Although art is Thaw’s favourite area, the way it is taught both at secondary school and at art school is closer to repetitive *linear* rhythms (Lefebvre 2004, 18) and further from the unregulated creativity he longs for. For Thaw, disciplinarian technologies and linear rhythms extend beyond the school. For instance, he questions conventional work routines by thinking what would happen if one day workers changed their work schedules and decided to stay in bed instead of going to work one morning. Thaw has this thought while he is in bed, waiting to wake up to go to his first day at the Glasgow School of Art suggests he is himself thinking about staying in bed that morning and evading his social obligations and, as such, his participation in society.

Thaw’s vision of school as a homogenising regime that stifles individual freedom is inspired in some aspects by Gray’s own schooling experience. In a personal essay included in *Ten Tales Tall and True* (1993), the author describes Whitehill Secondary School, the school he also studied in, as a sort of prison: “The playgrounds were walled and fenced like prison exercise yards” (107). There, as Thaw does, he grew weary of the monotonous and uninspiring teaching methods: “Compound interest, sines, cosines, Latin declensions, tables of elements tasted to my mind like sawdust in my mouth: those who dished it out expected me to swallow while an almost bodily instinct urged me to vomit” (107). Yet, despite Gray’s dislike of rigid methodologies, he graduated and continued with his life. In contrast, the clash between Thaw and social routines is severely heightened leading him to radical social retreat.

Extremely anxious about the rituals of everyday life and pessimistic about the world around him, Thaw also escapes his depressing perception of reality by creating what Edward Soja calls a thirdspace (1996). For Soja, the Thirdspace is a social reconceptualisation of space that merges the vision of space as either physical (Firstspace) or mental (Secondspace) considering how our social dimension mediates our perceptions of space. Through his unique and individual imagination, Thaw uses the physical spaces of the city as a scenario for fantasies that are detached from Glasgow’s reality. These

fantasies help him with his art. For instance, on his first day as a student at the Glasgow School of Art, he sees a strange tree at the back streets of Sauchiehall Lane: “It grew in a patch of bare earth among pale-green rhubarb-shaped weeds; it divided at the roots into two scaly limbs, one twisting along the ground” (227). Thaw identifies with this tree as its unhealthy shape mimics his own physical and mental sickness. The tree has a strange form, standing on its own in the middle of a bare backyard. Accordingly, Thaw’s identification with it also highlights his self-perception as a social outcast. Inspired by this image, he uses the tree as a central piece of his art school assignment, a painting on the theme of “Washing Day.” This connection between Thaw’s fantastic perception of Glasgow and his own art is linked to Alasdair Gray’s use of his city for artistic inspiration as a student. Indeed, the passage on the tree and its use for a school painting is one of many autobiographical details of the novel. Gray’s own painting *The Beast in the Pit* (Annex 1) was made in 1952 after he was given the same “Washing Day” prompt at the Glasgow School of Art.

Although Thaw’s art helps him develop his imagination, it also strengthens his individualism and his self-estrangement. When he is told to paint his own version of Da Vinci’s “The Last Supper” as an art school assignment, he goes to the underground railway and contemplates the faces of poor people to model the apostles’ faces after them. He does this because for this assignment he needs to observe people. Yet, instead of getting to know the people he will use as models, Thaw remains detached from them. Accordingly, not even a more social realistic approach to art that takes the Glaswegian working classes as subjects of representation allows him to be solidary towards the people he is painting. However, his artistic representation of Glaswegian people does not mean he is not completely disengaged from their problems. If solidarity is an action that stems from an awareness of people’s needs and a willingness to help them, Thaw’s social disengagement is completely opposed to it.

When Thaw does not actively evade urban collective rhythms, his relationship with its inhabitants is, as “The Last Supper” example shows, heavily superficial. The shallowness of his interactions with real Glasgow is further emphasised in his disengagement with city politics. In a conversation with his friend Kenneth McAlpin, Thaw denounces Glasgow’s government mismanagement showing to be aware of the city’s political history. However, rather than directly engaging with these issues and getting politically involved, he only thinks of politics in his fantasies. For instance, in one of them Thaw imagines he is reconstructing Glasgow after a civil war and gives full

utopian-sounding ideas to improve the city's urbanity: "Fountains splashed and trees grew where the demolished banks had stood. Backcourts were given benches and open-air draughtboards for the old, paddling ponds and sand pits for infants, communal non-profit making launderettes for housewives. Pleasure boats with small orchestras sailed down the canal from Riddrie to the Clyde islands" (289). While he has ideas for a reinvention of the city, Thaw does not share these political plans with other people, neither does he join a political group or lead a protest to solve Glasgow's economic issues. These are not realistic plans directed to Glaswegians with an intention of communal improvement behind. Instead, they are fantasies of personal power than fuel his ego as he relishes on the imaginative capabilities of his unique mind. Hence, Thaw's imagination reinforces his narcissism isolating him from a real version of the city and from the possibility of acting in solidarity with Glasgow people.

By detaching from real Glasgow and into the Glasgow of his imagination, Thaw becomes alienated and incapable to express solidarity towards those around him. As his life progresses, fantasy growingly takes over reality and his social alienation intensifies. At the end of Book Two, Thaw is living at Cowlairston Parish Church, completely absorbed by the task of painting the church murals. His obsession with this project has led him to abandon his main structures of social support. For instance, by leaving the family home he has lost contact with his father and his sister. Moreover, having missed his assignments and exams, he is expelled from the Glasgow Art School. Engrossed in mural-painting, Thaw misses meals and develops unhealthy sleeping habits, becoming mad. As I have already explained, after a breakdown in which he thinks he has killed a woman, Thaw decides to leave Glasgow. As he leaves Glasgow behind, he sees the city levitating in the sky: "The city was forcing itself into the sky on every side. Factory, university, gasometer, slag-bing, ridges of tenements, parks loaded with trees ascended until he looked up at a horizon like the rim of a bowl with himself at the bottom" (348). This shows how fantasy has completely conquered his view of his surroundings, rendering him even more incapable than he was before of interacting with reality. As he separates himself from the city and reality, the city and the people within become unattainable. The escapist attitude which permeates Thaw's gaze and spatial engagement appear as cause and effect of his ultimate separation from society, his death at the end of Book Two and his incapability to be part of solidary networks.

In Section 3.2.1., I have discussed Gray's thematic obsession with the dialectics between individual freedom and the constraints of power. This continuous battle has been

an aspect touched upon in most analyses of the novel. For instance, Robert Crawford identifies “the struggle against entrapment” (1991, 4) as one of Gray’s obsessions. Similarly, Alison Lumsden stresses the centrality of escapism from oppressive systems in Gray’s work arguing Thaw’s self-destruction is in fact brought about by power systems (1993, 115). As I see it, Lumsden bypasses the importance that Thaw’s relationship with society, characterised by escapism rather than by participation, has in his suicide. Thaw is not a total victim of his surroundings but, in my view, his narcissistic personality and his desire to evade mundane relationship makes him unable to challenge oppressive systems as a member of society and in a solidary manner.

From a socialist humanist perspective, scholars like Gavin Miller and Georgia Walker Churchman, whose work I have examined in Section 3.2.2., question to what extent Thaw’s narcissism is compatible with Gray’s collective oriented ideas. For Miller, by framing Thaw’s social escapism as the cause of his death, Gray is criticising an individualistic use of art and an egocentric subjecthood (2005, 36). In a similar fashion, Walker Churchman views Thaw’s breakdown as “the product of an alienated understanding of his work; one which is deeply imbricated in the assertion of creative mastery and the desire for personal recognition and success” (2019, 84) and, as such, profoundly narcissistic. In line with both Miller and Walker Churchman, I contend that Gray’s construction of the character of Duncan Thaw serves him to criticise the lack of political viability of individualist social escapism. Concerning the ideas developed in his pamphlets, as well as the ethics that inform his participation in groups like Workers City, as I have explored in Section 3.2.3., Gray is aligned with a movement of solidarity towards the working classes, Glaswegians and ultimately a strong sense of civic solidarity through his sustained support of a strong welfare system in Britain. Consequently, I claim that in the novel Gray also shows the practical impossibility of total withdrawal from society and how escapism is both personally and politically destructive.

Furthermore, Thaw’s personality also allows Gray to explore the extreme consequences of wanting to escape society alone. By making Thaw into an increasingly marginal and egotistic man, Gray is not providing any solution to the main character’s personal problems based on solidarity, rather the opposite. However, as I see it, this does not mean Gray is condoning Thaw’s behaviour. Considering the biographical connections between both of them, I argue he is representing an exaggerated and apocalyptic vision of what could have happened to himself had he been less hopeful about political change and had his health issues been more severe. Gray has talked about how, during his school

years, he was obsessed with fantasy worlds (1993, 107) and about how he struggled with eczema and asthma like Thaw did. As Rodge Glass illustrates in his biography of Gray: “The connection between mental stress and physical illness has always been a close one for him and during these secondary school years Alasdair’s facial eczema and asthma attacks became increasingly oppressive: breathing was often difficult, which frequently brought on panic” (2008, 43). Despite sharing these problems with Thaw, Gray did have a sense of community at art school. While Thaw’s evasion from his art school classes and his retreat to Cowlares Parish Church leaves him without a community, Glasgow School of Art Gray “was popular and was valued by his peers for the quality of his work” (2008, 57). In fact, his initial idea for the use of the character of Duncan Thaw in 1954 was to write “a tragic novel” (56). As such, I argue that Gray’s interest in transforming elements from his own biography into a tragical story can explain Thaw and his most anti-solidary traits.

5.1.2. Women Seen as Objects: The Limitations to Men’s Solidarity with Women

Thaw’s socially awkward personality is especially interesting concerning its impact on his relationship with women. The complex intertwining of deep insecurity and a disdain for all the mundane aspects of human society that characterises his personality makes him perceive women as both unattainable beings and as objects Thaw seeks to control. As I have explained in Section 4.3.2., according to Søren Juul, the *recognition* of the other as equal and worthy is one of the key principles of solidarity. In this section, I explore how Thaw’s heavily unequal conception of women prevents solidarity from men to women where the acknowledgement of the other is key.

When he first falls in love —with Kate Caldwell— he is incapable of talking to her. He unsuccessfully tries to impress her with his intellect but, although Kate is nice to him, she does not like him back. Thaw feels so distant from Kate and from women in general that one afternoon he trespasses the park to hug a tree he imagines to be the body of a woman. Upon learning that Kate is going out with several boys at the same time, Thaw sees the possibility of being with her even more unrealistic: “There’s the obstacles of not being attractive, not having money to take her out, not knowing how to talk to her and now it seems she is a flirt. If I ever reach her she’ll shift elsewhere and keep on

shifting” (173). Thaw’s vision of women as unattainable is reinforced when, already an art school student, he runs into an old classmate of his, June Haig and asks her on a date. After agreeing to see him twice and standing him up both times, Thaw starts feeling unlovable. Janice Galloway emphasises that Gray’s description of women is indeed characterised by a “sense of loss and distance from the female” (1995 195). However, she does not discuss a problematic issue concerning this distance. Due to his failure to form relationships with women, Thaw sometimes creates fantasies where he dominates and humiliates them. Often the women of these fantasies are anonymous but, in the middle of an asthma attack, the face of one of these women turns into June’s and he imagines he rapes her. In this vein, while his real relationship with women permeates a sense of inferiority and distance, in his fantasies these turn into violent domination. These power dynamics radically oppose the mutuality and the sense of recognition that characterise solidarity.

This combination between distance and control also appears in Thaw’s relationship with Marjory. Although Thaw goes on a few dates with her, their relationship is unbalanced. As Thaw’s love for Marjory increases, she starts getting late to their dates or cancelling their plans together last minute also avoiding him around the art school when he is with his friends. Upon Marjory’s avoidant behaviour, Thaw becomes more and more resentful and vengeful towards her, feeling insulted and betrayed: “Oh, God, if you exist, hurt her, hurt her God, let her find no comfort but in me, make life afflict her as it afflicts me” (275). When they break up, unable to accept his feelings are not reciprocated, Thaw fantasises of becoming so important that Marjory is unable to escape his image in newspapers, the radio and on cinemas “he surrounded her, he was shaping her world, yet she could not touch him” (289). This fantasy reveals Thaw’s desire to dominate the whole of Marjory’s world and render her disempowered and at his service. As Walker Churchman describes it: “At the crux of Thaw’s political imagination, then, we find a yearning for absolute and non-reciprocal control over the other” (81). Due to his perception of Marjory as an object he can master and reduce to an idea, Thaw is not able to recognise her as a real woman outside his own mental framework; his self-absorption prevents him from truly knowing her. In Section 3.2.4.1., I have discussed Gavin Miller’s ideas on Thaw’s sexuality. For Miller, in his infatuations, Thaw is looking for muse-like perfect icons of beauty that serve his own interests rather than for real and free women (2005, 28). This shows to what extent Thaw’s conception of relationships with the women he likes lacks an acknowledgement of the other and rests on his own self-

pleasure. In fact, when Marjory does not reciprocate his feelings, Thaw even wishes to kill her. His pure hatred towards her emphasises that Thaw appreciates Marjory only when she fits the role he imagines for her, detesting her when she does not.

Both purely selfish interests and a lack of recognition of the other have been theoretically regarded as contrary to solidarity. As I see it, Gray portrays Thaw's relationship with women as highly individualistic, clashing with the solidarity that characterises his opinions on local and national politics. While in his pro-welfare politics Gray extends solidarity towards all Scottish people, caring particularly about the working classes, gender and feminism are not topics he discusses from his facet as a pamphlet writer. Rather, Gray's portrayal of relationships draws from his own experiences and his struggle to talk to girls as a young boy (1993, 107). In this vein, I argue that Thaw's objectification of women is connected to the sexist society he lived in and to a vision of domination as an admirable masculine trait. Thaw's misogyny is underlined by various commentaries by his friends. For instance, when they find out that Kate Caldwell goes out with several boys, Robert Coulter shames her calling her "a wee grope" (173). Similarly, when a girl rejects Aitken Drummond, an art school classmate, he tells Thaw that women are "downright villainous" (259). Moreover, Thaw believes that the only way of feeling closer to women is "when rescuing them" (158), fitting the role of a hero that is utterly detached from his shyness and physical weakness. Worried about how inferior his traits make him feel as a man, for him the only possibility to be with women is through superiority rather than equality. In the next section, I will explore how Thaw's incapability to recognise women's freedom and see them as equals is reproduced in his afterlife as Lanark.

5.1.3. Fluctuating between Self-Interest and Cooperation: The Limitations to Solidarity in the Couple

In this section, I explore how the relationship between Lanark and women is portrayed in Books Three and Four in the context of the couple he forms with Rima. As I have explained in Section 4.3.1., social solidarity is used to name the series of actions and obligations that contribute to a group's cohesion, including the couple and the family. For instance, Kurt Bayertz identifies love and feelings of affection as elements of a personal

relation of social solidarity (1999, 11). The elements and obligations that sustain a relation of social solidarity vary, according to Bayertz (1999, 9) and Scholz (2008, 21), depending on the characteristics of each group. Regarding solidarity in the couple, different elements have been considered as key in the maintenance of their unity, such as joint responsibility and involvement (Apostu 2023) or trust and communication (Burke and Stets 1999). In order to analyse the solidarity or lack thereof between Lanark and Rima, I focus on their joint involvement and in their trust.

When they meet, Lanark and Rima's relationship is characterised by distance between the two of them. While Lanark starts liking her almost as soon as he sees her, Rima behaves coldly with him. As the novel is narrated from Thaw's and Lanark's perspectives, it becomes difficult to know the reasons behind the women's behaviour unless these are explicitly revealed by them. As he seeks for her attention, for Lanark Rima's defensive remarks are hurtful and indicate she is avoiding intimate connection. Indeed, Rima describes herself as a cold person and when Lanark tries to get closer to her upon discovering they both have dragonhide, she harshly replies to him: "Do you think that makes a bond between us?" (35). Yet, despite her emotional aloofness, Lanark remains fond of her.

As I have already explained, Lanark encounters Rima again as a dragonhide patient at the Institute. Upon learning that the Institute instrumentalises the bodies of difficult patients and uses them as fuel and food, Lanark wants to leave. However, he needs to find a companion among the patients to accompany him on his journey out of it. As such, he starts treating Rima and ultimately saves her, even when Lanark's boss at the Institute, Ozenfant, believes her to be incurable. In their intentions to stop treating her and using her body as energy, the Institute act against any form of human solidarity. In fact, when Lanark has been treating Rima for a while, Ozenfant tries to convince him to abandon her, as he considers her a hopeless case and to use his time to heal "someone more important" (85). Under the pretence that sicker bodies are less human than healthy ones, the Institute uses them as energy. In this vein, the Institute does not respect what Judith Butler calls *grievability*. According to Butler, a life that is grieved is a life that matters: "Without grievability, there is no life, or, rather, there is something living that is other than life" (2009, 15). Thus, the normalisation of the instrumentalisation and cannibalisation of sick bodies—without the corresponding mourning process that human lives that matter go through—renders the Institute's hopeless cases non-grievable and non-human bodies. This shows a clear hierarchy in the Institute that sees the diseased and

their lives as unworthy, which serves Gray to criticise the violent and exploitative agenda capitalism justifies to obtain profit.

As mentioned above, solidarity is rooted in what Juul sees as the principle of recognition, that is, the acknowledgment that all humans are equally worthy. Consequently, as I see it, Lanark's efforts to save Rima place him closer to solidarity. By saving Rima, Lanark recognises her human worth and her need to live, challenging the Institute's inhuman and anti-solidary practices. In fact, Lanark's action places him and Rima closer together. However, Lanark's rescue of Rima is not a completely solidary action but also a selfish one. Finding a companion is the sole way Lanark can leave the Institute, so saving Rima is his best option to achieve his individual goal. Moreover, Lanark has inherited from Thaw a vision of masculinity as dominant and heroic. The chance to save Rima from being killed is presented as an opportunity to fulfil this role and help a woman in distress. By showing Lanark's action to be both solidary and selfish, Gray explores the fine line between self-interest and help to others. This topic is especially interesting because it reveals an inherent connection between self-interest and men's asymmetrical actions of solidarity with women. Particularly in this heroic and protective manner, help from men to women inflates men's ego and risks perpetuating the position of men as superior and stronger than women.

The problems to find equality and a sense of solidarity devoid of self-interest in the couple are further explored in the crossing of the Intercalendrical Zone. Before starting the journey, Lanark and Rima disagree on whether to take it. While Lanark desperately wants to leave due to his aversion towards the Institute's inhuman methods, incapable of eating their food made of human remains, Rima is comfortable and prefers to stay. Although in the end she agrees to go with him, her resentment against Lanark remains, adding tension to their relationship. When I interviewed Alasdair Gray in 2019, he told to me that he got the inspiration for the journey across the Intercalendrical Zone from a hitchhiking experience with his first wife, Inge Sørensen, while she was pregnant with his only child Andrew. As he explained it:

The experience of walking with my wife along a strip of motorway was terrible. Motorways were a new thing and we hadn't realised that we couldn't just thumb lifts from lorries on motorways. We were walking along the motorway very late at night and very early in the morning, being unable to leave the motorway or to get any vehicle to pick us

up. It was in part an exaggeration of that particular phase of my marriage that the crossing of the Intercalendrical Zone was based upon. (62)

In his revelation of the connection between the Intercalendrical Zone and a personal experience, Gray highlights how the chaotic space around them made hitchhiking a more stressful experience for both him and his wife. The spatial complications of this episode are exaggerated in Lanark and Rima's journey. The Intercalendrical Zone is a fluid space where time-space is warped and constantly shifting. A space full of white mist, it has a road in the middle divided into two by a yellow strip. The first thing Lanark and Rima notice is that the road goes downhill on one side and uphill on the other so that, at the beginning, Lanark is walking uphill and Rima downhill. The fact that the spatial experience of the walk and the inclination of the terrain is different for each member of the couple highlights the tension and disagreement between them. The road ahead is full of complications and walking in different inclinations makes it impossible for them to progress simultaneously and synchronize their individual rhythms following what Lefebvre calls *eurhythmia* (2000, 77). Therefore, this hard situation leads Lanark and Rima to cooperate and they hold hands to make walking easier and balance each other out: "'At last' Rima said, 'What if we walked on different sides of the line but held hands across it? Then when one of us went downhill we'd be steadied by the one going up.' Lanark stared at her and cried, 'What a clever idea!'" (378).

As I discussed in Section 4.3.2., Siegwart Lindenberg identifies *cooperation* as one of the basic norms of solidarity. Cooperation entails dividing the effort of a difficult situation among the people on a group to make the task easier. As such, by holding hands Lanark and Rima are cooperating and acknowledging how each other's help ultimately works to the advantage of the goal of arriving in Unthank as soon as possible. In this vein, their cooperation also responds to their self-interest. Yet, when they have both been walking for days and their bodies are tired, cooperation decays. When the effort is too big, Rima and Lanark's approximation to a sense of solidarity fails. This is emphasised when they realise they have been walking in circles. In frustration, Rima eats all the food they had packed for the travel. Angry because she had not agreed to cross the zone at first, her need to relieve her hunger and express her exasperation becomes more prominent than cooperating with Lanark. Consequently, their sense of solidarity is too precarious to persist.

In Section 4.3.2. of this thesis, I propose the concept *precarious solidarity* to describe situations where solidarity is doubly challenged as it is not encouraged or supported by institutions and it arises in socio-economically and politically precarious situations. In the context of Lanark and Rima's relationship, the society they live in is highly individualistic and, as emphasised by the Institute's practices, with values that undermine human solidarity. In addition, their relationship, unequal and strained, is emotionally precarious. As such, not only is their cooperation at the Intercalendrical Zone partly motivated by self-interest, but when the situation becomes more difficult each member of the couple resorts to their individual interests forgetting to help the other and revealing the inequality and distance between them. The precariousness of their cooperation is also highlighted when Rima gets so angry at Lanark that she stops walking. Lanark misunderstands the situation interpreting that Rima does not want to continue the journey with him and he leaves her there. However, Rima was expecting him to be more active and affectionate, taking her with him, so she feels abandoned by Lanark whom she calls "a cruel nasty idiot" (383). Although they hold hands again and continue cooperating until they reach the exit, their constant discussions and disregard for the other when the situation complicates allows Gray to explore the problems Lanark and Rima have to understand each other.

As I see it, considering its inspiration on a personal experience, Lanark and Rima's difficult relationship shares some elements with the relationship Gray had with his first wife. As such, like it did with some details of Thaw's personality, Gray's biography explicates to what extent the author's choice to depict the precariousness of solidarity between Lanark and Rima is related to his interest in representing problems of conviviality within a marriage. Indeed, in his biography of Alasdair Gray, Rodge Glass gives an account of how unhappy he was during his first marriage. According to Glass, Gray's friends and acquaintances remembered his wife Inge as someone who showed "selfish behaviour which, they said, was often designed specifically to anger or humiliate Alasdair" (2008, 94). Due to her death in 2000, knowing Inge's side of the story was impossible for Glass; however, he notes that it seems to have been public knowledge from earlier that Inge was miserable in the marriage and she looked outside "for the kind of attention she felt she was not getting from her husband" (2008, 94). These biographical elements match Lanark's perception of Rima as cold and cruel, as well as Rima's perception of Lanark as someone who disregards her feelings and does not treat them with affection.

In the context of the novel, despite of all the problems between Lanark and Rima, cooperation appears as a positive action. Their decision to hold hands while walking, despite catering to their own interests, helps both to reach Unthank alive emphasising the importance of that cooperation for human survival and for the improvement of human relationships. Nonetheless, his vision of the potential for solidarity in the couple is heavily pessimistic. While positive, cooperation between Lanark and Rima is seen as fleeting, disintegrating when they divorce. In the next section, I examine how Lanark's experience with cooperation at the Intercalendrical Zone fosters an awareness of the personal and political importance of solidarity to live together in society awhile at the same time individualism remains at the core of his personality. In order to explore the tensions between Lanark's selfishness and his attempts to be solidary, I focus on his relationship with the political world of Unthank and Provan, addressing as well how the elitist politics of this fantastic world limit its citizens' likelihood to act in solidarity.

5.1.4. Lanark's Attempts to Help Others: Precarious Solidarity against the Ethics of Utility

As I have explained in the introduction to the novel, although there are three central institutions in the unreal world Lanark lives in —the Institute, the Council and the Creature— the economic plans of the Creature dominate political decision-making. As such, this government has a worldwide oligarchic structure where corporations have a fundamental role. Lord Monboddo, the top governor of the Council, describes the system they live in as: “a great enterprise in which stable governments use the skills of institutional knowledge with the full backing of corporate wealth” (546). As a result, the highly competitive and elitist societies of Unthank and Provan disregard and dismantle everything that is unprofitable: the poor, the unemployed, the diseased, as well as the welfare measures that could be established to help them. As Grant, a member of Unthank's committee, tells Lanark, the people at the Creature “believe their greed holds up the continents. They don't call it greed, of course, they call it profit, or (among themselves, where they don't need to fool anyone) killing. They're sure that only their profit allows people to make and eat things” (410).

In my analysis of Gray's political perspective in Section 3.2.3., I argue that his pro-Scottish Home Rule stance, his socialist humanism and his republicanism derived from a total rejection of elitism and profit-driven political agendas. This is shown in his radical opposition against Thatcherite policies of privatisation and the dismantlement, followed by Blair, of the welfare state on the basis of cost efficiency and neoliberal ideas. It is precisely these ideologies what sustain the oppressive political system that govern Unthank and Provan. Making profit for a powerful few and joining the elite constitutes the moral compass of this fictional world. Accordingly, the political system that governs Unthank and its leading social values have visible similarities with what Søren Juul calls the ethics of utility. This idea is connected to the narrowing down of the definition of progress to technical and instrumental reason in scientific positivist thinking (193). For Juul, the limitation of the concept of human progress to the instrumental, together with the praise of neutrality and objectivity, transform moral progress into a subjective matter that loses authority. As such, solidarity is reconceptualised as an individual principle open to interpretation:

A cultural judgement conceiving morality as a subjective matter makes it difficult for people to understand their mutual dependency. In a society claiming that my morality may be as good as yours and vice versa, morality is colonized to the advantage of a technical reason which has no language to describe the conditions of the good life (...). For the same reason, solidarity cannot be understood as anything but a system of individual rights. (193-4)

The displacement of morality from the objectively good to a subjective realm endangers the fulfilment of solidarity if it is not balanced by an ethics of mutual dependence. The ethics of utility is subject to criteria of productivity and efficiency that could collide with the principles of equal chances and equal distribution that guide solidarity within a group (194). In this vein, Juul argues that "if the ethics of utility becomes absolute and is not balanced by an ethics of what we/society owe the individual person, in the end nothing can prevent injustice and inhumanity" (194). This is what happens in Unthank and Provan: in the absence of an ethics of solidarity that balances and challenges the ethics of utility, injustice and inhumanity have free rein.

The city of Unthank also has physical and cultural characteristics that hinder the potential for solidarity. The absence of sunlight and of clocks to measure time renders the life of its inhabitants unpredictable and the formation of solidary groups more difficult. The importance of spending time together for a group to reach an agreement on joint rules is precisely one of the crucial issues identified by Lindenberg to enact solidarity (1998, 93). Yet time unpredictability is not the only impediment met by Unthank citizens to form groups. Alienation and obstacles to communicate are rampant in a society situated in what Gloopy, one of Unthank's citizens, describes as an era of "crumbling social values. This is the age of alienation and non-communication. The old morals and manners are passing away and the new lot haven't come in yet" (522). Without the collective willingness to communicate, the citizens' ability to show solidarity to one another is hampered. Moreover, the prominence of individualism within and beyond the government undermines the strength and reach of solidarity attempts. Although citizens do vote, the government imposes their profit-driven agenda and the hope that the situation will change through collective solidarity is lacking among the population.

In this context, Lanark has the option of aligning with this system or challenging it. In the previous section, I stressed Lanark's opposition against the Institute's inhuman ethics and his approximation to human solidarity when saving Rima. As he gets closer to the politics of his world, his individual rejection of human injustice remains. For instance, when he goes to the Unthank job centre to find a work position after his son Alexander is born, he is hired as a grade D inquiry clerk for the administration, a job that consists in postponing inquiries rather than actually finding solutions to people's problems. As such, in accepting to work this job, Lanark would be participating in a bureaucratic trap established to avoid systemic changes and perpetuate inequalities. However, instead of following his boss' instructing, Lanark acts in solidarity with his old neighbour Jimmy Macfee, who goes to the inquiry desk seeking assistance from the government to buy a new house. Jimmy is one of the three children Susy has, Lanark's old neighbour who disappeared from Unthank a few days after his arrival in the city. Lanark intends to help Jimmy first of all by telling him the truth about the administration: "'Don't tell me. It's no use. This place isn't going to help you at all.' 'What?' 'You'll get no help here. If you need a new house you'll have to find a way of getting it yourself'" (442). Due to Lanark's past knowledge of Jimmy, his expression of solidarity is rooted in familiarity. Yet, his solidarity is based on other factors, like the parallelism between their experiences in Unthank. Like Jimmy, Lanark does not have a proper house and has been looking for a

job, which renders him a powerless member of the Unthank society, a circumstance Lanark can identify with. This identification between agent and recipient constitutes an example of solidarity based on what Barbara Prainsack and Alena Buyx call *similarity in a relevant aspect* (2017, 53). For Prainsack and Buyx it is similarity in the specific context where the solidary action is performed what mobilises an action of *interpersonal solidarity* from one person to another. In the case of Lanark, his familiarity with Jimmy, his empathy with his economic situation, as well as his disapproval of the institutional disregard to working class rights, is what motivates his solidary action towards Jimmy.

After telling him the truth and offering Jimmy his help, Lanark proposes him to find a group of people with similar housing problems and organise a strike claiming for bigger houses. Yet, Jimmy does not believe collective organisation to be possible in the Unthank political system: “Macfee screwed his face up incredulously and shouted, ‘Me? Organize a ... ? Thanks for bloody nothing!’” (442). Although Lanark demonstrates solidarity towards Jimmy and strengthens the relationship between the two, the potential for forming a solidary group to strike against the government, what Sally Scholz refers to as political solidarity (2008) becomes more difficult in this world due to a lack of belief in the possibility for political change. As the political system continues to regard the interest of the Creature above those of Unthank’s poorer workers, the chances for Lanark’s interpersonal solidarity with Jimmy Macfee to transform into a larger group of political solidarity are very limited.

Thus, in this example, while Lanark is extending solidarity towards Jimmy and encouraging him to act, in turn, in solidarity with other people who suffer from housing problems in Unthank, the government’s overt disregard of the working classes and Jimmy’s vision of collective action as ineffective against the omnipotence of the Creature’s interest prevent a stronger sense of solidarity from materialising. Nonetheless, in Lanark’s attempts to be solidary, obstacles do not always come exclusively from his context, but also from his individual personality.

Lanark’s personal ambitions appear as a limitation to solidarity when he becomes Unthank’s delegate at the Provan assembly. Lanark’s motivations to accept this position are similar to his intentions when he saves Rima, which show us the tensions between self-interest and solidarity. On the one hand, one of Lanark’s motivations when he accepts this position is his willingness to appeal to the Council’s solidarity to save Rima, Alexander and, in turn, all Unthank citizens from the city’s destruction. This motivation is rooted in affectional solidarity towards his family as well as in civic solidarity towards

his fellow citizens. On the other hand, Lanark also feels attracted to the individual power he can gain as delegate. As I have examined in Section 3.2.4.1., one of the spheres Gray portrays as a potential source for the reassertion of hegemonic masculinity and patriarchal power is politics. Indeed, while Lanark's decision to represent Unthank is partly motivated by solidary motivations, politics activate his narcissism and his self-perception as an omnipotent man: "Since wakening to sunlight in his aircraft that morning he had felt himself nearing the centre of a great event, approaching a place where he would utter, publicly, a word that would change the world" (476). Lanark's appetite for power and sense of self-importance in this context mirrors Duncan Thaw's narcissistic fantasies. For instance, in Chapter 16 Thaw dreams of being a Prime Minister so powerful that "he had only to suggest a reform for it to be practised" (157). Politics as a route towards power is represented in Thaw's heroic daydreams and reproduced in Lanark's experience at Provan's general assembly.

At the end of Book Two, narcissism becomes an obstacle for Thaw, symbolised by his suicide. Likewise, Lanark's dreams of power weaken the solidary values behind his decision to be a delegate and hamper his intention to use his new role as a platform to avoid Unthank's destruction. Although Lanark tries to communicate his intentions and ask for the delegates' support of Unthank as soon as he reaches the assembly venue, the organisers ignore him and distract him preventing him to act. Their distractions are directly connected to Lanark's desires. Some delegates take Lanark to a space where there is a party where a fictional alcoholic drink called white rainbows is served and where a group of girls work as assistants to the delegates. This group of girls make Lanark feel famous and powerful and tap into his deep wish to be admired by women. Knowing Lanark for his escape from the Institute, an event that has turned him into a controversial character discussed in the news, the red girls are in awe referring to him as "you-know-who from Unthank" (502). Drunk and thinking he may be able to have sex with one of these girls, Lanark completely forgets about his responsibilities and fails to attend the first assembly meetings. Moreover, he had brought a briefcase with important information on the chemical accident that was causing Unthank's destruction that he aimed to read and use in his speech to claim global support to the city. Yet, as his attention is gripped by the women's attention, he loses the briefcase. Lanark's inability to resist the temptation of being with a woman that makes him feel important is connected to his belief that power will place him closer to love. In his view, heroic men and strong men are more successful with women. This is shown in his simultaneous hate and jealousy of Sludden, who is

perceived by Lanark as an agent of hegemonic masculinity, in line with R.W. Connell's (2005, 77) classification: he is powerful, confident and he is liked by every woman in Unthank Lanark knows. On the contrary, Lanark is an insecure and ordinary man who struggles to love and to be loved standing closer to Connell's definition of subordinate masculinity. In this vein, in line with Thaw's conceptualisation of superiority as the only way of being with women, for Lanark, power leads him closer to the love he longs for.

When Lanark realises his wish to be treated as someone special has been detrimental for his intention to help Unthank people, he sees his vanity as a problematic obstacle for solidarity:

“Oh! I have been wicked, stupid, evil, stupid, daft daft daft daft and stupid, stupid! And it happened exactly when I thought myself a fine great special splendid man! How did it happen? I meant to find Wilkins and talk to him sensibly, but the women made me feel famous. Did they want to destroy me? No, no, they treated me like something special because it made them feel special but all the time nothing good was being made, nothing useful was done. I was drunk, yes, with white rainbows, yes, but mostly with vanity; nobody is as crazy as a man who thinks he is important. People tried to tell me things and I ignored them.” (527-8)

Accordingly, by framing egocentrism as an obstacle to Lanark's attempt to seek international solidarity, Gray is highlighting that selfishness and a complete sense of solidarity are incompatible.

While Lanark's reaction to the interest of these girls and his choice to continue drinking at the party evinces his failure to postpone speaking in solidarity with Unthank comes from the individual, the novel also plays with the idea these distractions were created purposefully for Lanark to fail in his mission. In fact, when Lanark wakes up alone not sure whether he has had sexual relations with one of the assistants, there is a notice on a poster wall saying: “JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE PARANOID DON'T THINK THEY AREN'T PLOTTING AGAINST YOU” (519). Both Lanark and the readers are unaware at this point of the novel that Lanark's participation in the assembly is a ruse planned by Sludden to complete Unthank's destruction. Hence, this sign serves to arouse the suspicion that Lanark's mission is a trap. As Lanark's stay in Provan

continues, the fact that the government are trying to impede his appeal of solidarity for Unthank becomes increasingly obvious.

Lanark leaves the venue of the party completely disoriented and gets arrested for a few days, accused of peeing in the middle of the street. His arrest is presented as a deliberate manoeuvre to avoid his participation in the assembly. Yet, Sludden's old fiancé Gay, who is now a journalist writing against the government's profit-driven agenda, gets him out of jail and reveals to him that all this time he has been a pawn in Sludden's game. Following his individual interests and his incommensurable ambitions, Sludden has sold Unthank's natural resources to a corporation. In this vein, Sludden is mobilising what Lindenberg calls the gain frame (2014, 38), a behaviour that challenges solidarity aligned with the achievement of economic gain or power.

After his days in jail, Lanark is advised by Gay to use the assembly's last day aiming to protest and speak in defence of Unthank. There he finds that Lord Monboddo is not willing to help Unthank deeming it unprofitable. When Lanark tells Lord Monboddo he is there to speak for the people of Unthank, the leader answers: "Yes. You wish to tell me they have too few jobs and homes and social services so stupidity, cruelty, disease and crime are increasing among them. I know that. There are many such places in the world and soon there will be more. Governments cannot help them much" (50). The Council seems powerless when it comes to being solidary to Unthank citizens. They have interiorised the Creature's ethics of utility and they abide by it relinquishing their own political responsibility to protect citizens. Their idea of helping others is rooted in their own gain frame justified by a moral compass that is profit-centred instead of human-centred. When Lanark asks Lord Monboddo why they cannot help the Unthank people immediately considering the urgency of the matter, he responds: "we can only help people by giving less than we take away from them. We enlarge the oasis by increasing the desert. That is the science of time and housekeeping. Some call it economics" (550). Through Lord Monboddo's words Gray displays his rejection of utilitarian thinking showing how placing economics and cost-efficiency at the centre of politics goes against people's welfare and increases poverty and destruction.

In the introduction to their book *Solidarity, Memory and Identity* (2015), Wojciech Owczarski and Maria Virginia Filomena Cremasco define solidarity as "a miracle:"

Solidarity is like a miracle: it appears unexpectedly and vanishes without any reason. Solidarity is unpredictable, mysterious and capricious. Nobody knows the rules by which

it is led. Nobody can foresee the time and place of its birth. And nobody is able to understand why it suddenly dies. Solidarity may show up in a hopeless situation, but it may also not show up in circumstances when everyone is sure it will. (2015, 1)

In Lanark's attempts to be solidary, solidarity is in fact portrayed as a rare and heavily limited possibility. While Lanark's action of solidarity towards Jimmy Macfee was precarious, its strength limited by Jimmy's hopelessness, his aim to act in solidarity with Unthank's citizens through his participation at the Provan assembly is obstructed by his vanity and by the elitism of the government. In this vein, as I see it, *Lanark* acknowledges the destructive impact that both personal and political selfish interests have for humanity. After Lanark fails to save Unthank from being exploited, he goes back and sees it being destroyed due to this world's profit-driven politics. In line with Gray's socialist humanist agenda, the apocalyptic message of *Lanark* shows to what extent institutions that are oriented to the support of the collective rather than of elitist interests are crucial for human well-being and for a peaceful survival of society.

5.2. Masculine and Capitalist Supremacy as Limitations to Solidarity in 1982, *Janine*

The theme of exploitation that I have explored in Thaw's fantasies and in the political regimes of Unthank and Provan in *Lanark*, becomes central in Gray's second novel, *1982, Janine* (1984). As I have explained in Section 3.2.4.1., its main protagonist, Jock McLeish, is an alcoholic and depressed supervisor of security installations, whose thoughts while lying drunk on a hotel bed during an almost sleepless night before a day of work, build the narrative. While Jock's timeframe is 1982 and this hotel bed is his present location, by means of his stream-of-consciousness, Gray reveals us glimpses of his past, his present, his pessimistic vision of the world and his escapes from self-acceptance through pornographic fantasies. The elements that build together who Jock McLeish is and explicate his state of mind, as well as the origin of his fantasies are scattered throughout the text and it is the reader's task to reassemble them. In order to facilitate my analysis, here I provide a rearranged summary of the novel, divided into

three parts. First, I review Jock's past life. Second, I explain his pornographic fantasies and his political ideas. Third, I study how Jock's past experiences, his fantasies and his politics are interrelated and analyse their connection to his existential crisis, resolved at the end of the novel.

Jock was born in a mining town in the Scottish Lowlands in the 1940s. Considering the novel is set in 1982, the historical background of Jock's experiences spans from the 1940s until the early 1980s. His mother is a housewife and his father used to work as a timekeeper of a mine pithead. Hence, the McLeish family belong to the rural working classes. Jock's father was a proud member of the working classes, yet his mother did not want him to follow his father's steps, instilling in his son the need to study and encouraging his social mobility. Consequently, Jock's teacher, known as Mad Hislop, becomes an educational referent for him both socially and in terms of gender during his school years. Once Jock graduates school, he enrolls in Glasgow Technical College, where he meets his first girlfriend Denny, a poorer girl who works at the college refectory. While at college, Jock starts doing stage lighting for a drama group where he meets Helen. In order to help the theatre group stage their play at the Edinburgh Fringe festival, Jock goes away from Glasgow for a few days and leaves Denny behind. In Edinburgh, Jock cheats on Denny with Helen and when he goes back to Glasgow he breaks up with her. Yet, after the breakup, Jock's freedom does not last long. Helen's father and brothers go to his apartment to tell him that Helen is pregnant and they must get married. Helen's father is an authoritarian man and, therefore, scared of the consequences, Jock accepts his demand. Jock's marriage with Helen is unhappy, especially since he discovers she was not really pregnant. The couple have almost no sex life and Jock begins imagining the sadistic fantasies that alternate with his memories in the novel. Tired of the lack of emotion in their relationship, Helen ultimately leaves Jock for another man. After the divorce, Jock has relationships with a woman called "an editor," whose name is not revealed and with a woman called Sontag, but his main relationship is with the increasing pornographic fantasies he uses to escape his life and the nostalgic and hurtful memories of his relationship with Denny and Helen.

These fantasies, as I have discussed in Section 3.2.4.1., have various fictional characters like Janine, Superb, Big Momma or Helga who are victims of rape and torture by fictional men who enjoy kidnapping and trapping women. The masculine supremacy that permeates these fantasies is connected to Jock's right-wing political ideas. As he sees it, the powerful will always oppress the weak. In this vein, Jock's Tory agenda clashes

with Gray's socialist ideas. In line with this idea, in his introduction to the 2003 edition of the novel, Will Self argues that Gray's intentions in *1982 Janine* were to create "an antithesis of himself: the honestly self-interested, almost Social Darwinian right winger" (xvi). Although Jock self-proclaims as a Tory, his vision of the world as an exploitative space resonates with Gray's criticism of neoliberalism in his pamphlets. In fact, Self states that, notwithstanding his original aim, "Gray has confessed that in creating a mirror image of himself, he has simply provided another self-portrait" (xvii). As such, by taking the perspective of a hopeless Tory man who does not believe social mobility for the poor to be possible, Gray voices his own concerns about class politics and the elitist and exploitative structure of the world.

On the one hand, there is a part of Jock that feels guilty about abandoning Denny for Helen, as well as about his support of warfare not only through voting but also through his job at the National Security System. On the other hand, his fantasies and his job at the National Security system make him feel a powerful man and he uses these to escape feelings of weakness or guilt. The clash between these two sides of his personality, one connected to his hidden vulnerability and one driven by ambitions of omnipotence, constitutes Jock's identity crisis. As I have illustrated in Section 3.2.4.1., at the ending of the novel, these two selves become less distant when Jock cries and acknowledges that Janine, the woman he has been torturing in his fantasies, is an embodiment of the most wounded part of himself and that he should reconcile with it.

Having this in mind, my analysis is divided into four parts. In the first section, I focus on the school as a space of gender socialisation, examining Mad Hislop's teachings and classroom dynamics and how these affect Jock McLeish's masculinity model, his worldview and his attitude towards solidarity. In the second section, I analyse Jock's pornographic fantasies questioning whether these promote a lack of solidarity towards women. In the third one, I examine Jock's pessimism on the potential for human solidarity, as well as how his right-wing ideas hamper his solidarity towards the working classes. Finally, I investigate how in his present life Jock uses spaces in an avoidant manner and how the novel shows a potential for his lack of solidarity to change.

5.2.1. Learning Masculinity at School: Masculine Violence and Supremacy as Values against Solidarity

As I have explained in Section 3.2.1. and as my analysis of *Lanark* illustrates, throughout Alasdair Gray's work, institutions are portrayed as key forces shaping the conduct and behaviour of human beings and ensuring social order. Schools are among these institutions and in *1982, Janine*, the school is presented as a space where gender roles are learnt and reproduced. In this section, I examine to what extent the masculinity taught by Mad Hislop, Jock's school teacher, is aligned with values that promote solidarity or, on the contrary, it promotes masculinity as an individualist, power-driven and violent role.

The school has been considered a space for the construction and reproduction of masculinities from various perspectives within gender studies. As Bettina van Hoven and Katrin Hörschelmann contend, the role of the school in the transformation of boys into men was a chief area of research in sex-role theory (2005, 6-7). From this perspective, which conceived of gender as a binary set of prototypical sex roles differently attributed to men and women, schools were seen as a fundamental space for the reinforcement of these roles. Similarly, in the field of critical men's studies, wherein this PhD thesis can be situated, the function of the school as a space for the teaching and learning of masculinities is also emphasised. For instance, in her social constructionist and relational approach towards masculinities, R.W. Connell considers schools a space for gender configuration, together with other institutions like the state and the workplace (2005, 73). In the same vein, Máirtín Mac an Ghail defines schools as "sites for the production of sex/gender subjectivities," where people interact with educational practices attached to state policies (1994, 1). However, the model of schooling presented in *1982, Janine* is the Scottish rural model of the 1930s and 1940s, where the use of the tawse was common practice. Corporal punishment in Scotland was not abolished in schools until the early 1980s, becoming a law in 1987 under the Education Act (No 2) 1986.¹⁵ In fact, as Andrew Kendrick argues, until its abolition: "getting the belt, or the tawse, was a standard punishment across schools and residential homes for many years in Scotland and corporal punishment was accepted across Scottish society" (2023, n.p.). Framing Jock's school years in 1940s Scotland, *1982, Janine* explores how violence, masculinity and education intertwine in the space of the school. Considering that the correlation between masculinity

¹⁵ In the Education (No. 2) Act 1986, available to read at the UK government legislation website, Article 48A is the abolition of corporal punishment of pupils in Scotland.

and violence was taught at Scottish schools in that historical period is important as it conditioned the perception a great part of society had of masculinity, normalising violent and also anti-solidary behaviours among men.

In the unspecified Scottish Lowlands village where Jock has grown up, boys are taught to follow the masculinity model set by their teacher, Mad Hislop, who, through his use of a three tongued leather tawse he calls Lochgelly, teaches them that masculinity entails the endurance of violence. Hislop humiliates the boys who weep after suffering his violence, calling them “big lassies” (44, 72) and praises those who resist the punishment without weeping, telling them there is “a spark of manhood” (44) in them. Jock’s masculinity as a young man and later as a man in his late forties retains some traits learnt from Hislop. This is especially apparent in the violence that characterises Jock’s sexual fantasies, as well as in his vision of the world as a place ruled by cruelty. Indeed, Jock calls the sadistic parts of himself “the Hislop in me, the mean snigger at a world ruled by shameless greed and cowardice and which thinks these insanities are serious essential traditional straightforward commonsense business” (166). As such, Gray shows education to be a determining force shaping Jock’s personality and his understanding of what masculinity ought to be. For instance, when Jock tolerates Mad Hislop’s blows with the tawse, he internalises the idea that masculinity equates both the performance and the endurance of violence. It is not only Hislop who reinforces this idea, but also the positive reaction of his classmates, boys and girls alike, to his toughness. Through the reaction of his classmates, Jock learns that the admiration of his peers and his sense of group belonging increases the closer he is to the strong and tough model of masculinity set by their teacher.

Hislop’s influence is clearly seen in Jock’s individualist understanding of helping others. As I have stressed in Section 4.3.1., according to Arto Laitinen and Anne Birgitte Pessi, solidarity is opposed to actions where the main component is self-interest. Moreover, in Section 4.3.2., I have explained that Siegwart Lindenberg theorises both hedonism and personal economic gain as values that obstruct the fulfilment of a sense of solidarity aligned with helping others. In *Lanark*, Gray already explored the fine line between individualism and solidarity and how both merge, for instance, in Lanark’s attempt to help Unthank citizens at the Provan general assembly. In *1982, Janine* the relationship between individual power and solidarity is portrayed in Jock’s defiance of Hislop’s authority. Sick of Hislop’s violence, Jock stands up against the teacher defending his classmate Anderson, who is punished by Hislop because he has a lisp. In order to try

to stop his teacher from harming his friend, Jock cries out: “He can’t help talking like that, sir” (326). In my view, Jock’s defence of Anderson constitutes an action of interpersonal solidarity towards his fellow classmate that recognises Anderson’s value and his right not to be attacked by Hislop. His action of solidarity towards Anderson is followed by a direct attack to Hislop’s behaviour: “You shouldnae have done that” (326), which is repeated and chanted louder and louder by the rest of the class. Through his action of solidarity and resistance against Hislop, Jock initiates a collective movement against the teacher’s cruel ways that culminates in his loss of authority and his resignation that same day. While the children feel “ashamed of themselves” (327) for having crushed Hislop’s self-esteem and provoked his resignation, they also feel they have acted in a solidary manner against injustice. In fighting Hislop’s authority, Jock and his classmates momentarily constitute a group of solidarity whose basis is the resistance against being treated in an unjust manner, which is the common ground that unites members of a group according to Sally Scholz’s model of political solidarity (2008, 6).

Yet, Jock’s account of this action shows his individualism, a trait that characterises him throughout the novel. What Jock values from his action is that it gives him a sense of self-importance heightening his perception that strength, shown when humiliating Hislop in front of the whole class, is the most valuable characteristic a man can have:

Afterward in the playground the class gathered round me, again and again telling each other and everyone who joined us what Hislop had done to Anderson, what I said to Hislop, what they had all said to Hislop. A lot of them, yes, girls too, walked home with me and only went to their own houses when I entered mine. I had not become their leader in any way, they just liked being near me because they were glad I existed. They felt safer and stronger because I was one of them. They liked being near me because they were glad I existed. (327)

Accordingly, rather than recognising the strength the group can attain by collaborating, it is the admiration others have for him as an individual what matters for him the most. In this vein, Jock’s reaction against Hislop’s violent authority can be understood as an acquisition of a strong masculinity which, in this situation, rather than exploitative of the weak is protective of them. By taking the lead on a classroom protest and on the temporal formation of a solidary group, Jock denounces Hislop’s masculinity model and refuses to wholly reproduce it. However, although he has challenged his

teacher's educational methods specifically, Jock has not rejected a masculinity based on heroism and toughness. This is why rather than focusing on the mutual moral duties that bind the group together and enhancing their ability to be solidarity in their fight against Hislop, he focuses on his individuality. From such an individualist position, the recognition of the other that is needed for solidarity is not fully achieved. While in defending Anderson, Jock does recognise him, the motivation of this solidarity action is not mainly rooted in helping his classmate, but on showing the classroom his masculine strength and his ability to humiliate such an intimidating man as Hislop.

Taking into consideration that Gray's concern, as a socialist humanist, is to find the manner to live collectively and peacefully, his portrayal of the Scottish 1940s classroom as a space where violent masculinities were shaped serves to criticise the educational promotion of values that heavily hamper conviviality and solidarity. As I see it, his choice to represent classroom violence responds to his interest in portraying the origins of male violence and individualism in Scotland as elements that are both personally and politically damaging. In the following section, I analyse the connection between Jock's reproduction of dominance as the foundation of masculinity in his pornographic fantasies and his relationships with Denny and Helen, assessing to what extent he is able to be solidary towards women.

5.2.2. Away from Real Women and into Pornography: Fantasies of Masculine Power as Limitations to Solidarity towards Women

In Section 3.2.4.2., I have discussed the critical controversy around the use of pornography in *1982, Janine*. While many critics (Crawford 1991, Walker 1991, Stirling 2008) interpret Jock's sadomasochistic fantasies as a political metaphor that mirrors the unequal logics of power Gray denounces in the novel, others like Stephen J. Boyd consider these representations risk participating in the normalisation of violence against women (1991, 10). From the perspective of solidarity, pornography fosters dynamics of violence and subordination that are radically against the values of recognition and equality that are at its heart. Moreover, considering pornography as a patriarchal product

that perpetuates the domination of men over women, its logics heavily undermine the potential for solidarity from men towards women promoting instead a vision of women as sexual objects.

The structure of Jock's fantasies is highly patriarchal. Janine, Superb, Helga or Big Momma are subject to rape, entrapment and torture by men with the names of Max or Cupid, who are seen by Jock as representations of himself and the stimulus he seeks when creating these fantasies is, as he says, "ABSOLUTE MASTERY" (33). The spaces where Jock confines these women are police stations, jails and mental hospitals with a direct correlation with capitalist authority. Furthermore, all the violent tortures these women are subject to are done on the basis that they are seen as inferior to men as thus should be controlled because they have been "too greedy, too active, too eccentric, too stupid" (110). In this vein, Jock's pornographic fantasies are built like Michel Foucault's disciplinary technologies (1977) for the women trapped and tortured within these spaces, showing a vision of women as subordinate objects that is radically opposed to solidarity.

Not only do these fantasies reveal that Jock's conceptualisation of women hampers his recognition of them as worthy humans and, as such, as recipients of solidarity, but also his need to feel dominant constitutes an obstacle to his real-life relationships with women. Both Jock's class ambitions and his wish to be perceived as someone superior make him feel ashamed of his first girlfriend, Denny. A poor working-class girl, Denny does not have the money to live in a flat, so she lives in a hostel with a very strict curfew that limits her encounters with Jock to the afternoon. After several days sleeping together, Jock suggests she could go live with him and that way they would be able to see each other more frequently. Yet, Jock's condition is that she can only move in if she does not leave his room. Although Jock's justification is that staying in his room would avoid problems with his landlord, Denny's spatial restriction constitutes a sort of entrapment that mirrors Jock's fantasies. Yet Denny does go out to work and even starts talking to the landlord after some weeks of living with Jock. However, as I see it, by confining her to his room most of the time, Jock is attempting to control Denny and reduce her to an object that exists exclusively for his sexual pleasure. In this vein, Jock's relationship to Denny is one of possession rather than solidarity.

Jock's need for superiority is also portrayed as an obstacle in his relationship with Helen. Unable to be sexually intimate with her while considering her his equal, when Jock has sex with Helen he needs to imagine being superior and submitting her in order to enjoy himself: "I roused myself by caressing her as if she were the slave of a completely

selfish lust and I entered her vindictively with a penis which I thought of as a truncheon or redhot poker” (68). As such, his fantasies of women being tortured intertwine with his need to feel superior in real life relations. Jock has internalised a distant, rigid and controlling masculinity that makes it very difficult for him to truly build equal relationships with women. This is so because his need to be superior, both in gender and class terms, interferes with his desire for intimacy.

The fact that selfishness has a negative effect in Jock’s relationships shows that in 1982, *Janine Gray* extends the criticism to egocentrism found in *Lanark* highlighting the damaging effects that ambitions of masculine supremacy have for Jock’s personal life. In the following section, I consider how Jock’s vision of a world governed by unequal logics of power that places profit at the centre thwarts his vision of solidarity as a possible action.

5.2.3. Jock’s Capitalist Worldview: The Limitations of Human and Working-Class Solidarity

As I have already explained, Jock is a Tory man in his forties who has a pessimistic vision of humanity and whose worldview derives from the impact masculine figures of authority have had in the construction of his own identity. The patterns of domination that have been historically attributed to masculinity appear in the novel as barriers for human solidarity. The world conceived by Jock is one in which the powerful find less and less barriers for their power to grow and in which atrocities against human rights are increasing. Considering Alasdair Gray’s socialist and humanist political agenda, according to which power abuse and selfishness in governments should be challenged, Jock McLeish’s vision of British and world politics is a catastrophic one.

There are several sections of the novel that suggest Jock does not believe that solidarity is possible. One of the reasons for this is that he sees humans as inherently destructive and competitive, rather than prone to ties of solidarity based on equality:

We fear responsibility, you see, so inaccessible bodies attract us most. We neglect the ground below our feet and gaze at the stars hoping they are peopled with nasties so horrible that we will look decent beside them, by goodies so wise that they will take us by the hand and guide us on to The True Way. Aliens must be our inferiors or superiors,

you see, because we do not believe in equal partnership, in equally shared goods and responsibilities. (303)

Due to a conceptualisation of human relationships as unequal and selfish, Jock questions the potential for human beings to be solidary in the four contexts I describe in Section 4.3.1. and Section 4.3.2., namely, social solidarity, civic solidarity, political solidarity and human solidarity. Completely hopeless about the capacity of humans to be good to each other, Jock describes them as beings with an “inborn capability for intoxication, greed, lust, cruelty and murder” (174).

A second reason for Jock’s disbelief in solidarity is his vision of society in 1982 as a machine driven by profit where initiatives that do not lead to monetary gain in the short term are not valuable. As a Tory, Jock agrees that inequality and a profit-driven mindset is what is best for society, stating that: “a government can only do public good by inflicting public injuries” (120). In placing economic progress at the centre, Jock is aligned with the ethics of utility described by Juul as an obstacle to solidarity. As I have discussed in my analysis of *Lanark*, Juul describes the ethics of utility as a political agenda that gives priority to economic productivity over human respectful conviviality, thus forgetting about the importance of solidarity.

Jock’s belief in the ethics of utility and his certainty that the powerful few will always control the world is so ingrained that he does not think left-wing and working-class politics are worth fighting for. In her theory of political solidarity, Sally Scholz argues that for political solidarity to be mobilised there needs to be hope for the potential for social change and for a better world (2006, 16). Due to his vision of extreme capitalism as a permanent circumstance, Jock shows no hope for social change and, as such, no solidarity towards the working classes. Unlike his father, a Marxist man who “thought that the poorly paid would eventually organise themselves and overpower the moneyed people” (51), Jock claims he is sure they will not reach power and that he could never join the working classes in an action of political solidarity against capitalism as he considers them “a gang of losers” (51). Jock’s lack of solidarity towards the working classes is not only visible politically, but also regarding social solidarity. Due to his mobility from the lower to the middle classes and his adoption of neoliberal ideas, Jock sees the working classes with contempt. This is shown, for instance, in his shame of Denny and his avoidance to go out with her outside his room due to fear of people’s looks.

5.2.4. Shifting from a Lack of Recognition towards the Celebration of Cooperation: The Potential for Precarious Solidarity

Unlike in the rest of the novels I analyse in this thesis, *1982, Janine* does not have a Glaswegian setting. Yet, I have chosen it due to its significance for the study of Scottish masculinities and solidarity. Our main access to its spaces is through Jock McLeish's fantasies and memories. In this section, I examine Jock's use of space considering how his approach to mobility explains his relationship with himself and with others and affects his potential to be solidary.

While Jock is immobile and alone in a hotel bed, among the thoughts he shares in his stream-of-consciousness he reveals aspects of his working life and his relationship with his co-workers. Jock is in a job that requires constant travelling and, in these trips, instead of socialising and following the social rhythms of his job, he seeks for anonymity and isolation. The planes, trains and taxis Jock takes to move around for work and the hotel bedrooms he stays in before or after an important job function for Jock as what Marc Augé calls *non-places* (1995, 77-8). Non-places are the product of an epoch after modernity that Augé terms *supermodernity*, which he connects with the development of the transport, communication and commerce networks and to the fleeting, solitary and individual nature of the relations maintained through them (1995, 78). Augé lists hotels, holiday clubs or areas threatened with demolition as non-places (78).

From this perspective, the feature of non-places that resonates the most with Jock McLeish's spatial engagement is travelling. Augé considers the traveller the archetypal occupant of the non-place where, due the speed of travelling, "neither identity, nor relations, nor history really make any sense" (87). Like the non-place traveller, Jock uses travelling to avoid being recognised by his co-workers. As he claims: "If I stop travelling and stay in one place I will become a recognisable, pitiable ("Out of pity for your condition I will take no action") despicable drunkard. I can only keep my dignity and stay mysterious by ceasing upon the midnight with no pain etcetera" (166)

Jock fears that if he were to be fixed in the same place for a long time, people would get to know him for who he is. As such, the anonymity offered by a state of constant mobility through non-places helps him avoid recognition. Instead of presenting himself with honesty to the people he works with, shame and isolation is pervasive in his social relations. As such, Jock's avoidant approach towards social relations undermines his

capability to act in solidarity with those around him. In his unwillingness to be known by others, Jock fails to know, empathise or form groups with them, detaching himself from solidary engagements.

Yet, despite his avoidant behaviour concerning work, the novel suggests that there is still potential for solidarity in Jock's memory of his conversation with the director of the drama group whom he encountered years after the play. During its staging at Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the individual egos of the actresses, Helen and Diana, the director, Brian and Jock himself led to frequent disagreement and miscommunication. The play ran successfully for ten nights but, when Brian ended up at Edinburgh's police station after a misunderstanding, the play has to be cancelled on the eleventh night. As such, the experience ended for all of the members with perceived a sense of failure. However, when Jock and Brian meet again, they recognise each other's talents and realise that making the play had only been possible thanks to their mutual cooperation: "We were no accident, we were a co-operative. I suspect all good companies are co-operatives who won't admit it" (319). While mutual cooperation in this context does not appear as a clear action of solidarity and, in fact, the play failed due to the individual egos of the group members, Jock and Brian's sense of mutual recognition conveys a positive message that celebrates the people's ability to help each other despite the obstacles.

In this vein, *1982, Janine* shows a protagonist who is deeply selfish and whose tendency towards supremacy and strength challenges his ability to be solidary. Yet, by showing Jock to be deeply alienated and unhappy Gray shows the detrimental consequences of attempting to be omnipotent.

**CHAPTER 6. SOLIDARITY IN
WORKING-CLASS SPACES: JAMES
KELMAN AND ANTI-
ESTABLISHMENT RESISTANCE**

6.1. Against Solidarities within the Establishment in *The Busconductor Hines*

The Busconductor Hines is James Kelman's first published novel. Faithful to his aim to portray the ordinary lives of the deprived working classes, Kelman depicts the struggles of its protagonist, Rab Hines, who works as a bus conductor for the Glasgow buses, over the course of a week. Although conducting was at first an exciting job he did well, the novel shows an exhausted and alienated Rab who often arrives late to his shifts and misses work. As I discussed in Section 3.3.3. of this thesis, Kelman's male characters are mostly neurotic, passive men, invaded by the voices in their heads and struggling to take action. Rab Hines perfectly fits this description. Due to Kelman's characteristic mixture of third and first person narrative voice (see Section 3.3.1.), the story is mediated from Rab's point of view. In this vein, the main character's existential dread and his passive way of coping with it influences how he interacts with those around him, mainly his family and his co-workers. Rab's close family are his wife, Sandra and his four-year-old son, Paul. Sandra comes from Knightswood, a more affluent Glasgow neighbourhood than Rab's Drumchapel. As I will discuss further later, this class difference affects their relationship and their discussions concerning the family's socio-economic circumstances. Space is also crucial to understanding Rab's interactions with his co-workers, which mainly take place inside working spaces like the bus itself or the garage.

In this section, I will analyse this novel from the perspectives of space, masculinities and solidarity. To that end, I have divided it into three parts. First, I address how ambitions of both social and spatial mobility influence social solidarity between Rab and Sandra. Second, I explore social solidarity in the workplace by studying two aspects. One is the consequences of Rab's individual relationship with the workplace and with his colleagues on his ability to extend solidarity. The other takes a contextual perspective of the impact workplace hierarchies have on the relationship between workers. Finally, I examine the potential for working-class political solidarity among the workers at Rab's bus company.

6.1.1. Ambitious Women and Social In/Solidarity within the Working-Class Couple

In this section, I examine how Kelman represents the obstacles to social solidarity in the couple in his portrayal of the relationship between Rab and Sandra. As I explained in

Section 3.3.3.3., various scholars (Knights 1999, McMillan 2001, Jones 2009a) have argued that Kelman's gender dynamics are characterised by a gender role reversal that places women closer to the middle-classes and to ambitions of social mobility and men as passive figures in crisis. Taking this into account, I aim to explore here whether this gendered difference concerning expectations of social mobility is portrayed as an obstacle in Rab and Sandra's relationship and how it affects their unity as a couple.

In my analysis of couple solidarity in Alasdair Gray's *Lanark* I analysed the fluctuations between precarious solidarity and a lack of solidarity between Lanark and Rima from the context of social solidarity. Here I will employ the same theoretical context to analyse solidarity between Rab and Sandra. Jan E. Stets and Kevin McCaffree regard physical copresence to be a crucial element fostering social solidarity in general, including the context of couple (2014, 336). As such, in order to examine solidarity between Rab and Sandra I focus on physical copresence as a crucial component to measure the solidarity between Rab and Sandra due to its connection to space. I explore how their differing expectations concerning social mobility may be connected to differing expectations concerning spatial mobility and how this may impact their relationship. In order to do so, I employ theories of space, critical men's studies and solidarity, paying attention to the interrelations between them.

As explained in Section 4.1.1., from a Marxist perspective, space is seen as controlled by capital (Lefebvre 1991, 10; Harvey 1989, 234). This means that the use humans can make of space follows a class-based logic through which those in control of capitalist structures have easier access to mobility than the lower classes. This idea is encapsulated in David Harvey's concept *time-space compression*, which argues that technological progress regarding transport and communications shortens global temporal and spatial distances, mostly for those who can afford the cost of these inventions (1989, 284). The Hines —Rab, Sandra and their son Paul— are among the deprived working classes and the consequences of their socio-economic circumstances are clearly visible in their prospects of both social and spatial mobility: they live in a deteriorating one-room flat in an unnamed area of Glasgow and their prospects of getting a better house are slim.

Taking a capabilities approach, Rab and Sandra cannot fulfil Martha Nussbaum's tenth basic capability. As described in Section 4.1.1., this capability concerns people's ability to hold property and seek employment, which are interrelated, as the Hines demonstrate. Due to his situation in a dead-end job, Rab lacks the economic means to buy a house or rent a better one. His job as a bus conductor is on the verge of disappearance

with the introduction of one-man buses, which he calls “the vehicular items of the not too distant future” (80). As a result, his only option to continue working on the buses is to become a bus driver. Unfortunately, Rab does not feel hopeful about this option either. For conductors to be able to enrol in the school for bus drivers, they need to have a good timekeeping record, something that Rab, due to his many late arrivals, does not have. At a crossroads between the options of staying on the buses until his conductor contract expires, becoming unemployed and finding a new job, an endeavour which is described in the novel as difficult, Rab is in a state of paralysis. This means that his inability to move upwards socially affects his inability to move spatially out of his decaying house. In fact, the state of his house and his inability to move out of it mirrors his circumstances as a bus conductor, stuck in an almost disappearing job he cannot escape from.

Rab and Sandra’s social and spatial immobility come into conflict with their desire to escape it. As he reflects about how unhappy both of them are in these precarious circumstances, Rab thinks that the only solution is to get away. He even fantasises about migrating to Australia on his own, like his brother has. Moreover, Sandra, feeling trapped in their current life, tells Rab: “I just want to get away from this place” (60). However, from Rab’s perspective, this desire is not the same for each of the couple. While both Rab and Sandra imagine living elsewhere, Sandra seems more serious about leaving Glasgow. Indeed, Rab sees going away as Sandra’s dream: “It is what she wants more than anything. Right away from Glasgow altogether” (145). Moreover, Sandra also seems more serious about improving their socio-economic circumstances. When she talks to Rab about the possibility of her working full-time, he does not take this option seriously. Similarly, when he mentions the opportunity to start working on his days-off, it is Sandra who considers it —“we could do with the extra money Rab” (24)— while Rab is less convinced. From a masculinities perspective, the fact that Rab is failing to get a better job and shows doubt instead of conviction when considering the possibility of moving socially upwards and spatially outwards places him outside of the masculine breadwinner model. As I see it, the tension created by Sandra’s ambitions of social and spatial mobility and Rab’s inability to fulfil them is framed within the novel as an obstacle to the couple’s social solidarity that is connected to a precarious masculine embodiment of space.

Sandra’s economic expectations appear as a threat to the couple’s unity, for instance, in her depiction of richer and more easily mobile men who could be potential rivals to Rab. One of these men is Sandra’s boss, Mr Buchanan. Rab dislikes him as he represents the capitalist and imperialist establishment he despises so much. In fact, Rab’s

anti-establishment beliefs mirror Kelman's and they are highlighted throughout the novel in his comments about work. For instance, he talks about his own refusal to participate in the capitalist system, to which he refers as "the system of the British Greats" (109). Similarly, when Sandra tells him the office workers have to do extra work after an employee has been fired and no one has been hired to replace her, Rab calls the company's practice a "typical capitalist strategy" (34), showing his critical position against this system. However, due to the correlation between capitalism and mobility, Rab is also jealous of Mr Buchanan as he can offer Sandra the economic stability and the spatial mobility he cannot. The extent of his jealousy towards Mr Buchanan is stressed when, after Sandra is away from home longer than Rab expects, he thinks Sandra may have left him for her boss: "the things that were going through my mind! You an auld Buchanan off to the Bahamas for a winter week in the sun!" (110). The fact that Rab's image of Sandra leaving him involves an escapade to a far away and exotic destination with a rich man is, in my view, highly significant from the perspective of working-class masculinities. Lacking the ability to socially and consequently spatially move beyond his house and his job, Rab feels unable to provide Sandra with the life she desires, which makes him feel vulnerable, disappointed in himself and ultimately symbolically out of place.

The idea that the unity of their relationship is threatened by his inability to guarantee the family's social mobility is further reinforced when Sandra tells Rab she has been propositioned by a man in a red car on her way back from shopping. Although this episode happens two days before Sandra actually tells Rab, she only chooses to mention it after expressing how exhausted she is of their life in Glasgow. The fact that she chooses this moment reveals that this proposition has made Sandra question her life. The red car symbolises this man's wealth as well as his possibilities of spatial mobility. While she is talking to him, Rab is, in contrast, in the house "asleep in front of the bloody television" (60). The red car's mobility stands in stark contrast to Rab's immobility in the house. Thus, in terms of Sandra's desire to leave Glasgow, the man in the red car represents what she would like Rab to be and a potential life of both social and spatial mobility radically opposed to the life Rab, fixed in space due to his class positionality as an alienated man with almost no money or professional prospects, can actually offer her.

The idea that Sandra's desire for both social and spatial mobility undermines the couple's solidarity is highlighted the two times in the novel she is away from home longer than expected, when Rab believes Sandra may be leaving him. The fact that it is Sandra

who is away from home and moving around Glasgow whereas Rab is immobile symbolises the couple's distance as well as Rab's fear of abandonment. Rab links Sandra's escape to her changing opinion of him: "She went away because she doesn't think so highly of him as she used to but returned because she still loves him" (218). Although Rab believes Sandra loves him, the fear haunts him that she will eventually leave him, tired of his inability to help her get a better house and a better life. This turns him into a contradictory masculine figure who, in spite of disliking his job and opposing the capitalist system, often feels challenged by the figure of the masculine breadwinner as a status he would like to reach. In fact, Rab's wish to become a breadwinner is especially activated through his interpretation of Sandra's expectations. For instance, one of the times she leaves home, Rab thinks about the influence her parents' expectations of her marriage have had on Sandra's view of life:

It was their expectation she should one day meet her match in the Higher Realms...Little wonder they should be so dumbfounded to learn of their only daughter's curious infatuation with a lowly member of the transport experience. Here they had been having a lovely young wench of a golden-haired lass whose space they assumed as a logical second step on a nailed-to-the-floor ladder. Not only was she not now moving forwards, she was falling backwards, into the lusting arms of a uniformed ne'er-do-well. (94-95)

While the definition of Rab as a "ne'er-do-well" reproduces the ideas of his father-in-law, Rab assumes this is what his wife thinks of him, in spite of the love she has for him.

Another aspect of the novel in which women's ambitions of class mobility are characterised as an obstacle for couple solidarity in a working-class household is the contrast between Rab's vision of Sandra at home and his vision of Sandra as a worker. Although she works at an office part-time, Rab romanticises the image of Sandra as a housewife, expressing dislike of those aspects connected to her working life. When Rab recalls the couple's first experiences in their now decaying flat, the romanticisation of Sandra as housewife is clear: "Coming home off a late backshift, the kitchen really warm and Sandra there with some grub in the pot and sometimes even a bottle of fucking beer, that beautiful innocence for christ sake" (96). Rab highlights Sandra's innocence while cooking and offering him some beer in an idealised vision of traditional feminine

domesticity. This stands in stark contrast with Rab's description of Sandra as a secretary working for Mr Buchanan:

Here you have a cunt by the name of Buchanan who is the boss and has always regarded one's wife in a favourable light, as someone he would always reinstate, her work having been exemplary since first she started working for the cunt directly upon leaving Secretarial College. An employee of ideal proportions. Never a day's illness but that such an illness is of a bona fide variety. A credit to all and sundry eh, excuse me madam you by any chance being employed on an informal basis by the Heads of the Monarchic State. A simple question. Give us an aye or give us a naw. (89)

Here again, Rab's jealousy of Mr Buchanan and of his good relationship with Sandra as his employee is shown. Aware of her expectations of economic improvement and perceiving her as someone who fails to accept his dearth of opportunities —“if she had worked things out she would have recognised the extent of the choice” (103) — he fears Sandra would be happier with Mr Buchanan than with himself. Moreover, the fact he associates Sandra's job with her compliance with the upper-class establishment —“the Heads of the Monarchic State” (89)— shows Rab's disapproval of her working life. The difference between romanticised housewife Sandra and working Sandra is also interesting in terms of space. In Rab's nostalgic memory, Sandra is in the house, fitting the view of the domestic space as feminine. On the contrary, as a part-time office secretary, Sandra has to leave the house to go to work. Were she to accept the full-time position she has been offered, Rab and Sandra's physical copresence at the house would be further threatened. In fact, it is not only her work schedule that is portrayed as an obstacle to Rab and Sandra's copresence, but also the possibility that her socio-economic ambitions will increase her spatial distance from Rab's immobility, eventually breaking up the couple.

Rab's idea that Sandra's class expectations threaten the couple's solidarity has both a gender and a class reading. From a gender perspective, it reflects the fear that some anti-establishment and alienated working-class heterosexual men like Rab have of being abandoned if women seek better socio-economic opportunities. In fact, Rab's fear of Sandra's absences shows a reversal in the couple's economic dependence, which ultimately reflects a gendered power dynamic that, at the time Kelman wrote this novel, was changing very fast. By having the opportunity to go full-time, Sandra could become economically independent and freer to leave Rab than at times when couple unity was

based exclusively on women's economic dependence on a male breadwinner. In contrast, alienated and unable to find a better job than his disappearing position as conductor, Rab is becoming more and more dependent on Sandra. Accordingly, I argue Rab is portrayed as a victim of Sandra's working life and class ambitions. For him, the image of family unity involves a traditional gender binary in which Sandra, instead of mobile and thus able to leave him, is fixed in the domestic space.

Considering Kelman's class politics, Sandra's ambitions are also seen as problematic. As I discussed in Section 3.3., both in his fiction and pamphlets, Kelman shows an anti-establishment vision of the world that sees economic elites as forces that assimilate and marginalise the working classes and ought to be challenged. For instance, as a form of aesthetic resistance, Kelman claims his right to write working-class stories that are free from the narrative centrality of social mobility often portrayed as the sole purpose of poor people (2002, 38-9). In *And the Judges Said...* Kelman explains that, when he started writing, he wanted his characters to be closer to his own reality, "my own culture and community," rather than creating characters "striving to become other persons (e.g. imagined members of the British upper-middle classes)" (2002, 39). In this vein, I argue that the view of Sandra's wish for social mobility as a threat to couple solidarity is also a criticism of capitalist ambitions. While Rab remains a member of the marginal working classes throughout the novel, unassimilated by the forces of capitalist mobility, Sandra's proximity to the middle classes places her closer to its practices of assimilation in the capitalist elite. Considering Kelman's political stance, Rab is closer to the author's idea of self-determination of the working classes as they are. As explained in Section 3.3.2., he understands self-determination as the basis of grassroots activism carried out outside the official structures of the capitalist establishment. It consists of doing politics from a place of recognition of the reality of the working classes. In contrast to this idea, Sandra is depicted as someone who wants to abandon her social class and, for that matter, abandon Rab, who could be seen as Kelman's representation of a working-class man.

The capitalist system is not solely viewed with contempt by Rab in regard to women's socio-economic ambitions and in the context of the couple, but also as regards the workplace itself. In the next section, I will examine how Rab's rejection of the capitalist system influences his own ability to find solidarity in the workplace.

6.1.2. The Cowboy Hines: Workplace Marginality and Social Solidarity

In this section, I will examine Kelman's conceptualisation of social solidarity in Rab Hines' workplace. I will first examine Rab's sense of group belonging or lack thereof considering his relationship with space and his masculine identity. Then I will adopt a contextual perspective of the bus company, analysing the consequences that workplace hierarchies and the introduction of one-man operations may have for the creation of solidarity among workers.

As Tim Edensor explains in his book *Geographies of Rhythm* (2010), a mobile vehicle can have various places of rhythm (6). For instance, the interior of a car can be a place of rhythms that are distinct from but interrelated to the place of rhythms produced by the car outside. Exploring this idea in relation to the bus, I will focus on how Rab's individual rhythms inside the bus reveal his solidarity or lack thereof within this public socialisation space. For instance, while working, Rab often stays on the rear seat of the bus with his eyes shut, resting and escaping for a moment from his own reality. Closing his eyes to isolate his field of vision from the space of the bus highlights Rab's alienation from his own work, but also from the social relationships within it. Throughout the novel, Rab tends to share his work shifts with the same bus driver, Willy Reilly, with whom he spends most of their joint shifts talking and joking. Despite Rab's friendly relationship with Reilly, he sometimes covers his ears while Reilly is speaking and sings over his words. This shows Rab's desire to isolate himself from all workplace dimensions, both images and sounds and become an individual detached from his working life.

Tim Edensor calls the rhythms that run against those imposed by centres of power *resistant rhythms* (2010, 16). As he describes them, resistant rhythms entail alternative movements that critique "normative, disciplinary rhythms" such as the speed of capitalist production and consumption (16). Apart from Rab's arrhythmic embodiment of space, which isolates him from the images and sounds within the bus, Rab also employs resistant rhythms to defy the rules of the bus company and, as such, express his refusal to belong to his workplace. For instance, an Inspector tells Rab off during a shift for putting his feet on the seat and for not wearing his hat. Henri Lefebvre coined the term *dressage* to refer to those bodily rhythms imposed and regulated by structures of authority (2004, 48). Both putting his feet on the seat and not wearing his hat are challenges to the buses' code of dressage and to the bodily movements and attire that are allowed in the bus, which is mostly portrayed by Kelman as a space of authority. Yet Rab's resistant rhythms also

happen outside the space of the buses. Whenever he sleeps in and misses a shift or signs off sick in order to skip work, he is individually distancing himself from the collective rhythms of the buses and from the imposition of the work schedule to all workers. As such, resisting the rhythms of the buses both inside and outside of the bus itself Rab shows his own demarcation from the system and his challenge of it.

Rab's isolation from his working environment is not only shown in these resistant rhythms, but also in his lack of communication with his colleagues. He recalls conversations in the garage, which he calls "the talk," and describes them as endless and pointless. Thus, he is intent on rejecting "both the talk and the discussions of the talk while aware of the absurdity of doing even that" (87). His refusal to participate in work discussions angers Reilly and gets other drivers to talk less and less to him. Thus, Hines sees himself as an outsider, someone who "doesnt fucking chat back!" (155). In order to describe his own isolation from the group of workers, Rab calls himself "a negation" (202). He employs this term to refer specifically to his refusal to talk to his colleagues and to share his thoughts with them, because "[w]hat he thinks is nobody's business" (202). Both Rab's isolation from the buses through resistant rhythms and his lack of communication reinforce his view of himself as an island, an individual separate from any group identification. As pointed out in Section 4.3.1., the group is the basic unit in the definition of solidarity understood as a measure of group cohesion, what Andrea Sangiovanni and Juri Viehoff call *solidarity among* (2023, n.p.). In the same vein, the first requisite of group solidarity mentioned by Larry May is "conscious group identification" (1996, 44). Having this in mind, Rab's refusal to listen to Reilly and to engage with the rest of his colleagues during working hours prevents him from being part of a potential solidary group in this space. Rab identifies himself as an individual bus conductor whose identity is separate from that of the group he refuses to belong to.

Rab's individualism is also visible in one of his fantasies. As he tells his co-workers: "I want to be a cowboy when I grow up" (204). Although this sentence appears only twice in the novel, I believe the figure of the cowboy links the three theoretical dimensions of this thesis —space, masculinities and solidarity— with Rab's personality. Rab's individualism relates to the mythical image of the cowboy as a "lonesome but free wanderer" (Gibson 2014, 130). As Laura McCall contends, the myth of the cowboy as a symbol of independence and virility is a cultural product created in popular fiction and cinema which projects an ideal hegemonic construct" (2001, 4). This archetype is, specifically in a Wild West context, characterised by the freedom of the cowboy who,

alone and with no masters, is able to move through wild open spaces. Henry Nash Smith develops this idea further in *Virgin Land*: “The Wild West was (...) an exhilarating region of adventure and comradeship in the open air. Its heroes bore none of the marks of degraded status. They were in reality not members of society at all, but noble anarchists owning no master, free denizens of a limitless wilderness” (1950, 55). Like the cowboy myth, Rab is a lonely man who avoids close relationships with his colleagues and even more so with his superiors. He refuses to be part of the workplace group, separating himself from the collective like a unit, the singular “Busconductor Hines” of the title. Moreover, when he is not lamenting his own inability to become a bus driver or thinking about becoming unemployed, Rab fantasises about leaving his family behind and emigrating to Australia, a land he describes as “infinity. Measureless space” (140), which is in line with the limitless wilderness of the cowboy fantasy. Considering the definition of solidarity as an element of social cohesion among individuals, Rab’s personality is heavily anti-social. His refusal to get close to his workmates is a barrier to his capacity to be solidary. As such, without consciousness or care for the others, social solidarity with his colleagues fails to be mobilised.

Yet, in *The Busconductor Hines* workplace solidarity is also limited by the workplace context. Within the bus company, there is a hierarchy dividing conductors and bus drivers. Bus drivers earn more money than conductors, are offered more working hours and soon, with the arrival of one-man bus operations, they will become the main group of workers at the company. This difference in wages and working opportunities hinders a shared group consciousness. The bothy, the space at the garage where conductors and drivers meet during their breaks, is no longer clearly a space of solidarity based on shared working conditions, but a space of inequality and competition. For instance, the drivers’ higher wages generates distrust from conductors. As Rab tells Reilly: “No kidding you man there’s no cunt trustable nowadays” (35). Another conductor, Colin Brown, adds that the fact some drivers will approve of the introduction of one-man-buses instead of supporting conductors moved by a working-class consciousness makes him feel betrayed: “These fucking drivers’re all the same, cried a conductor. Aye, said Colin Brown. And he’ll be sticking his name down for the one-man operating games when your back’s fucking turned” (35). Interestingly, in spite of his criticism, not even Brown is trusted by his colleagues. For instance, George McCulloch, who is his regular driver, believes that Brown will be the first one to offer to work as a driver in one-man operations: “McCulloch laughed: Aw listen to this cunt! As soon as he

passes his licence it'll be the first thing he does himself; no danger" (35). Brown answers McCulloch's accusation declaring he would never betray conductors, his own group: "Fucking last thing you'll catch me doing, eh Rab?" (35). Yet, in spite of this declaration of intentions, Rab does not believe him. Thus, Kelman's portrayal rather than focusing on the potential to forge solidarity in this particular working environment, centres on the distrust and competition among this group of workers, who are moved by individualistic choices when better employment opportunities are offered.

This atmosphere of distrust captures the consequences of deindustrialisation and labour restructuring for working-class solidarity. As I see it, considering Kelman's anti-establishment politics, the identification of industrial restructuring as an obstacle to working-class solidarity entails a criticism of the precaritization of working conditions in the name of capitalist progress. In this vein, the introduction of one-man operations evokes the philosophies of radical individualism and the ethics of utility that Søren Juul defines as obstacles to solidarity (see Section 4.3.2). By getting rid of conductors and reducing their workforce, the bus company would be more cost-efficient and aligned with neoliberal profit-driven agendas. In turn, the reduction of the workforce creates an atmosphere of instability in which conductors are no longer a solid group, but a network of separate individuals competing to keep their jobs. While Rab's isolation and the competition among workers are heavily present in the buses, weakening social solidarity among workers, in the next section I will examine whether these aspects remain or change in a context of political solidarity.

6.1.3. Precarious Political Solidarity in the Workplace

In this last section concerning *The Busconductor Hines*, I will examine further how Kelman portrays political solidarity in the workplace. In order to do so, I will focus on the strike workers attempt to mount at the bus company Rab works at. Working-class political solidarity is a particularly interesting topic of study in Kelman's fiction due to his complex and contradictory ideas on the political relationship between the individual and the community. As I explained in Section 3.3.1., one of the philosophical currents which guides Kelman's aesthetic politics is existentialism. The author's connection with existentialism, according to Simon Kövesi (2007) and Laurence Nicoll (2000, 2010),

explains the radical individualism of his protagonists and his atomised vision of communities. In his analysis of Kelman's existentialism, Laurence Nicoll describes existentialism as fundamentally individualist: "there can be no existential 'we'" (2010, 130). The individualism of existentialism stems from its rejection of any category suspect of homogenisation. As Nicoll explains it, "the very notions of 'us' and 'them' are existentially suspect, for they seem to imply that individual communities possess essential qualities that serve as markers and means of differentiation. Any ascription of essence, of underlying common properties, is, however, acutely anti-existential" (130). Indeed, Kelman's understanding of self-determination challenges collectivisations on the basis of their essentialism. As he asks in one of his political essays:

What actually is the proletariat? Or for that matter the bourgeoisie? How do you recognise a class of folk? Or a race of people? You recognise them by general characteristics. When we perceive a member of a class we are not perceiving an individual human being, we are perceiving an idea, an abstract entity, a generality; it is a way of looking that by and large is the very opposite of art. (1992, 11)

In this vein, in his aesthetic politics Kelman looks at nuanced individuals, not at whole groups. Kelman's existentialism and the rejection of essentialist and homogeneous identifications inherent to it poses an obstacle for group-based solidarity. As Laitinen and Pessi describe it, solidarity among has a *we-thinking* structure rooted in group cohesion and egalitarianism between the members of the group (2014, 2). This is the opposite to the individual-based existentialism Nicoll associates with Kelman's fiction. With this in mind, I will explore how Kelman's understanding of existentialism influences Rab Hines' reticence to being collectivised.

This attitude is perfectly encapsulated in his reaction to his co-workers' attempt to call a strike. The idea is proposed by the garage Shop Steward, Sammy, when Rab refuses to take a line from the Head Office, a sort of penalty for his bad timekeeping record, outside working hours. As Rab sees it, he should be getting paid every time he goes up to the Head Office, even if it is to receive a penalty:

Either you sign for this Head Office line or you dont. What's it to be?

Naw eh . . . I'm no being cheeky or anything; I just dont understand how it's to be accomplished properly. I mean how it's actually possible for me to go. No unless I'm wearing the uniform and I can only really wear it when I'm getting paid to. (185)

Having to go to the Head Office in his free time and without getting paid for it is regarded by Rab as an injustice and as proof of workplace inequality. In his opinion, if his bosses are being paid to see him, then he should also be receiving economic compensation. In the context of the workplace, Rab's complaint against what he sees as unfair treatment by the company opens an opportunity for political solidarity to be activated among the workers, because, as Sally Scholz reminds us, political solidarity entails individuals bonding as a group in order to oppose an injustice (2008, 34). The feeling of workplace injustice escalates as the bus company managers threaten to fire Rab if he persists in his refusal to sign the line. Due to the gravity of the situation, the Shop Steward considers that, if the managers go through with Rab's dismissal, a "possible strike situation" (198) may arise. As representative of the workers, he calls a branch meeting to vote whether workers will organise in support of Rab if needed and when it is time to vote, everybody is in favour of striking if Rab is fired. This reaction shows a sense of joint political solidarity against Rab's dismissal. In supporting Rab against the managers, the workers are extending solidarity towards Rab as well and mobilising political solidarity amongst themselves. The sense of community activated in this meeting is highlighted by the Shop Steward's use of the word "brother" to refer to Rab and to talk to the other workers. Sammy employs the language of old trade unionism, where fellow male workers were called brother, to underline their close supportive relationship.

Some of Rab's colleagues share Sammy's collective working-class consciousness and they are excited about joining in political solidarity against the managers' attempt to fire Rab. Reilly, for instance, is described "talking with great excitement" (203) and another conductor shows his pride at the solidarity shown in the meeting: "best meeting I've ever been at. See when the vote came! totally unanimous. Everybody in the room man it was really good" (205). However, this attempt at political solidarity is momentary and extremely precarious. As I explain in Section 4.3.2. of this thesis, my definition of the term precarious solidarity refers to situations where solidarity lasts a short time due to tension with individual interests and competition rooted in a context of inequality. In Kelman's portrayal of the strike attempt in *The Busconductor Hines*, most workers show political solidarity towards Rab. This clashes with the more individualist orientation of

the competition among conductors over matters of wages and employment I analysed in the previous section. When Rab is truly in danger of being fired and in need of support, his colleagues forget their differences and join together to help him. In this vein, the buses context is not entirely individualistic and can also be solidary in a situation of injustice. This means that in this situation, it is not the individualism and competitiveness of the context makes this attempt to strike brief and consequently precarious. Rather, it is Rab's individual refusal to support it that makes the attempt at solidarity precarious.

Despite his position as victim and protagonist of this workplace abuse, Rab refuses to cooperate with Sammy and his co-workers. In the run up to the planned strike, there is a negotiation between between the Shop Steward and Mr McGilvaray, the garage Superintendent. Therefore, it respects the professional hierarchy within the garage that Rab challenges. From his perspective, as long as this hierarchy is respected, the industrial action will not be effective:

They should all be downstairs shouting. None of them are downstairs shouting. They let Sammy go down to speak and he will address McGilvaray as Mr and in return be addressed as Sammy. What is the point. There is no point in any of it. They do not understand. There is no point in speech. How come they speak. What do they speak for. It is beyond belief. How come people are content to act in this manner. (203)

For Rab, indignation shown through shouting or physical violence would be more effective methods to challenge the buses' authority: "If you trace a knife line from the adam's apple to the belly button his blood'll spurt in wee bubbles. If I had a gun I'd blow McGilvaray's fucking brains out" (203). He thinks talking with the managers to negotiate against his dismissal is a useless strategy that would maintain the inequalities of the system just as they are.

Rab also separates himself from his co-workers in the event industrial action actually happens. Although his colleagues have agreed to go on strike in solidarity with Rab, he does not want them to: "Any way, to be perfectly fucking honest with yous all, I dont want anybody going on strike on my behalf. I want to do it on my tod. It's my strike, yous can get your own. I mean they're fucking easy to find" (205). He individualises his own motivation, taking distance from the reason that led Sammy call the strike in the first place:. For him, the Shop Steward and the others: "are going on strike if I get the boot" (206). Instead, he is "on strike because garage business isn't my business outwith the sold

hours” (206). His detachment from the striking group and his individualisation of the strike is related to his lack of a sense of belonging to the group of bus workers.

Viewing himself as an individual without any collective attachment —as “a negation” and as “a cowboy” as mentioned above— is an obstacle to Rab’s support of the workplace strike. Not only is he ideologically opposed to the idea of a negotiation through dialogue as an effective form of industrial action, but he is also opposed to participating in a collective act of political resistance. These two aspects of Rab’s stance, his anarchism and his existentialist individualism, explain his resolution of the workplace conflict: instead of embracing workplace political solidarity or co-operating with the managers, Rab resigns from his job. By eluding the mechanisms of trade unionism and of the bus company authorities, Rab escapes two branches of what he sees as the same unfair establishment, one which reproduces economic inequalities among workers.

Rab’s lack of cooperation in the strike mirrors Kelman’s existentialist rejection of collective categorisations. Kelman constructs Rab as an existentialist character who refuses group participation and belonging. As mentioned in Section 3.3.2., Mitch Miller and Johnny Rodger identify a contradiction between the individualism of Kelman’s fiction and the claims to collective organisation and solidarity of his political essays (2011, 66). Yet I argue that Rab’s lack of political solidarity in the context of the strike shows this contradiction to be nuanced rather than radical. In his essays, Kelman does promote collective solidarity, but he does so among marginalised minorities and from a grassroots position that challenges political participation through the representational regimes of the establishment. Trade unions, the structure Rab refuses to participate in at the workplace, are among the structures of the establishment Kelman challenges. As such, for Kelman, although political solidarity is possible, its strength lies outside the establishment. Although in *The Busconductor Hines* the support of the strike by the rest of the workers shows political solidarity to be possible, Rab’s rejection of it is employed to introduce both Kelman’s existentialist and anti-establishment politics and to stay faithful to his vision of literature as a weapon of political radicalism.

6.2. Precarious and Disintegrating Social Solidarity in *A Chancer*

In *A Chancer*, Kelman reproduces the model of using a young working-class man as a protagonist. Tammis is younger than Rab, only twenty years old and does not have a family of his own. Absent parents—they are not even mentioned in the novel—he lives with his sister, Margaret and his brother-in-law, Robert. As the title of the novel indicates, Tammis is a chancer, a gambler. In fact, while other aspects of his life change socially and jobwise, his gambling remains central. Kelman started writing this novel before *The Busconductor Hines* and, although its exact timeframe is not specified, the narrative follows Tammis in what seems to be 1970s Glasgow as he enters and leaves the factory workplace, sees his friends in leisure spaces like the pub, spends time at home with his sister and brother-in-law, sees his two girlfriends, first Betty and then Vi and above all gambles. Apart from describing Tammis' everyday experiences, the novel offers a portrayal of the conditions of Glaswegian working-class lives in this decade and how these people navigate economic crisis and industrial decline, some of them searching for better chances through emigration.

The narrative style is minimalist, focusing mainly on the physical spaces Tammis is in, the people within them, their dialogue and their actions, but omitting their thoughts and feelings, which, as Cairns Craig (1993) and Simon Kövesi (2007) explain, complicates analysis of the novel. This decision follows Kelman's aim to efface the omniscient narrator off the page in order to represent the colonising voice of the establishment. As I explained in Section 3.3.1., Kelman's narrative politics point towards a dismantling of any value-system external to the text itself that is rooted in presuppositions based on essentialist identity categories. As he explained in an interview with Kirsty McNeil:

that's what I was trying to do in *A Chancer* – to get something that was “Let me state a fact here”. So nobody can say that's your opinion because you're working class or middle class. It had to be something that is so cold, so straight black and white that no-one can deny it as fact. So in a sense, getting rid of the narrative voice is trying to get down to that level of pure objectivity. This is the reality here, within this culture. Facticity, or something like that. (1989, 5)

Kelman sees “facticity” as the practice of obliterating political perspectives external to the literary text and presenting it as free as possible from prejudice and

archetype. Consequently, unable to know what the characters' thoughts are, my analysis of solidarity in the novel seeks to interpret the actions and the words of Tammas, his friends and his family. Moreover, due to the centrality of Tammas' social interactions, I will focus on the representations of social solidarity, assessing its precariousness. I have divided my analysis of the novel into two parts. In the first, I examine Tammas' mobility from a rhythmic perspective and assess its implications for precarious social solidarity. In the second, I focus on the Glaswegian context portrayed in the novel analysing emigration for socio-economic reasons as a factor undermining social solidarity among the local working classes.

6.2.1. Disordered Rhythms: The Spatial Dimension of Precarious Social Solidarity

In this section, I examine Tammas' spatial mobility, aiming to uncover what it reveals about his solidarity with his community. In his analysis of *A Chancer*, Simon Kövesi defines Tammas' social interactions as highly paradoxical. Tammas frequently leaves social situations such as a football game, employment, nights out with friends, the living room of his house, preferring to eat dinner in his room, or a weekend trip to Blackpool with his friends (2007, 65). When he leaves, he does it abruptly and without explanation in a way that highlights the dramatic significance of his departures. It seems that the main reason behind Tammas' escapes is his gambling compulsion and his preference to be at betting shops, casinos or at Shawfield Stadium.¹⁶ Although gambling appears as an explanation of Tammas' withdrawal from social engagement, for Kövesi, it is "as much a source of rich sociability as it is an excuse for retreat" (66). Indeed, he describes the relationships Tammas builds through gambling with older characters like Phil, Deefy and Joe as "strong, reliable bonds" (66). This situates Tammas in an ambiguous social position in that, while he frequently leaves without telling anyone, he is still, in Kövesi's view, highly sociable. Drawing from Kövesi's identification of Tammas as a socially ambiguous figure, I aim to further explore this aspect from the perspective of social solidarity, looking at Tammas' spatial mobility in the pub, gambling spaces and the workplace from the perspective of rhythms, working-class masculinities and solidarity.

¹⁶ Shawfield Stadium used to be a greyhound racing venue located in Rutherglen, South Lanarkshire, a town close to the Glasgow city limits.

As I discussed in Section 4.3.1., as well as in the previous section when analysing the failing solidarity between Rab and Sandra in *The Busconductor Hines*, social solidarity is conceptually related to social cohesion and employed to measure the internal unity of a group. Christian Smith and Katherine Sorrell argue that, while both social cohesion and solidarity are used to refer to “the existence of strong bonds tying people to each other and to the social whole” (2014, 238-9), the former can denote weaker examples of mutual identification and sharing. Due to the similarities and differences between these two concepts, I consider social solidarity an appropriate concept to further investigate Tammas’ social relations.

In *A Chancer*, Tammas’ main group of friends, made up of Rab, John, Donnie and Billy, tends to go to the same pub every Saturday, *Simpson’s Bar*, following what Lefebvre calls a linear rhythm, which refers to monotonous human activities (2004, 18). The action of going to the pub is repeated every week in a quasi-identical manner becoming a ritual and a mark of group identity for Tammas’ friends. Yet, Tammas is tired of this routine—“Bad enough having to come every Saturday night but every fucking Friday night as well!” (64)—preferring instead to create new rhythms by going to betting shops, clubs or racetracks. In *Geographies of Rhythm*, Tim Edensor highlights the importance of synchronising rhythms for the production of collective routines (8). The synchronised repetition of rhythms, what Henri Lefebvre terms *eurhythmia* (2004, 77), creates a series of routines that, taken together, form a cultural community (8). For instance, the rhythms of a group of friends or a family constitute a dimension of belonging to these groups (8). This is why, by choosing not to always synchronise his individual rhythms with those of his friends, Tammas is evading their collective pattern.

However, Tammas does not always leave social situations; sometimes he joins his friends and shares spaces with them. According to Edensor, certain spaces like shops, bars, cafes or garages are “meeting points at which individual paths congregate, providing geographies of communality and continuity within which social activities are coordinated and synchronized” (2010, 8). Although he is tired of his friends frequently going to *Simpson’s Bar*, whenever Tammas decides to go there, the pub is depicted as a space of male bonding where he plays dominoes, drinks beer and engages in banter with his friends. As I explained in Section 4.2.2., Ronnie Johnston and Arthur McIvor consider the pub a key space of male bonding in Glasgow’s working-class culture in the 1960s and this portrayal remains dominant in Kelman’s representation of Glasgow in the 1970s. Similarly, gambling spaces also function as collective spaces that Tammas shares with

his friends. For instance, he goes with his first girlfriend in the novel, Betty and with Rab and his girlfriend Rena to bet on dogs at Shawfield or with Billy to place a bet and watch a snooker match. Gambling spaces also offer Tammas the opportunity to meet new people like Phil, Deefy and Erskine, old gamblers, with whom he starts a relationship mainly limited to the betting shop, casinos and racetracks where they can share their pastime. In this vein, these spaces of socialisation contribute to potentially strengthening ties of solidarity.

Furthermore, Tammas is not just occasionally present in communal spaces, but it is here where he often lends money to his friend, an action I would consider an example of precarious solidarity. For instance, after being together in a gambling club, Tammas helps his friend John pay the bus fare. Again, walking to the job centre with his friend Billy and another unemployed man, Brian McCann, Tammas gives McCann a pound because he is penniless. These are gestures of help in a situation of need which is one of the basic norms of solidarity identified by Lindenberg, as I explained in Section 4.3.2. Although according to Lindenberg, solidarity entails fulfilling all six norms — cooperation, sharing, helping, making an effort to understand and be understood, trustworthiness and considerateness—, I argue that Tammas’ sporadic actions of helping friends in need serve to strengthen the interpersonal bonds between them. As Prainsack and Buyx describe it, interpersonal solidarity stems from a “recognition of similarity in a relevant aspect” between agent and recipient. This means that, in the context of the solidary action, the agent identifies an aspect he shares with the recipient and it is this identification that motivates the action. Tammas’ lending money to his friends shows a sense of recognition of their common needs. Money, as a basic element of precarious solidarity, is not only used by Tammas to help others, but there are people in his surroundings who also lend him money: Phil, an old gambler, gives Tammas two pounds so that he can continue betting and Robert, his brother-in-law, gives him money so that he can go out on Friday night. Lending money also promotes care towards the other, which is in line with Søren Juul’s idea of solidarity as recognition of the other. In fact, in a context of poverty and unemployment —Tammas, John and Brian McCann are all unemployed— lending money is, despite its precariousness, a significant solidary gesture that makes a difference to those in need.

This contradictory combination of social evasion and precarious solidarity turns Tammas, as Kövesi argues, into someone who is seemingly both social and anti-social . As I see it, it is precisely this contradiction that is problematic from the perspective of a

more solid conceptualisation of solidarity. Despite his occasional synchronisation with his friends' rhythms and his prosocial behaviour toward his new gambling partners, his abrupt departures and the fact he does not tell his friends or the reader why he leaves so frequently turn Tammas into an elusive and unreliable person. By spending time with his friends and suddenly vanishing without explanation, Tammas performs what I would call *disordered rhythms*. As I see it, disordered rhythms are a mixture of eurhythmia and unexpected evasion that turn the person performing them into someone unpredictable. As Christian Smith and Katherine Sorrell contend, the image of solidarity is characterised by a kind of solidity that "contrasts with images of diffusion, immateriality and fluidity" (2014, 238). As such, the fluidity of Tammas' disordered rhythms makes solidarity unstable.

One example of the negative consequences of Tammas' disordered rhythms for the potential of solidarity with his community can be found when he deserts his friends by deciding not to go on their Blackpool trip at the last minute, even though on the day of the trip, Tammas goes to *Simpson's Bar* to discuss the last arrangements with them. However, on his way home to pack, Tammas stops at the betting shop and loses money on horses. Disappointed about having lost —"The horse led till the distance; then it was passed, it finished unplaced" (55)—, he decides to stay in Glasgow gambling the whole weekend. Tammas makes his decision based on his interest in recovering the money he has lost, not because he cares about his friends' feelings or the fact they will have to cover his expenses. The selfishness of Tammas' decision is highlighted by Rab's father, who tells him:

Son, he said, eventually, that Blackpool carry on was bloody ridiculous.

Mm.

I'm no kidding ye — losing all your bloody money like that. And then what you seem to forget, you're leaving the rest of the boys to pay your digs' money. I mean that's what you forget, that's the bloody consequence Tammas, that's what you dont think about. All your pals son they've got to fork out on your behalf. God sake! I couldn't do that. (116)

By reminding Tammas of his moral duties towards his friends, Rab's father tries to show him the kind of empathy he lacks. Instead of thinking about how his absence would negatively affect them, Tammas only cares about himself. In this situation,

Tammas' social withdrawal is portrayed as a sign of the character's individualism and lack of solidary values.

The untrustworthiness produced by Tammas' disordered rhythms is further stressed when Rab asks Tammas to be the best man at his wedding. Worried that he will fail to fulfil his duties as the best man, Rab reminds him of how important it is that he does the job well instead of ignoring his responsibilities. As Rab tells him, showing he is aware of Tammas' tendency to evade social situations: "Tammas, you'll no fucking let us down... We're fucking finished if you do man...I don't give a fuck about things like Blackpool but this is different, this is fucking different, it's no a fucking holiday Tammas it's no a fucking holiday" (201). For Lindenberg, trustworthiness is one of the added norms of solidarity. As explained in Section 4.3.2., trust increases the likelihood that a solidary action will be performed. In this vein, Tammas' disordered rhythms are portrayed as a potential threat to his relationship with Rab and as a factor weakening their solidarity.

The routine of going to the local pub with his friends every week is not the only linear rhythm Tammas disrupts. He also abruptly leaves the two factories where he works. In the first, Tammas' work consists of repetitive and menial tasks that follow a preestablished rhythm. Lefebvre links linear rhythms especially to work routines and to their tiresome repetition (2004, 85). Tammas and his co-worker Ralphie have to do boring menial jobs like shifting bins full of pieces of plastic to the rear yard of the factory, moving 56lb bags of cement or burning wooden crates. Not only are both tasks boring, but they are also unrelated to their role as factory machine men showing to what extent their skills are not respected. This is why he decides to leave. After this, Tammas is given the opportunity to work again in the copper factory where Billy's father works. This job seems dangerous as he gets assigned a task at the rolling mill, where he has to transport a piece of burning copper with a pair of heavy clamps lacking the proper equipment to do so. These tasks also follow a tedious and linear rhythm which is completely opposed to Tammas' preference for disordered and unpredictable rhythms. At the copper factory, there is a man who is in charge of taking the gambling bets for all the factory employees. As soon as Tammas' bet on horses goes well, he asks for his wages and leaves the job.

In Section 2.2.4. and Section 3.3.3., I explain that Kelman's masculinities deconstruct traditional industrial masculinities and the values of hard work and life-long employment in a factory. The clash between an industrial, more linear working-class community and a new one represented by Tammas that is deindustrial and growingly mobile and what this entails for social solidarity among the working classes is

encapsulated in his family's reaction to Tammas' resignation from the copper factory. Unaware of the reasons behind Tammas' resignation, Margaret and Robert see it as a selfish action towards Billy's father, who had recommended him for the job. This reaction reveals the connection in the novel between workplace and community belonging. For Robert, working in a factory is something a poor young man like Tammas and himself has to do, a mark of working-class identity. Robert even tells Tammas that if he does not start to contribute economically to the household and fulfil his family duties, it would be best for him to move out of the house altogether.

Radically challenging Margaret's and Robert's ideas, Tammas not only refuses to work in a factory again —I dont really want to work in factories any more (273)— but, when he is unemployed, he often misses his appointments at the job centre. When Margaret finds out she tells him: “You're a lazy bugger!” (100) and Robert “grunt[s] something” (100), also showing his disapproval. Both Margaret and Robert's reaction to this further reinforces the idea that Tammas is challenging the traditional conception of the hard-working working-class man as well as the expectations his family has of him. Robert's idea of the importance of work and attending to your duties from the perspective of working-class masculinities is opposed to Tammas' disordered rhythms and compulsive gambling. This separation of his family's idea of what a working-class man ought to be and Tammas' subversion of these norms, undermines Tammas' sense of solidarity with his own family.

What remains ambiguous is why Tammas keeps on performing disordered rhythms although they hinder a solid sense of solidarity both with his friends and family by making him look selfish, aloof and untrustworthy. As I have already pointed out, due to the omission of Tammas' thoughts from the narrative voice, it is impossible to know exactly why he leaves social situations so frequently. Yet, what is clearer is that when he leaves, he tends to go to gambling spaces. The meaning of Tammas' gambling has been a shared point of discussion in previous studies of the novel. While Cairns Craig defined it as an allegory of his existential aimlessness (1993, 106), Sarah Engledow (2002) and Simon Kövesi (2007) argued that for Tammas gambling serves a specific purpose. For Engledow, gambling is a site for Tammas' liberation from the capitalist system and an activity that allows him to elude the cultural expectations of his community without completely isolating himself from it (2002, 81). Kövesi also links Tammas' gambling to freedom from the demands of the capitalist system, specifically from the necessity of a job (2007, 74). Despite the economic fluctuations of gambling, for Kövesi, the point of

gambling is “the resistance to an order, is the embodiment of a freedom” (76). From the perspective of rhythms, I agree with both Engledow and Kövesi’s perspectives. Indeed, gambling is portrayed as the cause of Tammas’ disordered rhythms and his abrupt challenges of the linear pub routine as well as of the work or job centre appointments are provoked by his flights to gambling spaces.

In the fourth position in her list of basic capabilities, Martha Nussbaum considers senses, imagination and thought as essential to human well-being. This comprises being able to use imagination and to have pleasurable experiences, which, in *A Chancer*, I argue, is heavily connected to Tammas’ gambling and his performance of disordered rhythms. In fact, it is gambling that mobilises Tammas’ excitement and imagination against the linear rhythms of his decadent community, like the pub routine or the rhythms of work. Amidst this socio-economic decline, as shown by his friends’ poverty and the conversations around redundancies in the factories, Tammas’ preference for disorder shows his search for exciting experiences that allow him to escape from such depressive monotony. From the perspective of solidarity, Tammas’ search for a more stimulating daily routine puts solid engagement with his friends and family at risk. Yet, as I see it, for Tammas, occasionally evading his community and, in turn, running the risk of disappointing them, is a better chance at freedom than complying with the expectations of his community. The novel’s title is heavily illustrative in this sense. As a chancer, Tammas not only gambles, but also plays with the odds of his social relationships unpredictably engaging with them and enjoying disorder.

Moreover, Tammas’ portrayal as a working-class individual who searches for freedom bypassing communal expectations is in line with Kelman’s politics. On the one hand, Kelman’s writing aims to challenge the collective categorisations of the value-system. On the other hand, he wants to write from the perspective of his own community. I argue that in *A Chancer*, Kelman does both by simultaneously challenging capitalist rhythms and archetypes while retaining a precarious sense of community. By evading factory rhythms, Tammas disrupts the association between hard-working and group belonging that Margaret and Robert’s expectations represent. This places him on the margins of a traditional working-class group consciousness based on work and on following capitalist rhythms. In this vein, Tammas escapes a type of group solidarity based on the homogenisation of all the individuals of a group under the same category. This standpoint endangers solidarity mostly with his family, who represent more traditional working-class values rooted in the necessity of labour and stability. Yet, as I

have explained, this does not mean solidarity or notions of community are completely absent from the novel. In Tammas' occasional meetings with friends in the pub and in gambling spaces, as well as in how they help each other by lending and borrowing money, I find examples of precarious solidarity. Although these actions are not permanent due to Tammas' disordered rhythms, they show Tammas and his friends do care for each other.

Sarah Engledow diagnoses the sense of community affiliation found in Tammas' dynamics of sharing money. In her view, by helping his friends and trusting them, Tammas recognises individual responsibility within a community in a way that resonates with classic conceptions of anarchy (2002, 78). Although I am not taking an anarchist approach, I argue that the role money plays in the novel indeed acknowledges that Tammas and his friends are aware, even if only sometimes, of their needs beyond the individual.

As I see it, Tammas' evasion of linearity and his embrace of disorder through his spatial movement as well as through gambling also shows his adaptation to the increasingly uncertain circumstances of the Glasgow working classes in the 1970s. Next, I will explore how Tammas' disordered rhythms are not individual but reflect the conditions of a period in Glasgow's history which also affect his friends' ability to maintain solidary engagements. While, as I have discussed in this section, precarious solidarity is possible if Tammas and his friends share the same space and perform actions that recognise the other, in the next section I will examine whether emigration provokes these fleeting moments of solidarity to completely disintegrate in 1970s Glasgow.

6.2.2. Working-class Emigration and Disintegrating Solidarity

In his analysis of the novel, Kövesi provides historical evidence that during the 1970s there was massive emigration out of Scotland, most notably out of the Glasgow area (2007, 82). Due to Kelman's portrayal of these historical circumstances, Kövesi argues that *A Chancer* shows a clear awareness of the circumstances of the Glaswegian working classes during the period of its writing (82). As I mentioned in Section 3.3.1., emigration for economic reasons is not only a circumstance Kelman had observed around him, but an experience he underwent himself when he migrated to California with his family

between 1963 and 1964, when he was seventeen, as well as when, later in life, he left Glasgow to work in the Channel Islands, Manchester and London.

In *A Chancer*, Glasgow is portrayed as a city without good opportunities for the working classes, somewhere most of Tammas' social circle has to leave. The first person who expresses a wish to escape Glasgow is his first girlfriend, Betty. Unemployed and having to babysit her younger siblings, Betty feels trapped in her Glasgow home and feels jealous about the financial autonomy that having a job gives Tammas:

You dont know how lucky you are. Sometimes I feel like running away. Just packing my bags and going away, going away from here altogether. (...) I've got an Auntie lives in England. She was up in the summer for a visit and she was telling me there was plenty of jobs down there if I ever felt like trying it. (1985, 9)

Instead of wishing to find a job herself in Glasgow, in Betty's view England is the place to be and Glasgow is, as Kövesi puts it, "somewhere to leave" (2007, 78). Although at the beginning of the novel Tammas does have a job, when his friend John asks him if he has ever thought about migrating, he replies that he has done so and that he would leave "Any fucking place!" (16), highlighting his utter aversion towards his city and a working-class culture in decline.

Either because it is something they want or something their family has decided to do, migrating to look for better opportunities is also in the plans of all of Tammas' friends. For instance, although he does not want to go, Donnie's family emigrates to New Zealand. On Donnie's last day, the gang goes to a pub to have some drinks and say goodbye to him. John is sad as he feels Donnie's leaving is the beginning of the end of the friends' group: "we're splitting up, we're all splitting up, we're all fucking splitting up. (...) It'll never be the same again" (130). Here, emigration is framed as a cause of group fragmentation that will weaken, in turn, their internal solidarity.

After Donnie leaves, John moves to Manchester for work. He considers leaving Glasgow because he is "fucking fed up with it here," considering, like Betty did, that England and Manchester specifically are economically thriving areas: "A guy in work was telling me the nightlife's brilliant down there. And the money as well, it's supposed to be brilliant too. Big big wages he says" (99). Also for work reasons, Tammas' friend Rab emigrates to Hull to play football for Hull City F.C. Rab would have preferred to play for Glasgow Rangers, but the team has never given him that opportunity. Rab's

inability to stay in Glasgow as a player for Rangers emphasises, once more, the dearth of prospects available in the 1970s. As John tells Tammas in a conversation about emigration: “I mean this place is dead Tammas you’ve got to admit it” (168). In the novel, Kelman portrays a 1970s Glasgow in decay that is far from the flourishing industrial centre it once was, as I explained in Chapter 2 of this thesis. The fact that it is England and not Glasgow that is economically booming criticises Britain’s financial abandonment of Scotland in the 1970s and 1980s and the concentration of wealth in the South of the country, which resonates with Alasdair Gray’s idea of Anglo-Centralising developed in Section 3.2.3.

I have examined the decay of Glasgow’s industry concerning the linear but alienating and aimless rhythms of factory work. In the Glasgow of *A Chancer*, jobs are still available, yet they are tedious, dangerous and badly paid. In light of these circumstances, some working-class Glaswegians prefer to search for better chances elsewhere than to stay in the city. Although emigration could potentially increase their odds of improving their living conditions, it was a solution that, as Kelman shows in *A Chancer*, has the potential of breaking communities apart. As I will explain next, emigration undermines solidarity among Tammas’ group of friends for two interrelated reasons: the widening of spatial distances and the end of communication among them.

In Section 4.3.2., I referred to Richard Sennett’s concept of *new capitalism* and how, in Søren Juul’s view, it threatened the idea of solidarity as mutual recognition. In *The Corrosion of Character*, Sennett explains how the structural changes in the labour system in new capitalism have influenced the workers’ need for mobility and therefore often caused them to migrate from their places of origin. As Sennett describes it, new capitalism is rooted in a short-term philosophy that favours temporary positions and a diverse and constantly growing skillset (1999, 22). Due to the growing importance of flexibility as a valued employee quality, Juul argues that the economic system of new capitalism forces individuals “to be constantly on the move” (2013, 201). Mobility for reasons of employment is present in *A Chancer*, yet it does not originate from a full restructuring of the labour regime into Sennett’s new capitalism. After all, Sennett published his book in 1999 and the historical context of Kelman’s novel is Glasgow in the 1970s. Nonetheless, Kelman’s portrayal of a Glasgow in the process of deindustrialisation and of emigration as a consequence of job precariousness has similar consequences for solidarity to Sennett’s description of new capitalism.

In fact, Kelman's description of emigration shares with Sennett's analysis of short-term and highly mobile employment a radical detachment from the past after arriving in a new place. By telling us about the life of an American consultant who changes jobs and moves around several states, Sennett explains how his past stops mattering for his new neighbours in each of his four moves (1999, 20). In *A Chancer*, Tammas does not have the perspective of new neighbours or of those who leave, but the perspective of those who stay. Tammas stays in Glasgow until the end of the novel and, when he leaves, those who have migrated are completely dislocated from his present time and space. In this vein, without Glasgow acting as a shared space, the friendship ties in Tammas' gang, already precarious beforehand, completely disintegrate along with their potential for solidarity.

Tammas is physically distant from his friends and on top of that, he has also stopped communicating with them altogether since they left. In an era when communications technologies were limited to the telephone and letters, keeping in touch with those who went away was difficult. As such, after Donnie goes to New Zealand, communication between the two friends ceases. When Brian McCann, a man Tammas meets at the unemployment job centre, asks him about Donnie, Tammas simply answers he has not even received a Christmas card from him. As with Donnie, Tammas also stops talking to Rab after he leaves for Hull. Consequently, for Tammas' group of friends, emigration entails spatial separation and quasi-disappearance. After leaving the city, both Donnie in New Zealand and Rab in Hull are displaced from Tammas' Glasgow and his life.

In his added norms of solidarity, Lindenberg underscores the importance of communication for the maintenance of solidary ties. Yet not every type of communication is valid for stabilising the normative frame of solidarity. Lindenberg specifies that communication that contributes to solidarity has to effectively show the speaker's intention to cooperate, share and help and the listener's reciprocity with these intentions (2014, 39). After his friends' emigration, not only is communication ineffective, it is non-existent, because spatial distance radically disrupts it between Tammas and his friends and their relationship disappears. As such, looking for a better life through emigration, combined with friends' inability to stay in touch after moving, radically undermines not only their potential to be in solidarity but also their friendship.

At the end of the novel, Tammas is portrayed as a character out of place. Many of his friends are gone and, although he has started a relationship with Vi, a woman he meets

gambling, it does not seem enough of a reason for Tammas to stay in Glasgow. Moreover, his plans to move to Peterhead, a town up North, for work seem to have been abandoned ever since Brian McCann, the man he was going to go with, tried to choke him when Tammas complained about always having to pay their rounds of pints at the pub. Although, as in the rest of the novel, Tammas' real motivations are not revealed, it seems the combination of his friend group crumbling and McCann's violence may have led to Tammas' realisation that it is his turn to leave Glasgow, tired of the city's decline. As he emigrates to London, the precarious solidarities in Glasgow's pubs and gambling spaces finally disintegrate. Although there is a possibility that Tammas may engage in new solidarities in the English capital, Donnie in New Zealand, John in Manchester and Rab in Hull, Glasgow has ceased to be a place of solidarity for this group of friends. By reflecting on the consequences of emigration for ties of solidarity among the 1970s Glasgow working classes, Kelman frames economic necessity as a crucial element undermining solidarity and putting people further away from each other.

6.3. Social Alienation and the Limitations of Solidarity in *A Disaffection*

Patrick Doyle (Pat) is the protagonist of James Kelman's third novel, *A Disaffection*, which shows him as a depressed schoolteacher whose anti-establishment ideals place him in an existential conundrum: he is an employee of a system he despises. The thematic centrality of his identity crisis, what Kelman names in the title his disaffection, is already suggested in the opening sentences of the novel: "Patrick Doyle was a teacher. Gradually he had become sickened by it" (1989, 1). According to Simon Kövesi, Kelman's exploration of Pat's disaffection considers all the meanings of the term as defined in Oxford Dictionary: "he displays a 'spirit of disloyalty to the government or existing authority', 'political alienation or discontent', outright 'dislike' of and 'hostility' towards his profession and 'alienation' from his own family and his own class" (2007, 91). Indeed, the combination of Pat's working-class family origins and his anti-authoritarian ideas with a profession that makes him complicit with the government renders his crisis simultaneously personal and political.

The narrative voice fluctuates between a third-person and a first-person narrator, at times dissolving into a free indirect discourse where the two narrative positions become

indistinguishable. Unlike in *A Chancer*, where the narrative was action-based, *A Disaffection* plunges the reader into Pat's neurotic mind as he interacts with his surroundings. The novel begins when Pat finds a pair of metallic pipes outside the local arts centre where he has been having drinks with his colleagues. Excited about the prospect of turning them into musical pipes he can play alone at home, the pipes symbolise his wish to isolate from society and create a new way of life away from the indoctrinating and marginalising hierarchy of the school. Although he would like to escape society, the novel explores the impossibility of completely doing it and the tensions between individual social evasion and Pat's social belonging in his family and workplace relations.

Since Pat's disaffection has both a personal and political dimension, I have divided my analysis into two sections. In the first, I examine his strained relationship with his family as a cause and effect of his existential crisis and the limited solidarity between them, looking at Pat's use of space, the masculine identities of Pat, his father and his brother Gavin, as well as class as a social barrier. In the second section, I study how Pat's depression and his view of the space of the school undermine both his social and political solidarity.

6.3.1. Self-isolation, Silent Masculinities and Class as Limitations to Family Solidarity

Although he never finished his degree, Kelman studied English and Philosophy at the University of Strathclyde for some years. His interest in these areas and especially in existentialist philosophy helps understand his exploration of the relationship between the individual and society and his deep focus on the tensions between the self and social categories. This philosophical investigation is especially visible in *A Disaffection*. In this section, I analyse how Pat's self-estrangement is an obstacle to his relationship with his family, particularly with his father and brother and how this prevents him from establishing solidary bonds with them.

Pat's disaffection tends to isolate him from human interactions. When he is not working at school, he spends his time in individual spaces: his home and his car. Pat's home is a space for social retreat where he plays the pipes, which, as explained above,

symbolises his social evasion. As Cairns Craig puts it, Pat Doyle is “locked out from participation in the process of being, enclosed within systems which he cannot accept, generating new systems which he knows to be illusory” (1993, 111). For him, the act of playing the pipes must be done in isolation: “If he wanted to do things like perform on the pipes then he had to do them alone. And not tell folk either. He was to carry on alone” (224). As such, it is an action of momentary individual escapism. The same happens with his driving around Glasgow in his car. On these occasions, Pat imagines leaving the city and going south to England, north to the Highlands and Islands, Spain and even Morocco. Yet, these fantasies clash with his aimless driving and his inability to choose a specific route: “Patrick, having opted for the M8 and now being on the road to England but it could be the road to Edinburgh or even Stirling... he was going to England. No he wasn't he was going home, he was returning home” (68). While Pat is unable to leave Glasgow, his fantasising about potential exit routes inside the car highlights his wish to escape. Furthermore, Pat also avoids his family in public spaces like the street. When he goes for a walk on his own and he sees his brother Gavin, his sister-in-law Nicola and his nephew and niece walk in his direction, Pat ducks “into the mouth of the nearest close” (162), not wanting to see them at that moment. His spatial evasion shows his unwillingness to socialise with them.

Pat's avoidant spatial movements are framed in the novel as a cause of his strained relationship with his family but also as a consequence. On the one hand, due to his depression, Pat forgets about important family occasions. This adds to his lack of family commitment as is highlighted, for instance, at the beginning of the novel when he recalls he has forgotten about his mother's birthday. His avoidant personality is further emphasised by his sister-in-law's distrust of his words when he tells her he will visit her and his brother soon: “You always say that and you never do, you make excuses” (76). In the course of the novel, he goes to his parents' house once after almost a month without seeing them and his father receives him with surprise: “Where've ye been hiding yourself young man!” (106). As such, his repeated disengagement renders him more unreliable and weakens his relationship with his family.

On the other hand, when Pat thinks about his family or sees them, their relationship is shown to be full of tensions that further promote his avoidant movements and his feelings of exclusion. When Pat visits his parents, his father is portrayed as a man who tends to argue with his son rather than seek understanding. Instead of picking a light topic of conversation, Pat's father begins to talk about the use of the belt in school, a

measure he supports, due to his more traditional values and one that Pat condemns. As father and son argue, the atmosphere becomes increasingly charged and Pat wishes to leave home altogether, regretting the visit. Pat's intense reaction suggests arguing is the usual dynamics with his father, one that makes him feel extremely uncomfortable. Moreover, Pat thinks about the impossibility of talking about important emotional topics with his father, a man so hermetic that his son compares him to Moby Dick: "He loves his da, he really does. It's just that fucking hopeless reactionariness. How do ye pierce it? It's a fucking tortoiseshell. You would need a Moby Dick harpoon. Father! Daddy! Dad! How are ye doing!" (119).

As Carole Jones contends, in Kelman the family is seen as "a site of conflict" usually due to a fracture between father and son (2009a, 41). In her analysis of *Disaffection*, Jones describes the silence of Pat's father as a masculine hardness that he cannot trespass (42). In fact, the combination of his father's aggressive conversational dynamics and his inability to discuss emotions with his son turns the family home into a hostile space for Pat, where lack of honest communication is a limitation to the solidarity between father and son as well as between brothers. Communication is a struggle that, according to Pat's sister-in-law Nicola, "runs in the family" (313), specifically among the family men. Pat describes his brother Gavin as a silent man who struggles to communicate openly especially with Pat: "the things of essential consequence in the world – these were the things Gavin never spoke about with his young brother. So how in the name of god were folk to find things out, if those who knew kept it all fucking to themselves!" (19). In fact the personality of Pat's father and Gavin portrays the correlation between an unemotional, aggressive masculinity and Glaswegian working-class men as described by Angela Bartie and Alistair Fraser (2017, 273) in their study of the Glasgow "hard man".

Unable to know how his father and Gavin feel, what they need or how they can be helped, they become too independent for Pat to be able to extend solidarity towards them. According to Jones, Pat is different from his father and Gavin because he is more prone to sentimentality and emotion (2009a, 42). While Pat's father enjoys arguing and Gavin is quiet and private, Pat has a more emotional personality, which according to traditional gender roles, is linked, as Neil McMillan contends, to the correlation between middle-class status and feminisation in Scotland's imagery (2003, 69-70). Yet, as I see it, his emotionality does not make Pat more solidary. Although he considers the possibility of speaking with his father and his brother more frequently, his disaffection leads him closer to self-absorption and inaction.

As I explained in Section 3.3.3.2., Kelman's male protagonists, Pat included, are characterised by passivity and solipsism. Yet in this thesis, I consider solidarity to be an action. In his article on the pedagogy of solidarity from a decolonial perspective, Rubén A. Gaztambide-Fernández uses the term *transitive solidarity* to stress the importance of seeing solidarity as “an active orientation towards others that, in its very transitivity, rejects a static position and embraces contingency” (2012, 54). Due to the neurosis and, in turn, the paralysis produced by his depressed mental state —“Patrick Doyle was not able to make a decision and stick by it” (63)— Pat is unable to be solidary with others. Indeed, although he sometimes expresses his need for company, he sees himself as someone who is too self-absorbed: “These things were aye happening right under your nose and you never ever bloody saw them. Because of your total preoccupation with self” (248-249). He is unable to be solidary towards others, which, together with his inactivity and isolation, allows Kelman to represent the individual subjectivity of a man in the midst of an existential crisis torn between wanting to escape society and his struggle to belong.

The tension explored in the novel between escaping and belonging is represented, for instance, when Pat goes to Gavin and Nicola's house, located in the neighbourhood of Cadder. As Pat opens the door, he finds Gavin with two of his neighbours, Davie and Arthur, sharing some drinks. Pat decides to stay and Gavin makes a pot of soup for the four men to share. The friendship involved in the act of sharing is highlighted in the novel: “They were friends, this trio of neighbours; they shared their grub and they shared their drink. They got on fine together. They were friends. And they were not all making him feel excluded; that was one thing, they were not making him feel awkward. That's two things” (268). Until now, Pat had avoided seeing his brother, but this scene shows some sense of community to be possible. Indeed, John Kirk describes the narrator's emphasis on food and drink as an expression of “a materialistic desire to share” (1999, 113), one that strengthens the relationship among Gavin, Pat Davie, Arthur. As I discussed in Section 4.3.2., sharing is also the second basic norm of solidarity in Lindenberg's normative frame. In this vein, I would consider Gavin's sharing of the food with his friends and his brother an action of precarious solidarity which, despite being weak and fleeting, highlights a latent potential for social solidarity among them.

Yet, this action of solidarity is even more precarious as it clashes with the tensions of Pat's relationship with Gavin. After eating the soup, Pat feels his brother wants him to leave. Although Gavin does not explicitly say so, Pat starts feeling out of place in Gavin's house: “Things were alright before I came. Now that I am here things are not alright I

should not have come and the things would still be fine” (272). As Simon Kövesi asserts, while Pat’s ideology clearly rejects the establishment and those complicit with it, he shows no “hope for communal comfort” among the working classes (2007, 91). As I see it, his lack of faith in the working classes is tied to his middle ground position between a middle-class employment and an anti-middle-classes agenda. This is why, ideologically outside the system but professionally within it, Pat feels excluded from his brother’s working-class household.

As such, class is a barrier for solidarity between Pat and his brother. Pat’s prejudice against the middle classes is portrayed in his self-perception as a class traitor. In line with Kelman’s existentialism, John Kirk has compared him to Jean-Paul Sartre’s “objective traitor,” whom Fredric Jameson describes as someone “forever suspended between the classes, yet unable to disengage from class realities and functions and from class guilt” (qtd. in Kirk 1999, 112). When thinking about Eric, an old university colleague, Pat admits disliking him for being middle-class: “these middle-class bastards, lying fuckers, so absolutely hypocritical” (53). Pat’s own identity crisis and the self-hate that his complicity with the system produces are further activated when Gavin calls teachers “middle-class wankers” (281). When Pat hears this, he feels insulted: “Do you mean me? Are you fucking call me a middle-class wanker?” (282). This insult challenges Pat’s whole perception of his relationship with his brother and after having shared Gavin’s soup he reconsiders his bond with his brother: “Aye, it’s nice to know who your friends are; and if you dont have friends amongst your relatives then (...) who the fuck are you and so on, supposed to have friends among” (285).

While Pat is an employed teacher, Gavin is unemployed. Their socioeconomic differences have a strong presence in their relationship and they matter more than what they have in common. Due to this economic inequality and his self-perception as a class traitor, Pat believes he does not deserve respect from Gavin:

Gavin didnt wish to speak to his young brother, especially on a basis of equality. His young brother had a good sort of middle-class job and a good sort of middle-classish wage whereas he had fuck all. His young brother could make all the comments and criticisms he had a mind to, then walk along to the licensed grocer and buy a bottle of whisky and a dozen cans of superlager — just about the most expensive lager in the entire premises. So what was the point in talking to him, to somebody like him. (302-303)

Communication between the brothers and, in turn, solidarity is hindered by their class differences. The novel presents a dilemma concerning whether solidarity towards members of the middle classes, no matter what their relationship is to you, is compatible with political commitment against the establishment. For a moment, Pat wishes the class differences between him and his brother could be reconciled. Reconciliation and, using Juul's definition of solidarity, recognition, would minimise the significance of socioeconomic differences in the way people treat each other:

I receive almost twice as much of the provender of survival as do my brother and sister-in-law and nephew and niece all rolled up into one neat bundle. And we are all to be at one, yes, at peace, reconciled, fully. Says who? Says me. I say it. I say to my big brother, dont for fuck sake do what you are doing but listen to me as an equal and let us talk to each other and in that talking we shall be finding the way ahead. (306)

As a man divided between rigid anti-establishment ideas and a need to belong, there is a part of Pat that would like the barriers between him and his brother to dissolve so that they could treat each other as equals. Yet, when Pat reconnects with his agenda against the middle classes, he rejects the idea of reconciliation. For anti-establishment Pat, reconciliation is connected to a bourgeois agenda that obliterates the importance of class differences when fighting against elites: "What a pile of fucking shite! What a pile of absolute gibbers! The very idea that such forms of conflict can be so resolved! This is a straight bourgeois intellectual wank. These liberal fucking excesses taken to the very limits of fucking hyping hypocritical tollie" (306). Pat's political agenda is so radical that it justifies the absence of solidarity between him and his brother on the basis of his complicit role with the system. Consequently, *A Disaffection* presents an individual whose radical rejection of the establishment limits both his relationship with others and his relationship with his self.

Kelman aims to efface all limiting social categories from his novels. In fact, Carole Jones argues that the central dilemma in his work and in the life of his individualistic male protagonist is "how to assert selfhood in the face of social conditions" (2009a, 32). However, *A Disaffection* shows to what extent categories like class are impossible to abandon and how, an obsession over them, shown by Pat's disaffection, further limits our ability to be with others and embrace human interdependence. In his analysis of the novel, Aaron Kelly argues that Kelman does not seek to state the unlimited

powers of the individual but rather to investigate its limitations: “The critique resides — negatively— in the incapacity of Kelman’s narratives to realise fully an individual freedom. This inability to implement the promise of individual freedom itself divulges that individualism is not such an individual matter after all” (Kelly 2009, 90). Despite examining to what extent total isolation is impossible and how social retreat due to a rigid worldview can undermine solidarity, *A Disaffection* does not propose a possible model of solidarity that overcomes our differences. I argue that Kelman does not suggest that individuals should not help others, in fact, through Pat’s disaffection, he shows how damaging total isolation can be. However, in depicting class differences as insurmountable from a position of radical anti-establishment commitment, Kelman does not propose a solution to social alienation. In the next section, I will examine how Pat’s disaffection also prevents him from establishing social solidarity with his colleagues and from mobilising a group in order to promote political solidarity.

6.3.2. Anti-Establishment within the Establishment: The Limitations of Social and Political Solidarity at the School

Pat’s anti-establishment ideas mediate his own perception of the space around him, from the school where he works to the rest of the city. In these spaces he inhabits, embodies and traverses, Pat creates what Edward Soja calls a thirdspace (1996) that allows him to create an individual perception of the city mediated by his political agenda. Due to his vision of the world as an authoritarian police state, Pat’s thirdspace constitutes a sort of carceral archipelago, which, as I discussed in Section 4.1.1., is one of the six discourses that appear in Edward Soja’s study of Los Angeles as the paradigmatic postmodern city (2002). This discourse draws both from Foucault’s disciplinary technologies and from Mike Davis’ work *City of Quartz* (1990). For Soja, the carceral archipelago entails the transformation of cities into surveilled fortresses where the police enforce control to contain the potential conflicts ensuing from increasing sociocultural polarities (2002, 194). In this context, Soja argues, there is a “substitution of police for polis” (190) meaning that control is not only externally enforced but it is integrated into the structure of the city. The renaming of the police as polis that Soja proposes in his explanation of the carceral archipelago is especially relevant considering Kelman’s use of this same

term, “polis,” to refer not only to the police, but also to the state as a structure rooted in control. In fact, due to his work for the education system, Pat describes himself as “a member of the polis” (139).

Pat has recurring paranoid ideas that he is under surveillance and being followed by the police or by Education Department inspectors. For instance, in the middle of a football match, he sees a man whom he believes to be from the Education Department of Scotland who is following him for his anti-establishment ideas. Right next to this man, Pat sees a younger man who resembles a policeman who had come to give a talk to his school. Due to the similarity between this man and the policeman, Pat thinks that he is being spied on. The carceral archipelago he amplifies in his paranoid ideas also extends to the street, the pub and even the TV: “when you watch the telly, ye aye think it’s you that’s doing the bloody watching but it’s no, it’s you that’s actually getting watched — the government’s got the fucking security forces all taking notes!” (239).

Yet the main space of this carceral archipelago is the school. The way Pat describes the attitudes of his colleagues resonates with surveillance and the invasion of individual privacy. He sees them as a nosy group of people who are “watching what you were doing, wanting to know your business (...) wanting to keep tabs on everything you did, every last thing you got involved in or did not get fucking involved in!” (6). Pat’s understanding of the school as a surveillance regime is further stressed when he calls the school’s second headmaster “MI6.”¹⁷ The main headmaster of the school, Old Milne, is also seen as a figure policing the teachers’ movements: “Old Milne had many spies; and from his secretary’s office window it was possible to see the driveway to the main schoolgates” (30). In order to define his own view of the school’s role in the enforcement of social control, Pat uses the term “institutionalised terror” (103).

Pat’s view of the school as a structure of control undermines the potential for social solidarity with his colleagues. While in *A Chancer*, Tammam increasingly separated himself from his group of friends due to his gambling addiction and his search for risk and adventure, in *A Disaffection*, Pat avoids participating in the group of teachers because he perceives them —and he perceives himself— as accomplices in the marginalisation of the working classes. Furthermore, Pat’s disaffection towards the school system makes him waver throughout the novel on whether to stop teaching altogether or stay at the school. His recurring wish to leave —“I’m just bloody fed up with it” (13-14)— as well

¹⁷ MI6 is the name of the British Secret Intelligence Service.

as his dislike for the majority of the teaching staff puts a barrier between him and the other teachers weakening their social ties and Pat's own sense of belonging.

Simon Kövesi defines Pat as an anarchist teacher who aims to dismantle the hierarchy that places teachers in a superior position to students and who challenges the order and content of the school curriculum (2007, 103). His goal is to promote critical thinking and rage against the establishment. For instance, Pat tries to teach his students about the importance of action against injustice in other parts of the world:

And by the way, pass all this on to whomsoever you want to pass it on to, I dont care, I dont care; because as well you know there are people the same age as yourselves getting beaten up and tortured and killed in countries not all that far from here and I wont name them because if ye dont know what I'm 'talking about ye dont deserve to. People of twelve, thirteen, fourteen; they're getting tortured and murdered. Okay, so yous've got to do something. (199)

His insistence on action —“yous've got to do something”—, is intended to lead his students to stand in solidarity with victims of violence either in a group of political solidarity or individually. In this case, according to H. Gustav Klaus, Pat seems to be referring to the Ulster conflict, “where the British Government was found guilty of torture and inhuman treatment by the European Convention on Human Rights” (88). The novel does not suggest how his students would organise to action, but Pat's teachings open up the opportunity for them to do so in the future. As I explain in Section 3.3.2., Kelman has participated in political events, standing in solidarity with the Kurdish and Palestinian people, as well as campaigning in support of victims of racially motivated attacks in the UK and beyond. In fact, one of the essays where Kelman emphasises the need to support marginalised people globally is entitled “Oppression and Solidarity” (1992), which delves into his understanding of a form of political solidarity with the potential to become a key vehicle of collective resistance among minorities. In this vein, Pat's words to his students are connected to this facet of Kelman's political persona. Indeed, what Pat encourages his students to do resembles Kelman's actions of solidarity to help minorities and victims of state violence. Kelman's criticism of state violence through Pat's words can also potentially generate in the reader's interest to further investigate state violence and extend solidarity towards its victims.

Nonetheless, although Pat encourages his students to be active in their solidarity towards suffering young people—an age group they can directly relate to—around the world, he takes a passive approach to world problems. Instead of joining a group or individually protesting against injustice, he tells his students he will resign and play the pipes at home. At the realisation of this contradiction between what he expects of them and what he will do, a student asks him: “If ye think the world’s as bad as all that then how come you’re just gonni go away and play the pipes instead of doing something more useful?” (200). Pat, who is exhausted, responds, “I just want a rest” (200). Sally Scholz argues that political solidarity emerges from a particular vision of the future that functions as the motivation for solidarity, the cause worth fighting for (2008, 34). In *A Disaffection*, Pat is so depressed about the state of the world that he does not see the possibility of finding a solution in the future. If, as I have explained above, solidarity is an action of help towards other people, Pat’s inaction and solipsistic retreat hampers the potential for solidarity. As Kirk describes it, Pat is “the postmodern intellectual who is fully aware of the all-pervasive nature of power and is thus sufficiently cowed to a state that little can be done to overthrow it” (1999, 112-3). Agreeing with Kirk’s interpretation, I argue that the existential crisis Pat is experiencing throughout the novel places him in a state of paralysis that severely impedes his ability to be solidary.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSIONS

This thesis shows that the novels of Alasdair Gray and James Kelman published from 1981 to 1989 have great potential for the study of solidarity as a contextual and changing dimension. The selected works have allowed me to emphasise the idea of solidarity as an action that is subject to the individual use of space and mediated by gender and class parameters. They have also helped to highlight the influence of political ideology on the personal attitude towards solidarity and the importance of a scale of values that promotes the recognition of the other (Juul 2013) as fundamental elements that reinforce solidarity. The thesis proposes as a new concept the term precarious solidarity. This concept draws from Siegwart Lindenberg's theories on the precariousness and instability of the normative frame of solidarity (2014), as well as from Judith Butler's definition of precariousness (2009). My own understanding of the concept seeks to define solidarity as an action that becomes less frequent and weaker in contexts where economic precariousness and social inequality is combined with individualistic political values like neoliberalism and elitism. Its use in this thesis underlines its function for analysing solidarity in a literary context which, like the corpus of this thesis, is centred upon the individualistic tendencies of human beings, personally and politically, and which explores the barriers we have to engage with our environment under conditions of belonging and equality.

In Chapter 2, I have undertaken a historical review of "Glasgow fiction" (Burgess 1989, McIlvanney 2012) and I have situated Alasdair Gray and James Kelman within this literary tradition. Structuring this review not only chronologically but also thematically has allowed me to highlight the importance that key aspects of my thesis, namely the treatment of the relationship to space, the representation of masculinities and narratives of class identity have in Glasgow fiction. In relation to the subsequent use of these dimensions for my study of solidarity, I have been able to observe that the problems of the heterosexual white working-class male in fitting into a social environment from which he wants to escape have been a central theme in the Glasgow novel since approximately the 1930s. This demonstrates that, despite the recognition of Glasgow as a city with a strong solidary commitment with workers' rights, as shown in novels such as Dot Allan's *Hunger March* (1934) or, in a contemporary era, Alison Miller's *Demo* (2005), the city is recurrently portrayed as a dimension that leads to escapism and paralysis, rather than solidary action in this tradition. In this way, this chapter reveals that the preoccupation with individual male identity, solipsism or social inaction represented as obstacles to solidarity in Gray's and Kelman's novels is rooted in a local literary tradition.

In Chapter 3, I have analysed the politics represented in Gray's and Kelman's fiction and essays as well as the gender dynamics that appear in their work. Although the aim of this chapter is not to assess whether Scottish writers were actual instigators of the debates on national culture that contributed to the devolution of the Scottish parliament in 1997, nor to conclude the extent to which culture did indeed help national political change, it has served to lay the groundwork for considering literature as a medium for reflection on political ideas, solidarity being one of them. My analysis of Alasdair Gray's political ideas has guided me to consider how his depiction of personal and socio-political oppressive power dynamics constitutes a critique against exploitation. From a socialist humanist agenda, Gray views individualism and domination as threats to a healthy individual subjecthood and to respectful human conviviality. At the same time, my analysis of how recurrently domination and entrapment are portrayed in his novels has allowed me to emphasise that, for Gray, overcoming these dimensions is a challenging struggle. I have also made a connection between Gray's nationalism, his staunch socialist defence of the welfare state and his support of Glaswegian working-class culture by highlighting the importance of working-class and civic solidarity in his personal ideas.

Furthermore, by examining the gender dynamics in Gray's fiction, I have been able to observe that the author's representation of unequal power dynamics is not simply a general political critique, but also exposes the author's exploration of heteronormative masculinities. In *Lanark* (1981) and *1982, Janine* (1984), Gray describes men who are uncomfortable in circumstances of inferiority and who compensate their vulnerability through an imagined omnipotence in the form of fantasies or an individualistic use of political power. One of these imagined mechanisms of male supremacy, which I analyse in Section 3.2.4.2, is pornography. Here, I read Gray's use of pornography in *1982, Janine* as a critique of exploitative dynamics and also as a crude depiction of a type of masculinity based on the control of women. My reflection on the ideas of Stephen J. Boyd (1991), Eilidh Whiteford (1994) and Kirsten Stirling (2008) on the fine line between critique and representation in Gray's use of pornography reveals the extent to which Gray risks perpetuating sexualisation and lack of solidarity towards women. The description of Gray's masculinities as figures rooted in the pursuit and reassertion of patriarchal power has laid the groundwork for my analysis of solidarity in Chapter 5.

My investigation of Kelman's political ideas makes visible similarities and differences between the political ideas in his fiction and those expressed in his essays. Kelman's aesthetic agenda shows a fundamental contradiction. On the one hand, he

demonstrates his intention to represent and give voice to the underclass. On the other hand, due to the influence of existentialist philosophy in his work and his resistance against the use of narrative clichés that the author associates with the establishment, Kelman portrays his protagonists as individuals isolated from a sense of group belonging and from the traditional working classes. Reviewing Kelman's essays has allowed me to see that the differences between the philosophical explorations of his fiction and the ideas that underpin his activism are even greater. In his political activism, Kelman shows solidarity with marginalised populations and insists on the importance of weaving networks of solidarity between victims of state injustice, such as workers suffering from asbestosis —Clydeside Action on Asbestos— racist attacks —Scottish Campaign Against Racism and Fascism— or ethnic oppression —Friends of Kurdistan and Friends of Palestine. However, solidarity towards oppressed populations is not reflected in his literary work in which the protagonists, despite being part of the working class or having an anti-establishment ideology, are individuals who seek social isolation. In this way, this analysis has allowed me to see how Kelman's political ideas fluctuate between a radical individualistic defiance of the establishment, shown in his novels, and attempts to fight political injustice through solidarity in grassroots organisations.

Moreover, the definition of Kelman's male characters as men who tend towards marginalisation has guided my study of solidarity towards the elements that hinder it. Section 3.3.3., in which I study gender dynamics in Kelman's work, has also helped to orient this thesis towards the limitations of solidarity. In it, I have highlighted that Kelman's masculinities tend towards a vulnerability and paralysis that challenges both hegemonic (Connell 1987) and traditional working-class masculinities based on action. In this vein, the analysis of Kelman's men as reflective and solipsistic has allowed me to situate them away from solidarity, seen as an action of support to others.

In Chapter 4, I have reviewed various theories on space, masculinities and solidarity that ground my study of precarious solidarity. Given that this thesis understands solidarity as a situated action mediated by the relationship to space and gender dynamics, both perspectives have helped to focus my study. The application of Marxist theories of space has allowed me to see that the use of space responds to individual perceptions of our environment (Soja 1998, Lefebvre 1991), anchored in social, mental and political parameters that guide the attitude of Gray's and Kelman's characters towards solidarity. For the analysis of the working-class and socio-economically precarious spaces portrayed in *The Busconductor Hines* (1984) and *A Chancer* (1985), the basic capabilities theorised

by Nussbaum have been particularly useful in establishing a connection between the lack of basic capabilities and the emergence of social tensions that challenge social solidarity. Furthermore, *rhythmanalysis* as theorised by Henri Lefebvre (2004) and Tim Edensor (2000, 2010) has underpinned the understanding of collective rhythms as spaces for the creation of group routines and the reproduction of capitalist hierarchies, considering the defiance of these rhythms as movements that simultaneously function to resist capitalism and weaken ties of social solidarity and political solidarity based on group participation (Scholz 2008).

Section 4.2. offers theoretical insights into the intersection between masculinities and space. These ideas have allowed me to conceive of the spatial movements of the male characters in the primary corpus as parameters that define both their masculinity and their ability to be more or less solidary. The review of the study of Scottish and Glaswegian masculinities in Section 4.2.1. has revealed the need to further investigate Glaswegian masculinities beyond the stereotype of the criminal and alcoholic “hard man.” An expansion of this investigation could further promote the deconstruction of the cultural association between Scotland and Glasgow and a strong, unemotional and violent masculinity by examining a more plural and less heteropatriarchal view of Scottish men both in sociological and literary studies.

Furthermore, the consideration of work and the workplace in relation to masculinity in Section 4.2.2. has helped me to analyse how work is an inherent part of the identity of the male characters in the primary corpus. In Section 3.2.2., I revise previous studies on Gray’s critique of the use of work as a mechanism of individual power (Churchman 2019). The view of the interrelation between masculinity and work has helped me to analyse Duncan Thaw’s art, the politics for Lanark or Jock McLeish’s job in *1982*, *Janine* as a security system supervisor as dimensions of patriarchal and individualistic power that influence their relationship to solidarity. In the three novels it is shown that the conceptualisation of work as a dimension to strengthen their individual ego places them towards selfishness and isolates them from close social relationships and from a sense of social solidarity. As regards James Kelman, the joint vision of masculinity and work has allowed me to highlight how the relationship with work is a fundamental part of the identity of the characters in his novels and of their capacity for solidarity. As such, in *The Busconductor Hines* and *A Chancer* the dearth of work opportunities and the protagonists’ defiance to the capitalist system impedes their establishment of both social and political solidary networks with their colleagues. Moreover, in *A Disaffection*, Pat

Doyle avoids contact with his family and his colleagues at work due to his struggle with an identity crisis caused by the tensions between his work as a schoolteacher and his anti-establishment beliefs.

This section ends with a discussion of the space of work as a site for the creation of working-class masculine solidarities during the period of industrialisation, whose potential has declined with deindustrialisation and the consequent loss of trade union power in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s. As the novels in the primary corpus were published between 1981 and 1989, coinciding with the early years of Margaret Thatcher's government and the progressive dissolution of workers' alliances and solidarities, the discussion of this period has helped me question how solidarity in Gray's and Kelman's novels is made more precarious by economic crisis, unemployment and the neoliberal dismantlement of the welfare state. In this vein, although some of the obstacles towards solidarity that can be identified in Gray's and Kelman's novels are individual, the values of neoliberalism undermine solidarity in the novels of both authors. Similarly, unemployment and the dearth of opportunities derived from deindustrialisation are portrayed as limitations to solidarity in Kelman's novels.

Section 4.3. has contributed to determining the specific approach of my analysis of solidarity. Although in my discussion of definitions of solidarity I start by considering it as a collective and egalitarian connected concept —what Andrea Sangiovanni and Juri Viehoff call “solidarity among” (2023, n.p.)— in Section 4.3.1. I extend this definition to what Sangiovanni and Viehoff call a “solidarity with” (2023, n.p.) that can appear in contexts of inequality and asymmetrical help to others, like the ones represented in the primary corpus. Drawing from Barbara Prainsack and Alena Buyx's concept of interpersonal solidarity, which understands solidarity as an action of assisting the other based on the recognition of similarity in a relevant respect (2017) between the agent of the solidarity action and its recipient in a particular context, I have been able to argue in the literary analyses that actions of cooperation or help towards the other are indeed examples of solidarity. Furthermore, the explanation of the four types of solidarity identified by Kurt Bayertz (1999) and Sally Scholz (2008) according to its context — social, civic, political and human solidarity— underpins my analysis of solidarity as an action subject to the context in which it arises.

The discussion of the relationship between solidarity and the reproduction of discriminatory mechanisms (Dean 1996) and complicity with a social order that can be oppressive and unjust (Spicker 2006) has been particularly useful to me in considering

the lack of political solidarity in James Kelman's *The Busconductor Hines*. In this work, the protagonist, Rab Hines, sees participation in strike by the bus company's trade union as an action perpetuating inequality between workers and bosses and helping to maintain order rather than serving to challenge it. Thus, from an anti-establishment perspective, this novel questions the viability of political solidarity in fighting injustice.

Moreover, the ideas of Siegwart Lindenberg (2014) and Søren Juul (2013) have guided my analysis of both the elements that constitute and promote solidarity action and the values that hinder it. Lindenberg's definition of cooperation, sharing, helping, making an effort to understand and be understood, trustworthiness and considerateness as the six norms that together make up solidarity has been instrumental in defining the precarious acts of solidarity in the selected novels. For Lindenberg, it is the simultaneous use of these six norms that characterises an action as solidary. In this sense, none of the solidarity actions depicted in Gray's and Kelman's novels meet all six norms at the same time. However, Lanark and Rima's cooperation when they cross the Intercalendrical Zone together, or Tammas' help to his friends by lending them money, has allowed me to classify these actions as examples of precarious solidarity. Conversely, the lack of trust or active communication have been categorised as factors that weaken the possibility of solidarity. In addition, Juul's explanation of solidarity as an action based on the recognition of the value of the other as an equal and someone worthy to interact with also allowed me to classify actions that moved towards or away from the principle of recognition as more or less solidary. For example, when in *Lanark* the eponymous character saves Rima from being killed and used as an energy fortress in the Institute, Lanark recognises Rim's humanity. Likewise, the celebration in 1982, *Janine* of Jock McLeish and theatre group director Brian's contribution to the play is an act of mutual recognition that values collective effort. Among the values Juul associates with modernity and the loss of solidarity, his definition of the ethics of utility and Richard Sennett's new capitalism (1999) have been central to the analysis of neoliberalism in Gray's and Kelman's novels and working-class emigration in Kelman's *A Chancer* as barriers to solidarity.

Chapter 5 has focused on the literary analysis of Alasdair Gray's novels *Lanark* (1981) and *1982, Janine* (1984). Both texts show Gray's consideration of unequal personal and political power dynamics as incompatible with solidarity. In these novels, Gray reveals how individualism, megalomania and exploitative structures lead to personally and politically catastrophic situations. In contrast, the possibility of an equal

consideration of the other and a sense of community are presented as sources of hope. However, reconciliation with the community is difficult to achieve. In *Lanark* and in 1982, *Janine*, the pursuit of power and corrupt politics are extremely strong forces and the potential for solidarity is very precarious. The structures that make solidarity precarious and even contribute to its demise are deeply connected both to the power of capital, from a neoliberal perspective, and to patriarchal power, and Gray critiques the negative effects against solidarity of both spheres.

My analysis of *Lanark* reveals that, in this novel, solidarity is continually in tension with the individualism and desire for external admiration of the main character, as well as with the neoliberal ethics that characterises the world of Unthank and Provan. By understanding spaces such as the school as rigid spaces characterised by linear rhythms (Lefebvre 2004), I have argued that Thaw's individual reinvention of space through his imagination and art completely isolates him from the possibility of establishing bonds of social solidarity with his environment. Gray's depiction of Thaw's use of fantasy as a source of escapism and his reduction of women to objects at the mercy of what he imagines of them show that an overly individual and egocentric view of his surroundings is an obstacle to solidarity.

The egocentrism of Thaw's fantasies is strongly rooted in a perception of heterosexual masculinity as a dominant and heroic role. For both Thaw and Lanark, the heroic component they associate with masculinity distances them from an egalitarian and fully solidary relationship with women and the environment. Thus, in my analysis of Lanark's actions of precarious solidarity towards Rima or the inhabitants of Unthank, I show that his solidarity towards others is related to the reinforcement of his own self-esteem and of a masculine role based on heroism. By exploring the close relationship between egoism, male self-esteem and actions of help towards others, Gray highlights the difficulty of achieving unselfish and egalitarian solidarity by emphasising that individualism and ambitions for power characterise human beings and their politics. Taking this into consideration, I argue that, although in his political pamphlets Gray criticises neoliberalism and proposes a more caring way of governing based on a strong welfare state and the equal distribution of wealth, in *Lanark* he questions what human and political values we must overcome in order to achieve a more solidary society.

Chapter 6 has dealt with James Kelman's *The Busconductor Hines* (1984), *A Chancer* (1985) and *A Disaffection* (1989). All three novels show that resistance against the system isolates the main characters from society and hinders them from solidarity.

The consideration of space as a dimension mediated by hierarchies of power in Kelman's novels has allowed me to demonstrate that, in their defiance of the system, the characters in these three novels do not participate in collective rhythms of group membership or seek membership away from linear capitalist rhythms (Lefebvre 2004). Moreover, the analysis of the masculinities in these works reveals that they are alternative heterosexual working-class subjectivities that do not participate in the workplace, understood as a structure that perpetuates inequality and a working-class masculine identity based on work and, therefore, on capitalism.

My analysis of Rab Hines's relationship to domestic space and the workplace in *The Busconductor Hines* has helped me to study the consequences that Rab's remoteness from capitalist rhythms have for his ability to be solidary. Simultaneously analysing the class and spatial mobility of Rab and Sandra's couple has allowed me to observe that, from Rab's and Kelman's anti-establishment perspective, Sandra's class ambitions constitute a barrier to solidarity in the couple, creating tension between them. Rab's flight from class mobility and membership of the capitalist system also distances him from social solidarity at work and from participation in political solidarity through workers' unionism, which, in line with Kelman's existentialist and anti-establishment ideas, is seen as a structure aligned with bourgeois interests of worker oppression.

In *A Chancer*, Tammas's flight from collective and capitalist rhythms also translates into a decline in his solidarity with his friends and family. Although Tammas finds a new way of socialisation in gambling and approaches his social relations by lending them money or accepting loans from them, these alternative solidarity actions are arrhythmic (Lefebvre 2004) and therefore tremendously precarious. However, these loans are the only actions Tammas can take while fleeing collective and capitalist rhythms that are disintegrating due to the massive emigration from the impoverished Glasgow in which he lives. Thus, despite their precariousness, my analysis highlights money lending as a significant action of social solidarity and the maintenance of Tammas' community. In contrast, in *A Disaffection*, in his total opposition to the system and his attempt to flee from it, Pat Doyle finds no solidarity. My analysis of Pat's individual rhythms has allowed me to observe that this novel shows that a total defiance of the system can become a problem in that it prevents the protagonist from joining in political solidarity with anti-establishment groups and isolates him from his environment. The protagonists of Kelman's novels occupy a limbo between escapism and life as part of the system. This limbo allows Kelman to engage in a philosophical exploration of the complicated

relationship between the individual and a society that the author perceives as oppressive, but it does not allow him to develop in his fiction ideas about solidary actions on behalf of minorities as he does in his essays.

Although the association of both authors with a left-wing ideology a priori invites us to think that the presence of solidarity in their fiction would be greater, this thesis has shown that their work focuses more on the difficulties of achieving solidarity, which is portrayed by both authors as tremendously precarious. The ideas on the precariousness of solidarity put forward by the two authors are different. On the one hand, although Gray identifies individualism or lust for power as characteristics of heteronormative masculinity, his positive representation of cooperation shows how it is only in combination with precarious solidarity actions that a peaceful society is sustainable. By contrast, in his novels, Kelman presents a critical view of solidarity bonds that, like trade unionism, are aligned with the interests of the system. In addition, he is pessimistic about the possibility of his protagonists' finding solidarity networks in their communities and grassroots organisations.

As a whole, this thesis has highlighted the interest that, in contrast to the strong commitment to solidarity in their political essays, the fiction of Alasdair Gray and James Kelman has for the study of the human and political limitations of solidarity. Using space and masculinity as the axes that have guided my study of solidarity, this thesis demonstrates that masculine heterosexual roles, heroic and dominant in Gray's case, and evasive and anti-capitalist in Kelman's, determine their spatial dynamics and their potential for solidary relations. This is why, in this thesis, solidarity is understood as a spatially rooted and gendered action.

Esta tesis demuestra que las novelas de Alasdair Gray y James Kelman publicadas de 1981 a 1989 cuentan con un gran potencial para el estudio de la solidaridad como una dimensión contextual y cambiante. Las obras seleccionadas contribuyen a visibilizar que las acciones solidarias están sujetas al uso individual del espacio mediado por parámetros de género y de clase. Asimismo, también ayudan a resaltar la influencia de la ideología política en la disposición personal hacia la solidaridad y la importancia de una escala de valores que promueva el reconocimiento del otro (Juul 2013) como elementos

fundamentales que refuerzan la solidaridad. La tesis propone como nuevo concepto y de futura aplicabilidad el término solidaridad precaria. Este término ha sido desarrollado a partir de las teorías de Siegwart Lindenberg sobre la precariedad e inestabilidad del marco normativo de solidaridad (2014), así como a partir de la definición de Judith Butler de precariedad (2009). Mi propia interpretación del concepto trata de definir la solidaridad como una acción que se hace menos frecuente y más débil en contextos en los que la precariedad económica y la desigualdad social se combinan con valores políticos individualistas como el neoliberalismo y el elitismo. Su uso en esta tesis pone de manifiesto su funcionalidad para analizar la solidaridad en un contexto literario que, como propone el corpus primario de esta tesis, por un lado, revela las tendencias individualistas del ser humano, personal y políticamente, y por otro explora las barreras que tenemos al relacionarnos con nuestro entorno en condiciones de pertenencia al grupo e igualdad.

En el Capítulo 2 he realizado una revisión histórica de la “novela de Glasgow” (Burgess 1989, McIlvanney 2012) y he situado a Alasdair Gray y James Kelman dentro de esta tradición literaria. Estructurar este repaso no sólo cronológicamente sino también temáticamente me ha permitido resaltar la importancia que tienen en esta tradición los ejes clave de mi tesis, a saber, el tratamiento de la relación con el entorno espacial, la representación de las masculinidades y las narrativas sobre la identidad de clase. En relación con el posterior uso de estas dimensiones para mi estudio de la solidaridad, he podido observar que los problemas del hombre blanco, heterosexual y de clase obrera para encajar en un entorno social del que quiere escapar han sido un tema central en la novela de Glasgow aproximadamente desde los años 1930. Esto demuestra que, pese al reconocimiento de Glasgow como una ciudad con un fuerte compromiso solidario con los derechos de los obreros, tal y como se muestra en novelas como *Hunger March* (1934), de Dot Allan, o en una época contemporánea en *Demo* (2005), de Alison Miller, la ciudad vista como una dimensión que lleva al escapismo y a la parálisis en vez de a la acción solidaria es un tema tremendamente recurrente en esta tradición. De esta manera, este capítulo revela que la preocupación por la identidad masculina individual, el solipsismo o la inacción social representados como obstáculos a la solidaridad en las novelas de Gray y Kelman beben de una tradición literaria local.

En el Capítulo 3 he analizado las políticas representadas en la ficción y los ensayos de Gray y Kelman, así como las dinámicas de género que aparecen en su obra. Aunque el objetivo de este capítulo no es evaluar si los escritores escoceses fueron realmente instigadores de los debates sobre la cultura nacional que contribuyeron a la devolución

del parlamento escocés en 1997, ni concluir hasta qué punto la cultura ayudó efectivamente al cambio político nacional, ha servido para considerar la literatura como un medio de reflexión sobre ideas políticas, siendo la solidaridad una de ellas. Mi análisis del pensamiento político de Alasdair Gray me ha llevado a considerar que la descripción que hace Gray de las dinámicas de poder opresivas a nivel personal y sociopolítico constituye una crítica contra la explotación. Desde una agenda humanista y socialista, Gray ve el individualismo y la explotación como amenazas a una subjetividad individual sana y a una convivencia humana respetuosa. Al mismo tiempo, mi análisis de la frecuencia con la que la dominación y las dificultades para escapar de espacios limitantes aparecen retratados en sus novelas me ha permitido subrayar que, para Gray, la superación de estas dimensiones es difícil de conseguir. Asimismo, he establecido una conexión entre el nacionalismo de Gray, su férrea defensa socialista del estado del bienestar y su apoyo de la cultura obrera de Glasgow, poniendo de manifiesto la importancia que la solidaridad hacia la clase obrera y la solidaridad cívica tienen en su pensamiento.

Además, gracias a la revisión de las dinámicas de género que aparecen en la ficción de Gray, he podido observar que la representación que hace el autor de las dinámicas desiguales de poder no es simplemente una crítica política, sino que también expone la exploración que hace el autor de las masculinidades. En obras como *Lanark* y *1982, Janine*, Gray describe hombres que están incómodos en circunstancias de inferioridad y que compensan su vulnerabilidad mediante una omnipotencia imaginada en forma de fantasías o un uso individualista del poder político. Uno de estos mecanismos imaginarios de supremacía masculina es la pornografía, que analizo en la Sección 3.2.4.2. En ella, entiendo la pornografía de Gray en *1982, Janine* como una crítica a las dinámicas de explotación y también como una descripción cruda de un tipo de masculinidad basado en el control del débil. Mi reflexión a partir de las ideas de Stephen J. Boyd (1991), Eilidh Whiteford (1994) y Kirsten Stirling (2008) sobre la fina línea entre la crítica y la representación en el uso que Gray hace de la pornografía revela hasta qué punto Gray corre el riesgo de perpetuar la sexualización y la falta de solidaridad hacia las mujeres. La descripción de las masculinidades de Gray como figuras arraigadas a la búsqueda y reafirmación de un poder patriarcal ha sentado las bases de mi análisis de la solidaridad en el Capítulo 5.

Mi investigación sobre las ideas políticas de Kelman visibiliza las similitudes y las diferencias entre las ideas políticas de sus obras de ficción y las ideas de sus ensayos.

La agenda estética de Kelman presenta una contradicción fundamental. Por una parte, muestra su intención de representar y dar voz a las clases marginales. Por otra parte, debido a la influencia de la filosofía existencialista en su obra y a su resistencia contra el uso de clichés narrativos que el autor asocia a las élites, Kelman retrata a sus protagonistas como individuos aislados de un sentido de pertenencia al grupo y a la clase obrera tradicional. La revisión de los ensayos de Kelman me ha permitido poner de manifiesto que las diferencias entre las exploraciones filosóficas de sus novelas y las ideas que sustentan su activismo son aún mayores. En su activismo político, Kelman se muestra solidario con poblaciones marginadas e insiste en la importancia de tejer redes de solidaridad entre las víctimas de injusticia estatal, como los obreros enfermos de asbestosis —Clydeside Action on Asbestos— los ataques racistas —Scottish Campaign Against Racism and Fascism— o la opresión étnica —Friends of Kurdistan and Friends of Palestine—. Sin embargo, esta solidaridad no está reflejada en su obra literaria, en la cual los protagonistas, pese a formar parte de la clase obrera o tener una ideología antisistema, son individuos que buscan el aislamiento social. De esta manera, este análisis me ha permitido constatar que las ideas políticas de Kelman fluctúan entre un desafío radical a lo establecido, mostrado en sus novelas, e intentos de luchar contra la injusticia política a través de la solidaridad en organizaciones de base cercanas a las comunidades afectadas.

Además, la definición de los personajes masculinos de Kelman como hombres que tienden a la marginalización ha contribuido a guiar mi estudio de la solidaridad hacia los elementos que la obstaculizan. La Sección 3.3.3., en la que estudio las dinámicas de género en la obra de Kelman, también ha contribuido a orientar esta tesis hacia las limitaciones de la solidaridad. En ella he podido resaltar que las masculinidades de Kelman tienden hacia la vulnerabilidad y la parálisis desafiando tanto las masculinidades hegemónicas (Connell 1987) como las masculinidades obreras tradicionales basadas en la acción. En este sentido, al entender la solidaridad como una acción de apoyo a los demás, el análisis de los hombres de Kelman como reflexivos y encerrados en sí mismos me ha permitido situarlos lejos de la solidaridad.

En el Capítulo 4 he revisado varias teorías sobre espacio, masculinidades y solidaridad que sustentan mi estudio sobre la solidaridad precaria. Teniendo en cuenta que esta tesis entiende la solidaridad como una acción situada y mediada por la relación con el espacio y las dinámicas de género, ambas perspectivas han ayudado a centrar mi estudio. La aplicación de teorías Marxistas sobre el espacio me ha permitido constatar

que el uso del espacio responde a las percepciones individuales de nuestro entorno (Soja 1998, Lefebvre 1991), ancladas en parámetros sociales, mentales y políticos que guían el acercamiento o el alejamiento solidario de los personajes de Gray y Kelman. Para el análisis de los espacios de clase obrera y de precariedad socioeconómica retratados en *The Busconductor Hines* (1984) y *A Chancer* (1985), las capacidades básicas teorizadas por Nussbaum han sido especialmente útiles para establecer una conexión entre la falta de capacidades básicas y la aparición de tensiones sociales que desafían la solidaridad social entre una pareja o una comunidad. Además, el *rhythmanalysis*, tal y como la han teorizado Henri Lefebvre (2004) y Tim Edensor (2000, 2010), ha sustentado el entendimiento de los ritmos colectivos como elementos de creación de rutinas grupales y de reproducción de jerarquías capitalistas, entendiendo el desafío de estos ritmos o la búsqueda de ritmos individuales como movimientos que, por una parte, funcionan para resistir contra el capitalismo, a la par que debilitan la solidaridad social y la solidaridad política, basadas en la pertenencia a un grupo (Scholz 2008).

La Sección 4.2. revisa la teorización sobre la intersección entre las masculinidades y el espacio y me ha permitido entender los movimientos espaciales de los personajes masculinos del corpus primario como parámetros que definen tanto su masculinidad como su capacidad para ser más o menos solidarios. El repaso del estudio de las masculinidades de Escocia y Glasgow en la Sección 4.2.1. ha revelado la necesidad de estudiar las masculinidades de Glasgow más allá del estereotipo del “hard man” criminal y alcohólico y que las masculinidades más vulnerables que existen en la ciudad de Glasgow no sólo sean estudiadas en el ámbito literario, sino también en el sociológico. De esta manera, se podría promover más aún la deconstrucción de la asociación cultural entre Escocia y Glasgow y una masculinidad fuerte, poco emocional y violenta, en favor de una visión del hombre escocés más plural y desvinculada de estereotipos heteropatriarcales.

Por otra parte, la consideración del trabajo y el lugar de trabajo en relación con la masculinidad en la Sección 4.2.2. me ha ayudado a analizar en qué medida el trabajo es una parte inherente de la identidad de los personajes masculinos del corpus primario. En la Sección 3.2.2., reviso estudios anteriores sobre la crítica de Gray al uso del trabajo como mecanismo de poder individual (Churchman 2019). La visión de la unión entre la masculinidad y el trabajo me ha ayudado a analizar el arte de Duncan Thaw, la política de Lanark o el trabajo de Jock McLeish en *1982*, *Janine* como supervisor de sistema de seguridad como dimensiones de poder patriarcal e individualista y a examinar su relación

con la solidaridad. En las tres novelas se muestra cómo la conceptualización del trabajo como una dimensión que fortalece el ego individual acerca a estos personajes hacia el egoísmo y los aísla de unas relaciones sociales cercanas y de un sentido de solidaridad social. En lo que respecta a James Kelman, la visión conjunta de la masculinidad y el trabajo me ha permitido reseñar que la relación con el trabajo es una parte fundamental de la identidad de los personajes de sus novelas y de su capacidad para ser solidarios. En *The Busconductor Hines* y *A Chancer* la escasez de oportunidades laborales y la oposición de los protagonistas a pertenecer al sistema capitalista les dificulta establecer redes solidarias tanto sociales como políticas con sus compañeros de trabajo. Por otra parte, en *A Disaffection*, Pat Doyle evita el contacto con su familia y sus compañeros de trabajo debido a su lucha contra la crisis de identidad provocada por las tensiones entre su trabajo de maestro de escuela y sus creencias contrarias al sistema.

Esta sección cierra con una discusión sobre el espacio laboral como un lugar para la creación de las masculinidades de clase obrera durante el periodo de industrialización, cuyo potencial solidario ha decaído con la desindustrialización y la consecuente pérdida de poder de los sindicatos a finales de la década de 1970 y a lo largo de la de 1980. Debido a que las novelas del corpus primario fueron publicadas entre 1981 y 1989, coincidiendo con los primeros años del gobierno de Margaret Thatcher y con la progresiva disolución de las solidaridades obreras, la discusión de este periodo me ha ayudado a visibilizar que la solidaridad obrera en las novelas de Gray y Kelman está relacionada con las circunstancias de esta época, afectada por la crisis económica, el desempleo y el desmantelamiento neoliberal del estado del bienestar. En este sentido, aunque algunos de los obstáculos a la solidaridad que pueden identificarse en las novelas de Gray y Kelman son individuales, los valores del neoliberalismo socavan la solidaridad en las novelas de Gray. Del mismo modo, el desempleo y la escasez de oportunidades derivadas de la desindustrialización se presentan como limitaciones a la solidaridad en las novelas de Kelman.

La Sección 4.3. del capítulo teórico ha servido para determinar la orientación concreta de mi análisis sobre la solidaridad. Aunque en mi discusión sobre las definiciones de la solidaridad parto de un entendimiento de la misma como un concepto colectivo y conectado a la igualdad —lo que Andrea Sangiovanni and Juri Viehoff llaman “solidaridad entre” (2023, n.p.)— en la Sección 4.3.1. amplío esta definición de solidaridad a una “solidaridad con” (Sangiovanni y Viehoff 2023, n.p.) que pueda aparecer en contextos de desigualdad y de ayuda asimétrica a otros como los que se

representan en el corpus primario. A partir del concepto de solidaridad interpersonal de Barbara Prainsack y Alena Buyx (2017), el cual entiende la solidaridad como una acción de asistencia al otro basada en el reconocimiento de una similitud entre el agente de la acción solidaria y su receptor en un contexto concreto, he podido argumentar en los análisis literarios que las acciones de cooperación o ayuda al otro son ejemplos de solidaridad. Además, la explicación de los cuatro tipos de solidaridad identificados por Kurt Bayertz (1999) y Sally Scholz (2008) según el contexto —solidaridad social, cívica, política y humana— sustenta mi análisis de la solidaridad como una acción sujeta al contexto en el que surge.

La discusión de la relación entre la solidaridad y la reproducción de mecanismos discriminatorios (Dean 1996) y de complicidad con un orden social que puede ser opresivo e injusto (Spicker 2006) me ha resultado de especial utilidad al considerar la falta de solidaridad política en *The Busconductor Hines*, de James Kelman. En esta obra, el protagonista, Rab Hines, considera que la participación en una huelga propuesta por el sindicato de la compañía de autobuses perpetúa la desigualdad entre los trabajadores y los jefes y ayuda a mantener el orden en vez de servir para desafiarlo. De esta manera, desde una perspectiva antisistema, en esta obra se cuestiona la utilidad de la solidaridad política para luchar contra la injusticia.

Asimismo, las ideas de Siegwart Lindenberg (2014) y Søren Juul (2013) han guiado mi análisis tanto de los elementos que constituyen y promueven una acción solidaria como de los valores que la obstaculizan. La definición que hace Lindenberg de la cooperación —el acto de compartir, la ayuda, esforzarse por comprender y ser comprendido, la confianza y la consideración como las seis normas que juntas conforman la solidaridad— ha sido fundamental a la hora de definir los actos de solidaridad precaria que aparecen en el corpus primario. Para Lindenberg, es el uso simultáneo de estas seis normas lo que caracteriza una acción como solidaria. En este sentido, ninguna de las acciones solidarias representadas en las novelas de Gray y Kelman cumplen con estas seis normas a la vez. Sin embargo, el acercamiento de Lanark y Rima a la cooperación cuando cruzan juntos la Zona Intercalendrica o la ayuda que ofrece Tammás a sus amigos prestándoles dinero, me ha permitido clasificar estas acciones como ejemplos de solidaridad precaria. Por el contrario, la falta de confianza o de comunicación activa, así como la definición de Lindenberg del marco hedonista y el marco de ganancia han sido catalogados como factores que debilitan la posibilidad de solidaridad. Además, la explicación que Juul propone de la solidaridad como una acción basada en el

reconocimiento del valor del otro como un igual y alguien digno con quien interactuar también me ha permitido clasificar las acciones que se acercaban o se alejaban del principio de reconocimiento como más o menos solidarias. Por ejemplo, cuando en *Lanark* el personaje homónimo salva a Rima de ser asesinada y usada como fuente de energía en el Instituto, Lanark es capaz de reconocer la humanidad de Rima. Asimismo, la celebración en 1982, *Janine* de la contribución de Jock McLeish y el director del grupo de teatro Brian a la obra dramática supone una acción de reconocimiento mutuo que valora el esfuerzo colectivo. De entre los valores que Juul asocia a la modernidad y a la pérdida de solidaridad, su definición de las éticas de utilidad y el nuevo capitalismo (1999) de Richard Sennett han sido esenciales para el análisis del neoliberalismo, en las novelas de Gray, y la movilidad por causas de trabajo en *A Chancer*, de Kelman, como barreras contra la solidaridad.

El Capítulo 5 se ha centrado en el análisis literario de las novelas *Lanark* (1981) y *1982, Janine* (1984), de Alasdair Gray. Ambos textos muestran la consideración de Gray de las dinámicas desiguales de poder personales y políticas como factores incompatibles con la solidaridad. En estas novelas, Gray revela que el individualismo, la megalomanía y las estructuras de explotación llevan a situaciones negativas personal y políticamente. En contraposición, la cooperación, la posibilidad de una consideración igualitaria del otro y un sentido de comunidad se presentan como vías de salvación humana. Sin embargo, la reconciliación con la comunidad es difícil de conseguir. Tanto en *Lanark* como en *1982, Janine* la búsqueda del poder o las políticas corruptas son tremendamente fuertes y el potencial de solidaridad, pese a ser algo positivo que combate la desigualdad, es muy precario. Las estructuras que precarizan la solidaridad incluso aunque contribuyan a su desaparición están fuertemente conectadas tanto al poder del capital, desde una perspectiva neoliberal como al poder patriarcal y Gray critica los efectos negativos contra la solidaridad de ambas esferas.

Mi análisis de *Lanark* revela que en esta novela la solidaridad está continuamente en tensión con el individualismo y el deseo de admiración externa del personaje principal, así como con la ética neoliberal que caracteriza el mundo de Unthank y de Provan. Al entender espacios como el de la escuela como espacios rígidos caracterizados por ritmos lineales (Lefebvre 2004), he podido argumentar que la reinención individual del espacio de Thaw a través de su imaginación y del arte le aíslan por completo de la posibilidad de establecer lazos de solidaridad social con su entorno. La representación de Gray del uso de la fantasía que hace Thaw como fuente de escapismo y su reducción de las mujeres a

objetos que están a merced de lo que él mismo imagina de ellas muestran que una visión demasiado individual y egocéntrica del entorno supone un obstáculo para la solidaridad.

El egocentrismo de las fantasías de Thaw está fuertemente arraigado a una percepción de la masculinidad heterosexual como un rol dominante y heroico. Tanto para Thaw como para Lanark el componente heroico que ellos asocian a la masculinidad les aleja de una relación igualitaria y completamente solidaria con las mujeres y el entorno. De esta manera, en mi análisis de los ejemplos de solidaridad precaria del personaje de Lanark hacia Rima o hacia los habitantes de Unthank, muestro que la solidaridad de Lanark, pese a acercarle al reconocimiento del otro, está también relacionada con el refuerzo de su propia autoestima y de un rol masculino basado en la heroicidad. Al explorar la estrecha relación entre el egoísmo, la autoestima masculina y las acciones de ayuda al otro, Gray pone de manifiesto la dificultad de conseguir una solidaridad no egoísta e igualitaria enfatizando que el individualismo y las ambiciones de poder caracterizan al ser humano y a sus políticas.

En mi estudio de *1982, Janine* pongo en valor cómo, a través del personaje de Jock McLeish, Gray explora las consecuencias de ser cómplice de dinámicas desiguales de poder, tanto en su uso de la pornografía como en su ideología. El análisis de la escuela como espacio de socialización de género me ha permitido constatar que Gray entiende la escuela en la década de 1940 como un lugar en el que, a través de la violencia física, se promovía una masculinidad basada en la humillación del más débil y contraria a la solidaridad. Los valores aprendidos por Jock McLeish en la escuela son fundamentales para explicar la estructura de sus fantasías pornográficas como lo que Foucault denomina tecnologías disciplinarias (1977), así como su visión del mundo según lógicas de dominación y subordinación que imposibilitan la solidaridad humana y hacia las clases obreras. De esta manera, estudio a Jock McLeish como a un personaje capaz de establecer únicamente relaciones caracterizadas por la dominación y la ausencia de intimidad con sus parejas. La consideración de las fantasías y la relaciones con las mujeres de Jock como espacios de dominación y tecnologías disciplinarias ha sido fundamental para señalar que estos espacios reproducen la falta de solidaridad con las mujeres. De esta manera, analizo a McLeish como un personaje alejado de la solidaridad. No solamente sus ideas afectan sus relaciones de solidaridad social, sino que también su rigidez emocional, aprendida del modelo masculino de su profesor Mad Hislop, hace que se aleje de la intimidad y la vulnerabilidad con sus parejas y de sus compañeros de trabajo. De esta manera, en la subsección 4.2.4., leo la inmovilidad de Jock y su uso de no-lugares (Augé 1995) para

evitar el reconocimiento mutuo como un estado de aislamiento solidario. En contraste con esto, evaluó la experiencia de Jock en el grupo de teatro como un ejemplo precario de solidaridad basado en la cooperación, en el que Gray muestra que el reconocimiento y la ayuda al otro tiene el potencial de acercar a Jock a un sentido de solidaridad más amplio y a sacarle de su estado de aislamiento. Por este motivo, argumento que, aunque en sus panfletos políticos Gray critica el neoliberalismo y propone una manera más solidaria de gobernar basada en un fuerte estado del bienestar y el reparto igualitario de las riquezas, en *Lanark* y *1982, Janine* se pregunta qué valores humanos y políticos debemos superar para poder llegar a una vida más solidaria.

En el Capítulo 6 he abordado *The Busconductor Hines* (1984), *A Chancer* (1985) y *A Disaffection* (1989), de James Kelman. Las tres novelas muestran que la resistencia contra el sistema que sustenta las políticas de Kelman aísla a los personajes principales de la sociedad y obstaculizan su solidaridad. La consideración del espacio como una dimensión mediada por jerarquías de poder en sus novelas me ha permitido demostrar que, en su desafío del sistema, los personajes de estas tres novelas no participan en ritmos colectivos de pertenencia al grupo o que buscan una pertenencia alejada de los ritmos lineales (Lefebvre 2004) capitalistas. Además, el análisis de las masculinidades de estas obras pone de manifiesto que son subjetividades heterosexuales y obreras alternativas que no participan activamente en espacios laborales, entendidos como estructuras que perpetúan la desigualdad y una identidad masculina obrera basada en el trabajo y, por lo tanto, en el capitalismo.

El análisis de la relación de Rab Hines con el espacio doméstico y el espacio laboral en *The Busconductor Hines* me ha ayudado a señalar las consecuencias de la lejanía de Rab de los ritmos capitalistas en su relación con la solidaridad. Analizar de manera simultánea la movilidad de clase y la movilidad espacial de la pareja formada por Rab y Sandra me ha permitido observar que, desde la perspectiva antisistema de Rab y de Kelman, las ambiciones de clase de Sandra constituyen una barrera para la solidaridad en la pareja y crea tensión entre ellos. El rechazo de Rab hacia la movilidad de clase y la pertenencia al sistema capitalista también lo alejan de la solidaridad social en el trabajo y de la participación en la solidaridad política a través del sindicalismo obrero, el cual, en línea con las ideas existencialistas y antisistema de Kelman, es visto como una estructura alineada con los intereses burgueses de opresión obrera.

En *A Chancer*, he observado que la huida de los ritmos colectivos y capitalistas de Tammás también se traduce en una disminución de su solidaridad con sus amigos y su

familia. Aunque Tammas encuentre en el juego una nueva manera de socialización y se acerque a sus amistades prestándoles dinero o aceptando préstamos de ellos, estas acciones solidarias alternativas son arrítmicas (Lefebvre 2004) y, por lo tanto, tremendamente precarias. Sin embargo, estos préstamos son las únicas acciones que Tammas puede desarrollar a la vez que huye de unos ritmos colectivos y capitalistas que se están desintegrando debido a la masiva emigración del Glasgow empobrecido en el de vive. De esta manera, pese a su precariedad, mi análisis resalta los préstamos de dinero como acciones significativas de solidaridad social y de mantenimiento de la comunidad de Tammas. Por el contrario, en *A Disaffection*, en su oposición total contra el sistema y su intento de huir de él, Pat Doyle no encuentra ningún atisbo de solidaridad. Mi análisis de los ritmos individuales de este personaje me ha permitido observar que esta novela muestra el desafío total del sistema como un problema que impide al protagonista unirse en solidaridad política a grupos antisistema y le aísla de su entorno. Así pues, los protagonistas de las novelas de Kelman ocupan un limbo entre el escapismo y la vida dentro del sistema. Este limbo permite a Kelman realizar una exploración filosófica sobre la complicada relación entre el individuo y una sociedad que el autor percibe como limitante, pero no le permite desarrollar en su ficción ideas sobre la acción solidaria a favor de las minorías como lo hace en sus ensayos.

Pese a que la asociación de ambos autores con una ideología de izquierdas a priori invita a pensar que la presencia de la solidaridad en su ficción sería mayor, esta tesis ha puesto de manifiesto que su obra se centra más en las dificultades para alcanzar una solidaridad que ambos autores representan, en línea con las ideas de Siegwart Lindenberg (2014), como tremendamente precaria. Las ideas sobre la precariedad de la solidaridad mostradas por ambos autores son distintas. Por una parte, aunque Gray identifica el individualismo o las ansias de poder como características de la masculinidad heteronormativa, su representación positiva de la cooperación muestra que una sociedad en común es solo sostenible en combinación con acciones de solidaridad precaria. Por el contrario, en sus novelas, Kelman presenta una visión crítica de los lazos solidarios que, como el sindicalismo, están alineados con los intereses del sistema y tampoco es optimista ante la posibilidad de que sus protagonistas puedan encontrar redes de solidaridad en sus comunidades y organizaciones de base.

En su conjunto, esta tesis ha puesto en valor el interés que, en contraposición con el fuerte compromiso con la solidaridad de sus ensayos políticos, la obra de Alasdair Gray y James Kelman tiene para el estudio de las limitaciones humanas y políticas de la

solidaridad. Mediante el uso del espacio y la masculinidad como los ejes que han guiado mi estudio de la solidaridad, esta tesis demuestra que los roles heterosexuales masculinos heroicos y dominantes, en el caso de Gray, y evasivos y anticapitalistas, en el caso de Kelman, determinan sus dinámicas espaciales y su potencial para establecer relaciones precariamente solidarias. Es por ello que esta tesis entiende la solidaridad como una acción determinada por el espacio y el género.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1



Alasdair Gray – *The Beast in the Pit*, 1952

